



Big Helping of Hope

Spreading awareness of the need for the emergency shelter remains a huge focus. We took a big step forward in expanding our visibility thanks to Fort Wayne SOUP, the nonprofit group using an acronym that stands for socializing, organizing, uniting people. The group collects \$5 from everyone attending its quarterly micro-grant dinners and invites the diners to vote on their favorite of several funding pitches that they hear from startup businesses or nonprofits.

Board members accompanied Executive Director Lisa Fabian to the dinner on Feb. 20 at which time she gave an impassioned plea for the trailblazing shelter and our mission to support homeless single women.

“St. Joseph Missions has learned directly from one of our single homeless sisters that the going rate for purchasing a woman’s body and debasing it at will if she is desperate enough for a hot meal and a warm bed for just one night is \$20,” she told the audience. “No woman should ever have to be dehumanized simply to survive.”

Her words touched the hearts of those attending, because in the end, St. Joseph Missions secured the most votes (and all the money collected that night, including matching funds). We’re grateful to Fort Wayne SOUP and to the community for this vote of confidence in our mission.

Special thanks to David Leininger, Wells Fargo Bank, and Shawn Sullivan, Wells Fargo Advisors, who offered sage advice during pitch practice provided through FW Confluence.

You can help us spread the word as well:

**“Like” us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stjosephmissions.org>
Share our content and tell your family and friends about us!**



Cynthia's Story of Survival

Cynthia Hayes has been a fighter from the beginning. Born with a condition called hydrocephalus (abnormal buildup of fluid in the cavities deep within the brain), she nearly lost

her life as a baby. A shunt (tube) surgically inserted into her brain was connected to a flexible tube placed under her skin to drain the excess fluid into her abdomen so it could be absorbed by her body.

Her family moved from Los Angeles to Fort Wayne when she was 11. During her teenage years, Cynthia isolated herself and found making friends difficult. Yet it wasn't until she was 23 that she sought professional help for how she was feeling inside. "I felt like I was worthless and not able to function in society."

Cynthia was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and depression. An abusive boyfriend only compounded things, leading Cynthia to be hospitalized several times over a four-year period. It was also at this time that she considered suicide, either by cutting herself or running headlong into traffic.

Before Cynthia got help for her mental illness, holding a job was virtually impossible. Financial problems led her and her boyfriend to lose their apartment and become homeless. They lived in and out of motels over the next year.

"I was always worried where I would lay my head at night and if I would be safe," Cynthia remembers about her experience. "Being homeless made me feel hopeless and made me feel like giving up on life. I was depressed most of the time because I had no idea where I would end up on a daily basis."

Finally, Cynthia gathered the courage to seek the help of her family. She received treatment for her mental illness and found employment and housing assistance through The Carriage House.

Today Cynthia, 37, is married and has a full-time job at Parkview Health as an environmental services technician. With the help of medication, family support, employment, and community resources, Cynthia has been able to turn her life around.

Cynthia's situation – a woman battling mental illness, domestic abuse, and homelessness – isn't unique in Fort Wayne. Many women are combating the same struggles right now in our community. Cynthia considers herself to be one of the lucky ones.

"I had a family who agreed to take me back and help. Not all women in this situation have this option," says Cynthia.

There are many other women in Fort Wayne who don't have family they can rely on, who are facing unimaginable hardships, and who need **your** help.

That's the sad truth. And that's why an emergency shelter for our single homeless sisters is so crucial in our community—and why Cynthia is proud to speak to the urgency of "our shelter" at outreach events.

Thank You!



We wouldn't have come this far on this journey to help women in need if not for the generosity of so many — in particular **BF Goodrich, Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company, Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for our Prayer Room/Chapel, and Frankouser Family Trust.** We are also grateful for the support of an expanding number of individuals, organizations, and businesses in our community:

- A Mother's Hope
- Allen County System of Care
- Allen County Chiropractic Wellness Center
- Anti-Trafficking Network of Northeast Indiana
- Associated Churches of Fort Wayne and Allen County
- Bowen Center
- Brehob, John & Judy
- Brightpoint
- CME Corporation
- Catholic Charities
- Cedar's Hope
- Fort Wayne Area Planning Council on Homelessness
- G A MacDonald Associates
- Inasmuch Ministry
- JH Specialty, Inc./JJ Henry
- Just Neighbors Interfaith Homeless Network
- Kacprowicz, Mike & Sharon
- Lutheran Social Services of Indiana
- Mental Health America
- Osborne, LLOYD/I.U.O.E. 399
- Park Center
- Parkview Community Nursing
- Safe Families for Children Northeast Indiana
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Fidelis Chapter
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School
- The Carriage House
- The Rescue Mission/Charis House
- The Rose Home
- Trinity United Methodist Church
- Upstate Alliance of REALTORS® (UPSTAR)
- Vincent Village
- Whittington Homes & Services for Children & Families
- YWCA/Hope & Harriet Program

We invite you to join this illustrious list. And we extend our heartfelt appreciation to our

Building a Path to Hope: Buy a Brick



Bricks are a great way to:

**CELEBRATE A LOVED ONE (Like a 2020 Grad!),
PROMOTE A BUSINESS, OR HONOR A LEGACY!**

We invite you to share in our trailblazing venture! Our literal Path to Hope will be comprised of a beautiful brick pathway leading from the shelter's Guest Entrance to the peaceful backyard retreat. Order today!

Visit: bit.ly/SJMPath2Hope



Board member spotlight: Susan Byers

As a mother and grandmother, Susan Byers feels a strong calling to help the homeless. It started with her work through Saint Jude Catholic Church's youth ministry program in leading high school teens to serve the homeless downtown. That experience and her subsequent commitment to Catholics on a Mission's outreach led Susan to volunteer to serve on the St. Joseph Missions Board.

"Of all populations, the single female homeless is one that should have shelter most of all," says Susan, who works as the Executive Director of Career Services at Purdue University Fort

Wayne.

That is why she's so dedicated to seeing the creation of the St. Joseph's Missions Women's Shelter. "I believe strongly in advocating for those who may not be in a position to have much of a voice and speak their need. Through the shelter, we can connect women with appropriate resources in Fort Wayne and help them build the support network they need to have a better life and create a more hopeful future."

We have a need on our board for individuals in the legal and marketing/social media fields. If this matches you or someone you know, please contact Lisa Fabian at lisa@stjosephmissions.org.



Our vision

All are welcome!

What started in 2013 as Catholics on a Mission to bring food, supplies, and love to our homeless brothers and sisters in downtown Fort Wayne has evolved to become St. Joseph Missions, named for the Protector of Jesus and Mary. It's our vision to create Allen County's first 24/7/365 emergency shelter for single homeless women as more than a refuge from bitter elements and the violence of sexual predators/sex trafficking.

Shelter guests — entrusted to proven social services partners, empowered through work- and life-skills instruction, and emboldened with renewed purpose amidst accountability — will attain self-sufficiency by following their individualized holistic Path to Hope. While rooted in a Catholic identity, St. Joseph Missions perpetuates its tradition of love by embracing people of all faiths and backgrounds.

Thank you for supporting St. Joseph Missions while shopping at these online stores:

[Kroger Rewards](#) and [Amazon Smile](#)

St. Joseph Missions | <https://www.stjosephmissions.org/>

