



*Helping those who are homeless – one heart at a time.*

WINTER NEWSLETTER  
2021

1033 E. 26TH ST. ERIE, PA 16504 | 814-456-8073 | EUMA-ERIE.ORG

# JOURNEY HOME

## **EUMA's Journey Home bridges the gap from foster care to independent living.**

At your EUMA, we are committed to making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. Sometimes that means forming strategic partnerships with existing organizations to achieve our shared goals.

In partnership with Bethesda Lutheran Services and Family Services of NW PA, EUMA's newest program - Journey Home - serves youth (18-24) who are aging out of the foster care system and are at risk of entering the homeless system without an intervention.

While under the watchful and caring eyes of a Resident Assistant/EUMA staff and our partners' case managers, youth learn how to budget, take care of their own apartment, find employment and learn how to be good neighbors.

EUMA currently provides safe

and stable housing, at three EUMA properties throughout Erie, for up to 14 youth. EUMA's Journey Home offers youth the opportunity to learn to live on their own – while receiving the supportive services and housing they need to bridge the gap from foster care to independent living.



According to our foster care system, it is 18 when youth “age out,” or are required to exit the system. This means that they must learn to meet their own needs – they must identify, secure and maintain housing, find a job, manage their finances. For many

of these youth, aging out of foster care leaves them at a significantly greater risk of experiencing homelessness. For many, there are education delays, trauma and a lack of basic living skills.

Breanne Hillen,  
Program Super-

visor, Family Services of NWPA, comments on the value of our collaborative efforts for the youth in this program. “The youth that are in need of housing - don't have steady incomes, the funds necessary, or the background needed to complete the application for the landlord. This program provides us an opportunity to get them into a realistic apartment, give them all the services they need, wrap them with the case management, mental health services anything else they need to learn the life skills they need to be independent enough to live on their own.”

## TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR!

Join Kurt Crays, EUMA's Executive Director, for a virtual tour of the Journey Home property, which opened in November 2020.

**You can find the virtual tour on our website by clicking this link:**

**Journey Home Tour**



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## A MESSAGE FROM KURT

The disciple, Paul wrote to the Romans: “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer.” A Lenten and pandemic perfect verse if I ever I read one!

In this update, we share our joys. Because of you, hope in a brighter tomorrow is the reality for hundreds of homeless families with children, youth, Veterans and our single neighbors. We share some of the afflictions our neighbors face and seek your prayers for the people we serve each day and for our staff and volunteers caring for them.

While just a glimpse of the ministry of which you are a part, *know none of it would be possible without you.* Thank you for sharing in our joys, giving us strength to be patient in the struggle and altering the course of people's lives through your intercessory prayer.

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Please join us in welcoming three new members to EUMA's Board of Directors. Each bring a wealth of experience and expertise and will be tremendous assets to our board.



**KEVIN HARPER** is an Administrator at Harding Elementary School. He is in his second year acting as Principal for K-2nd grades. He has many years of experience working in the Erie School District and the community as a whole. Kevin earned his Master's degree focusing on Educational Leadership and Administration, from Saint Joseph's University. He resides in Erie with Erin, his wife of over 20 years, and his children.



**SAMUEL B. MCGARVEY** is an Assistant Manager for Northwest Bank. Prior to working at the bank, he was part of the management team at Sam's Club for 6 years. Samuel grew up in the Erie area, went to Collegiate Academy and then to Arcadia University in Philadelphia. He has 2 dogs that he treats as if they were his own children and he loves to travel.



**ROBERTA PAUL** is a Commercial Credit Risk Officer with PNC Financial Services. Roberta is an Erie native. She is married to her high school sweetheart, Christopher Paul, and they have two adult children. Roberta loves spending time with her family, hiking, reading, baking, volunteering and spreading God's love through the Sonlight Puppet ministry of Lakewood UMC.

Visit our website for contact information:

**EUMA-Erie.org**



## NEWS AND UPDATES

**Our Way Home Gala** - In an effort to keep everyone safe, EUMA will not be having our annual gala in 2021. While we are disappointed we will not be celebrating with you in person, we will update and connect with you in other ways. Stay tuned!

**25th Annual Refuge Golf Tournament** will be held on Monday, June 21, 2021 at the Riverside Golf Course, 25437 Route 19 in Cambridge Springs. Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us. More information and registration coming soon!

## PRAYER REQUESTS

For the single Dad at The Refuge who is facing challenges as he is trying to parent alone and help his two children with online schooling.

For those staying at Our Neighbors' Place who suffer with mental illness and addiction.

For the youth in the Journey Home program and the Resident Assistant living at EUMA's Journey Home property.

For the weary EUMA staff and volunteers committed to walking alongside our neighbors experiencing a housing crisis – even as they face personal health and family issues of their own.

## OUR NEIGHBORS' PLACE - SEASON 9

On Wednesday, November 18th, EUMA's Our Neighbors' Place (ONP) opened for the first night of it's 9th winter season. A season like no other... as we faced unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19.

During a "normal" season, ONP is a community effort, primarily staffed by volunteers. It operates on a rotating basis among several downtown Erie churches every two weeks during the winter season.

This season, many of our faithful volunteers could not volunteer due to health and safety concerns. Additionally, several churches were unable to host the shelter at their site. Thanks to the unwavering commitment of Our Neighbors' Place coordinators, lots of prayer and funds provided by the community these challenges were met and adaptations made.

EUMA was blessed with the ability to hire several employees to staff Our Neighbors' Place and the Mental Health Association offered space to host the shelter this season!

Some additional changes include social distancing protocols put into place to keep guests healthy, limiting the number of guests, requiring guests call 814-SHELTER for a referral and only serving meals on Saturdays.

Our Neighbors' Place goal is to ensure everyone has a warm, safe place to sleep during Erie's winter season – and despite COVID-19 and all the challenges – we're grateful to be doing exactly that.

**The following data is based on 63 nights:**

**1434 bed nights (person in a cot/night)**

**121 unduplicated guests**

**93 unduplicated male guests**

**28 unduplicated female guests**

**19 - age of youngest guest**

**80 - age of oldest guest**



### STAFF SPOTLIGHT: OUR NEIGHBORS' PLACE

In the midst of all the changes, we want to thank Rob O'Connell for being the rock that held the shelter steady! He volunteered his time as the Our Neighbors' Place Coordinator.

Holly Evans has been the light of the shelter's staff! She has a genuine love for her job as she goes above and beyond her call to duty.

Katie Peppers has been dubbed the "Computer Guru" as she assists in administrative needs, as well as caring for guests.

Rich Welton has been a dedicated volunteer for years and was a huge blessing when he agreed to be hired on for the late night weekend shifts.

And an additional thank you to all the other EUMA employees that have volunteered themselves to pick up shifts at Our Neighbors' Place.

In the end, this season would not have been possible without the dedication of dozens of volunteers and staff!



# SPRING CLEANING? MOVING?

CONSIDER DONATING SOME OF YOUR EXTRA  
HOUSEHOLD ITEMS TO THE RAINBOW!

Rainbow Connection Thrift Store has a  
high demand for the following items:

Dressers  
Sofas  
Love Seats  
Microwaves  
Toasters  
Lamps

*If you need a pick up, please call the store at  
814-453-4080*

*or email [bboleatz@EUMA-Erie.org](mailto:bboleatz@EUMA-Erie.org)*

Last year, 1,748 Rainbow Connection  
Thrift store vouchers for free clothing and  
household items were used by families and  
individuals in need through 26 different  
agencies and churches in our community.



## SHELTER WISHLIST ITEMS

New Twin sheets  
New pillowcases  
New Bath towels  
New washcloths  
Laundry Detergent  
Clorox Wipes  
Sleeping Bags  
Mop and bucket  
Broom and dust pan  
Tall kitchen trash can  
Kitchen towels  
Pot holders  
Dish Rack  
Coffee Makers  
Toasters  
Microwaves

FOR A FULL LIST OF NEEDS:

### NEEDED ITEMS

*Donations can be dropped off  
directly at our ministry locations  
or to our administrative office.*



1033 East 26th Street  
Erie, PA 16504  
814-456-8073  
[www.EUMA-Erie.org](http://www.EUMA-Erie.org)

**THE REFUGE**  
HOMELESS SHELTER FOR FAMILIES WITH  
CHILDREN  
1027 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504  
814-454-6088

**RAPID REHOUSING**  
QUICKLY MOVING PEOPLE FROM HOMELESS  
TO HOME AND HELPING THEM STAY THERE  
1027 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504  
814-456-8073

**LIBERTY HOUSE**  
TRANSITIONAL SHELTER FOR HOMELESS  
VETERAN MEN  
550 W. 7th St. Erie, PA 16502  
814-874-3687

**RAINBOW CONNECTION THRIFT  
STORE**  
PROVIDING NECESSITIES TO THOSE IN NEED  
1516 Buffalo Rd. Erie, PA 16510  
814-453-4080

**PERMANENT HOUSING**  
PROVIDING LOW-INCOME PERMANENT  
HOUSING  
1033 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504  
814-456-8073

**HEALTHCARE FOR THE HOMELESS  
PARTNERSHIP**  
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1033 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504  
814-456-8073

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