



# THE FACES OF EUMA

FALL 2023

728 West 9th St. Erie, PA 16502 | [EUMA-Erie.org](http://EUMA-Erie.org)

**At the Erie Women’s Fund Summer Celebration, Kathy Stearns, Chair of the Grants Committee, presented a \$100,000 grant to EUMA (Erie United Methodist Alliance) for its Journey Home Project.**

This project strives to make homelessness rare by keeping emancipated youth who have aged out of the foster system out of the homeless system. The grant will support the necessary rehabilitation of an eleven-unit anchor building in Erie’s West Bayfront Community. This building is home to a supportive living community that fosters stability and independence with the help of resident assistants who provide safety and security.

"We are thrilled to support EUMA in their work to reduce homelessness in our community, especially for such a vulnerable population," said Lauren Bauer, Chair of the Erie Women's Fund (EWF). "Grant making is the heart of what we do, and this year's major grant is a further testament to the power of collective giving."

When did you become an adult?  
They are adults and are expected to live independently when they turn 18 and age out of the foster care system. For too many, they instantly lose access to nearly every form of support that they've become used to.

That’s why nearly 5,000 will enter the homeless system and suicide is the leading cause of death for unaccompanied homeless youth. Nearly 6,000 will have justice involvement and half will lose custody of their children.

The most effective way of ending homelessness, improving health outcomes and strengthening our community for all is to keep people OUT of the homeless system.

In partnership with Bethesda Lutheran Services, Family Services of

NWPA, and faithful EUMA donors like you; we commit to ending homelessness for youth aging out of foster care.

In a letter of support EUMA’s project proposal to the Erie Women’s Fund, Andrew one of the youth in Journey Home wrote!

“After aging out of the foster care program, I found myself in some really deep waters and tough times. The opportunity that EUMA’s Journey Home program offered was a second chance. When I felt severely depressed, I contacted my EUMA resident assistant, Mark. He always showed up for me, served as a mentor and pushes me to do better every single day. Mark and the staff at EUMA, they give me hope.”

Last night 13 youth who aged out of foster care were in an EUMA apartment. They were supported by EUMA staff and volunteers committed to helping them transition to adulthood and thanks to you, in a building that will have a new roof, soffit, downspouts, exterior security lighting and a place to meet with their supportive services caseworkers, friends and family in a renovated commercial location and on a trajectory driven by hope in a brighter tomorrow.





Update from the CEO

# OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

that ends their homelessness once and for all!

Because of you, a single Mom and her five children flee domestic violence, are sheltered and on a pathway to permanent housing. A single Veteran Dad and his son are permanently housed in an EUMA apartment. An 18-year-old young woman who aged out of foster care is safe, supported and NOT in the homeless system and in all cases, those we have encountered have experienced the love and grace of Jesus.

As we enter the holiday season, a time of giving thanks – we both pause and say, “thank you,” and we invite you to say, “YES!” to ending homelessness during this season of giving. Please hang the attached flyer on a local community

board or storefront. To find out how you can join the cause, visit your EUMA online at EUMA-Erie.org. Truly, by the way you pray, give and engage

with your EUMA, you really are moving our neighbors experiencing a housing crisis from homeless to HOME -from hopeless to HOPE in a brighter tomorrow! Thank you.



As you can see, this newsletter is all about you! We pause and celebrate the time, talent and treasure you have invested in your EUMA.

For 135 years, people just like you have said, "Yes!" to helping Veterans in greatest need. Said, "Yes!" to welcoming those with severe mental illness out of the cold. Said, "Yes!" to keeping youth out of the homeless system. Said, "Yes!" to single Moms and single Dads as they are welcomed onto a pathway to permanent housing

## HIGHLIGHTED VOLUNTEERS

*We praise God when we think of Chris and Gail Detar*

### 1. How long have you been serving at EUMA?

We've been serving at EUMA since 2013 together and are monthly donors to the EUMA Heart to Heart Program which we feel passionate about.

### 2. What is it about the mission that you feel most passionate about?

The service to a highly vulnerable and voiceless population; staff and volunteers show Jesus' love most passionately to his broken sisters and brothers here, in Northwest PA.

### 3. What volunteer positions have you held at EUMA?

We've assisted with multiple projects such as:

- Renovating a bathroom at The Refuge several years ago.
- We've helped repair the old ramp in the back of The Refuge.

- Organized team Asbury's Christmas gifts for Hope House families for several years.
- Ride for The Refuge team organizers for Team Asbury Erie.
- Rode many years but now help with registration.
- Served as Our Neighbors' Place (ONP) Coordinators for area United Methodist Churches since 2016. (Served 4 of the 20 weeks in a typical shelter season).

### 4. Share a success story or something that makes you feel good about serving homelessness.

Jerry: We met him as a guest of ONP and assisted his move to an apartment. He has thrived there and volunteers weekly at ONP and Sunday Supper ministries. He moved from homelessness to home and now gives back!



*We ♥ our Volunteers*

### 5. Anything else that would be great to recruit or share with new volunteers?

In a society where many people work to assist homeless people, the staff and volunteers of EUMA stand out for their commitment to breaking down the barriers and actively pressing people forward to secure homes



# MAEVE MEMORIAL RUN 2023: honoring with every step

The Annual Maeve Memorial Run took place on July 22nd and is more than just a race; it's an opportunity to celebrate the legacy of Melissa and Jonathon Miller's daughter Maeve. Whether you knew the Millers personally or simply wanted to show your support, we extend a thank you to those who ran in such a way to win the prize!

The Annual Maeve Memorial Run is hosted by the Maeve Gives Corporation, a local non-profit created by the Miller family. The memorial run is open to people of all ages and fitness levels, from seasoned runners to beginners!

Proceeds went to EUMA to make homelessness, rare, brief, and one-time as Jesus would. Through registrations, donations, and a match from Rossbacher Insurance Group - Eades Agency, \$11,000 was raised and donated to EUMA.



**The 24th Annual Ride for The Refuge** took place on September 4th at Shades Beach. This fun event for experienced and new bikers and is open to everyone. It's not about the distance you ride; it's about coming together as a community to end homelessness for families with children.

We are pleased to announce that you and 128 riders raised approximately \$15,000. Thank you to all our volunteers and corporate sponsors for making this such a success! Because of you 162 people, including 95 children were sheltered and welcomed onto a pathway to permanent housing.



Thank you for your support!



## ERIE GIVES

The best campaign since the founding of EUMA!

We are thrilled to share some incredible news with you - thanks to your unwavering support, you not only met but surpassed our goal of \$135,000 during Erie Gives 2023! After the pro-rated match from Erie Community Foundation you raised a total of \$149,000—this is a \$50,000 increase! 415 Generous donors participated and EUMA was 9th out of 498 nonprofits through Erie Gives and most importantly the youth whose lives you have helped, thank you. Together we really are ending homelessness for youth aging out of foster care.



### 27TH ANNUAL REFUGE GOLF TOURNAMENT: Thank You for Making This Golf Outing a Hole-in-One!

Thank you to each and every one of you for making our recent golf outing our best yet! We'd also like to extend our thanks to our corporate sponsors, donors, and volunteers. Your contributions ensured that our outing was not only enjoyable but also helped us raise approximately \$27,000 (104% increase from last year) which directly benefits the 34 families at The Refuge to date. Please save the date for June 17, 2024.



# NEW STAFF

## Let us introduce the new staff!

Meet the newest trailblazers in Ending Homelessness...

Welcome, **Katherine (Katie) Wickert** as EUMA's first Chief Program Officer. With experience in adult probation and city government, most recently as the assistant city manager at The



Katie Wickert

City of Meadville, Katie brings a great deal of experience and passion to end homelessness in NWP.A.

While at Allegheny College, Katie was a Nancy Sheridan Scholar for three consecutive years and serves as Linesville Borough Council President Pro Tempore and Crawford Area Young Chamber of Commerce President. A PA State Association of Borough's Certified Borough Official, Katie has already brought her extensive rolodex and grant writing acumen to bear on behalf of EUMA. Welcome Katie at: [KWickert@EUMA-Erie.org](mailto:KWickert@EUMA-Erie.org)

Please also join me in welcoming **Erika DePalma**, Director of Development and Marketing. She will focus on growing the hearts of givers through fundraising and event planning.

This member of Grace United Methodist Church in Albion said, "God molded me to do this work. I am excited to join EUMA as we play a crucial role in ending homelessness in NWP.A."



Erika DePalma

Erika is a Penn West University graduate from which she earned a BS in Strategic Communication, minor in leadership studies, and an MA in Communication Managerial Leadership. She received the Dr. Joseph Laythe Award recognizing humanitarians in the local community and was chosen as the graduate commencement speaker.

Welcome Erika at: [EDePalma@EUMA-Erie.org](mailto:EDePalma@EUMA-Erie.org).

## Thank you to all of our sponsors!

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

