



CSEI Program Participant, Latasha, applauded after her speech at the luncheon

Donor & Partner Appreciation Luncheon

On a very cold day in January, CSEI hosted its inaugural luncheon, "Warming the House." Two organizations were recognized for their support of CSEI's programs. Both MidWestOne Bank and United Way of Dubuque Area Tri-States were recognized for their long-term financial support of CSEI's programs.

Private funding plays a vital role in augmenting CSEI's assistance programs, ensuring we are able to meet the growing demand for services and adapt to emerging needs. While federal funding provides essential resources for housing assistance, private donations help bridge gaps. Because of private gifts and grants, CSEI is able to offer more comprehensive services including phone-based case management; more personalized, lasting solutions to homelessness; strategies for homeless prevention; and improving outcomes for individuals and families. Additionally, these funds provide CSEI with matching fund requirements to leverage additional federal funding that supports our programs.

Latasha, a CSEI client, shared how CSEI's assistance has helped her family. *"Since joining this program, I have felt relief and security, supported by genuine people. I began meditating, praying, and reflecting on my journey. Meeting Shelby was a blessing, and her support is unmatched. I've had good times and unexpected surprises."*

In an environment of fluctuating federal budgets and economic uncertainty, donor funding ensures that these programs can continue to operate effectively. By supporting the partnership between public and private donations, we can create a stronger, more resilient safety net for those facing homelessness.



MidWestOne Bank



United Way of Dubuque Area Tri-States

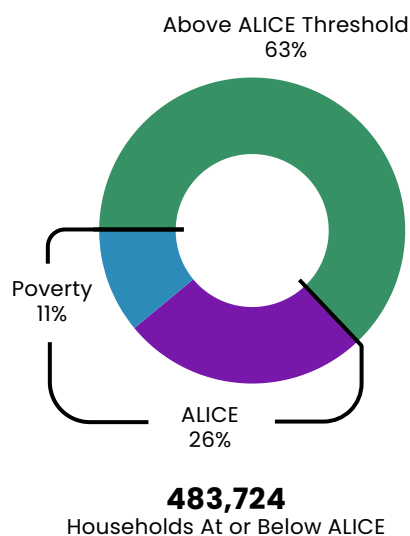
Want to learn more on how you can help CSEI serve our community's most vulnerable?
Visit our website at www.CSEIowa.org

Stopping Homelessness Before It Starts: How Prevention Helps

The Importance of Homeless Prevention Funding

While addressing the immediate needs of those already experiencing homelessness is critical, an equally important – and often overlooked – solution is preventing homelessness before it begins. Homeless Prevention assistance programs are critical.

Individuals and families who receive timely financial assistance to avoid homelessness can stop the disruption of the family home, maintain their jobs, education, and mental health, leading to better outcomes for them and society. This reduces the strain on social services like shelters, healthcare systems, and the criminal justice system.



Addressing the Root Causes

According to the 2024 United Way Iowa ALICE report, **37%** of all households in Iowa are struggling to make ends meet. 11% of these households are below the poverty line, while 26% were considered “ALICE” households. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed – representing individuals and families that earn above the Federal Poverty Level but cannot afford the basic cost of living in their county. Despite struggling to afford their basic needs, ALICE households often do not qualify for public assistance like food stamps, traditional housing subsidies, and free medical insurance.

Locally, households who experience this level of cost burden may typically explore housing subsidies like voucher programs but in our area, those systems involve years-long waiting lists or other unforeseen setbacks that have led to a halt in the issuance of new vouchers. This puts a higher reliance on CSEI’s Homeless Prevention programs.

CSEI’s Homeless Prevention Programs

In the spring of 2022, CSEI was awarded \$634,972 through the Iowa Department of Treasury’s Emergency Rental Assistance grant. The majority of these funds have been dedicated to supporting individuals and families facing eviction, helping them remain in their homes. To date, CSEI has provided assistance to 46 households, benefiting a total of 122 individuals. Recently, CSEI secured an additional \$469,300, continuing our ability to prevent homelessness and keep families in their homes. To qualify for assistance, households must meet HUD’s definition of being at imminent risk of homelessness, which includes individuals facing eviction or those temporarily staying with friends or family who need to find permanent housing.

This funding not only prevents homelessness but also empowers families to make meaningful changes toward long-term stability. Case managers work closely with clients to create budgets and set goals, preparing them for a successful transition once the rental assistance concludes. **One such success story is Nicole**, pictured right. During her time in the program, Nicole pursued further education, which led to increased stability in her job at a local nursing home. “There is finally light at the end of my tunnel,” Nicole said. “It took a really long time, and many times I didn’t think we were going to make it. But you have to put in the work; it doesn’t just happen.”

By allocating additional resources to prevent homelessness, CSEI is not only helping individuals and families maintain their housing.

“Most of us are three bad months away from being homeless. None of us are three good months away from being billionaires.”

– unknown



Our Mission

Our mission is to promote and encourage public well-being; provide homeless prevention resources to those living in poverty and threatened with homelessness; to help individuals and families survive and exit homelessness; and to expand opportunities and empower people to be self-sufficient in east-central Iowa cities and counties.

Our Programs

Rapid Rehousing

Short and medium-term rental assistance and case management serving individuals and families who are homeless

Homeless Prevention

Short-term assistance serving individuals and families who are at imminent risk of homelessness

Tenant Based Rental Assistance

Rental assistance for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Street Outreach

Outreach program with emphasis on reaching those living unsheltered and providing basic needs

Housing Helpline

Individuals at risk of homelessness in Delaware or Dubuque counties are encouraged to call the Housing Helpline to access information, referrals, and resources in their communities related to housing instability or homelessness

Service Statistics

602

HOUSING INSTABILITY CALLS

161

INDIVIDUALS SERVED THROUGH A HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

18

INDIVIDUALS SERVED THROUGH STREET OUTREACH

15

SERVED DURING WINTER POINT IN TIME COUNT

Board Feature: Sister Martha Donnelly, PBVM

Tell us about yourself!

I was born and raised in Mason City, Iowa, the sixth of eight children. I went to the University of Northern Iowa for a BA in elementary education. I entered my community in 1985 and have since become a Chaplain. I have ministered with Mt. Carmel with the BVM sisters, acted as the staff chaplain for 13 years at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, and at Mercy in Cedar Rapids.

If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be?

Jimmy Carter. I always admired him. His honesty, faith, integrity and his humility. I wanted to join a Habitat team just to meet him.

If you had to switch places with a CSEI staff member for a day, what would you be the most excited to do?

I hope to join Shelby sometime in her service to others.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received, and who gave it to you?

During my first year in community a Sister shared this thought. "Pray to know the truth of who you are before God." Know you are loved and are forgiven for being human having faults.

If you could magically solve one challenge facing the organization right now, what would it be and how would you go about it?

I hope homelessness in our country can be reduced as we try to assist others and the many issues and needs they have.



Sister Martha volunteering at the Dubuque Food Pantry

Sister Martha's impact on CSEI's programs

Sister Martha recently made a generous donation to CSEI, inspired by the testimonial that Latasha provided at CSEI's donor & partner luncheon. Martha insisted that the funds be used at the staff's discretion to meet the immediate needs of clients. This thoughtful and flexible contribution ensures resources are directed where they are most urgently needed, supporting individuals facing homelessness in an informed and personalized way.

Grants & Gifts

*GreenState Credit Union
Sisters of Charity of the BVM
Christopher & Nancy Patrick
The Cafaro Foundation
Sister Martha Donnelly*

Thank You!