



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

SUMMER NEWSLETTER  
2021

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

## SHAWNDA'S STORY

*"The Lord provides! Just ask and he will send his people!"*

**"God was working on me" Shawnda shared. "I got fed up - bad relationships, negativity – it wasn't working and I knew I needed to try something else. I decided to put my faith in God."**

Shawnda worked at Walmart for 5 years – before things began to spiral downward. She worked her way up to Dept. Manager, but left her job for personal reasons. And due to many negative circumstances, she ended up losing everything and sleeping in her car, while her kids stayed with relatives.

Shawnda came to the Refuge in the Fall of 2018 and stayed through Christmas. She remembers that Christmas well. She didn't have any money for gifts for her 2 teenagers and knew they'd be expecting something. "The Lord provided!" Shawnda explained. The staff at The Refuge told her "You don't need to buy anything for Christmas – we've got you covered." She was so grateful – her kids received gifts.

After staying at The Refuge for a month, EUMA's Rapid Re-housing team helped her find an apartment, provided rental assistance, housing case management services, and free vouchers to use at the Rainbow

Connection Thrift Store. Shawnda and her kids have now been in that same apartment for over two years.

When Shawnda and her kids moved into their own apartment they had nothing. She remembers what a blessing it was to have vouchers to use at The Rainbow Connection – where they were able to get furniture for their apartment and household items.

"Vouchers are so important – for people who don't have anything" Shawnda says. "The Rainbow helps so many people. It's a big need in our community. Some people don't even have beds for their kids and other things they need."

**It was EUMA's Rapid Rehousing team that approached Shawnda about an opportunity to work at EUMA's Rainbow Connection Thrift Store.** Shawnda jumped at the opportunity and has been working at The Rainbow ever since. She is now able to help others who are in need through the voucher program. **In fact, in June of 2021, she was promoted to Assistant Store Manager.** Bryan Boleratz, Rainbow Con-

nection Thrift Store manager, says she is a tremendous asset.

"I love working at Rainbow. Best thing about it are the other employees, relaxed environment and the fact that I feel appreciated. Bryan is very good at acknowledging and appreciating everyone for the work they do."

When asked what advice Shawnda would offer to others who find themselves in her situation. She shares so much wisdom – "Pray and ask God for help. He will send His people to help you. Give it to Him, Trust His Outcomes. Be patient – keep walking with the Lord."

As for future goals, Shawnda hopes to own a home of her own someday. She said when we see her shaking the keys to the house she bought – she will give God all the glory!



LEARN HOW YOU  
CAN HELP END  
HOMELESSNESS

[www.EUMA-Erie.org](http://www.EUMA-Erie.org)

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Visit our website for contact  
information:

[EUMA-Erie.org](http://EUMA-Erie.org)



## A MESSAGE FROM KURT

Did you know you are part of God's plan - plans for good and not for evil - plans to give our neighbors experiencing a housing crisis a good future - one characterized by hope in a brighter tomorrow? You really are!

Each day, because of the way you pray, give and engage with EUMA, single Mom's like Shawnda are moving from homeless to HOME through EUMA's The Refuge and My Way Home rapid re-housing! You make it possible for youth, seniors and those with disabilities to get back into the workforce that helps to make homelessness rare, brief and one-time through EUMA's Rainbow Connection Thrift Store.

Please PRAY for those experiencing a housing crisis and the staff and volunteers serving them. GIVE on Erie Gives Day. And ENGAGE with us by pedaling for a purpose for EUMA's 22 annual Ride for the Refuge. Together, we really are ending homelessness right here in NW Pennsylvania!

### *EUMA's 22nd Annual*

## RIDE FOR THE REFUGE

*Pedal for a Purpose*  
2021

Please join us for EUMA's Virtual Ride for The Refuge!

During the month of September, we are challenging riders to raise money to end homelessness for families with children at EUMA's The Refuge Homeless Shelter.

You choose when, where and how long your ride will be. You can ride alone or gather a team to ride together.

EUMA's 2020 virtual Ride was very successful! Here are some ideas from last year's riders:

"I launched my Ride by riding my bike into worship yesterday at Stone UMC! I'm pledging to ride 150 miles in September- raising at least \$250." - Rev. Sarah Daniels Roncolato, Stone Riders Team

"We enjoyed a nice, 23+ mile ride between Union City and Canadohta Lake, with an ice cream stop along the way. It was a beautiful day for a bike ride!"

- Yard Family, AREA Team

For more information and registration, please visit [EUMA-Erie.org/ News and Events](http://EUMA-Erie.org/NewsandEvents).

\* Months ago, when planning for the event, the decision was made to keep the Ride virtual for 2021 due to the pandemic.





## Donate to EUMA through Erie Gives!

- Tuesday, August 10, 2021 from 8 AM to 8 PM at [www.ErieGives.org](http://www.ErieGives.org)
- \$25 minimum donation; no max!
- Checks accepted until 8/9/2021 \*must be accompanied with a Check Contribution Form (available at [www.EUMA-Erie.org](http://www.EUMA-Erie.org))

Learn more about EUMA and this prorated matching gift opportunity at [www.EUMA-Erie.org](http://www.EUMA-Erie.org)

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray that EUMA's staffing needs are filled with missionally aligned and compassionate individuals.

Several staff members have been experiencing health issues. Please pray for healing and rest.

Please pray for the children at The Refuge during summer vacation.

Please pray for the youth in EUMA's Journey Home as they face challenges with living on their own.

## THE RAINBOW CONNECTION THRIFT STORE - BRIDGING COMMUNITIES

"There is a very wide spectrum of people [that work or volunteer here], from all walks of life. Some may have physical disabilities, some may have mental ones, some are non-English speaking or at least not their first language, some struggle with reliable child-care, some struggle with reliable transportation, some don't have a cell phone so communication is a challenge outside of work, etc. We have ranged from 17 years old up to the early 80s – which obviously can be quite challenging. We have had all of the letters of the LGBTQ+ community represented in my short tenure. We've had a number of different ethnicities. We've had city, rural, suburbs, and everything in between. I think it's absolutely beautiful to have such a diverse crew – truly living up to our Rainbow name!" said Bryan Boleratz, Director of Social Enterprise.



Here are a few of the partnered programs that provide The Rainbow with volunteers and employees:

**PA CareerLink Youth Readiness Program**– youth experiencing barriers get placed to help learn soft skills, build their resume, and prepare them for gainful employment.

**Bethesda Lutheran Services**– youth aging out of foster care required to volunteer at least 2x per week while being housed through their program.

**EUMA's Rapid Rehousing**– Welcoming clients to earn income while searching for gainful employment to ensure they are able to pay their rent and successfully remain housed.

**PA Parole**– individuals convicted of crimes and subsequently sentenced to complete a certain amount of community service.



## A HUGE thank you for the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community

As of June 30, 2021 EUMA's walkers and supporters have exceeded our fundraising goal by raising \$10,367 through the Highmark Walk!

**GECAC & Pathstone Senior Aide Programs**– both agencies work with senior citizens who face employment barriers.

**Various Workman's Comp programs**– there are several agencies that work with companies who have an employee out on workman's comp due to an injury.



# IRA ROLLOVERS

## SAVING TAXES AND ENDING HOMELESSNESS

If you are 70.5 years of age or older, and have a traditional IRA – you likely know about the IRS required minimum distribution – which requires you to withdraw a calculated amount annually from your IRA. At the time of withdrawal, you pay income tax on the amount withdrawn. For many, the taxes can be significant.

By making an IRA rollover gift to EUMA, you can help end homelessness in our community. Additionally, you benefit from not having to pay the tax on the donated rollover amount.

If you are 70.5 or older - you can transfer funds from your IRA directly to a qualified charity. Giving to EUMA in this way can significantly lower your taxes while providing a substantial gift to EUMA.

Check with your financial advisor to be sure this way of giving is right for you. If you have any questions, please email Margueritta Estes, Director of Development at [MEstes@EUMA-Erie.org](mailto:MEstes@EUMA-Erie.org) or call 814-456-8073, ext. 106.

# RAINBOW WISHLIST

If you are able to consistently volunteer on a weekly basis, WE NEED YOU!

We would love to work with and train you for various projects!

Contact Bryan Boleratz  
[BBoleratz@EUMA-Erie.org](mailto:BBoleratz@EUMA-Erie.org)

## SHELTER WISHLIST

New Bath towels  
New washcloths  
Laundry Detergent  
Clorox Wipes  
Paper Towels  
Magic Erasers  
Air Fresheners  
Tissues  
Mop and bucket  
Broom and dust pan  
Tall kitchen trash can  
Kitchen towels  
Pot holders  
Dish Rack

*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**  
RAPIDLY MOVING PEOPLE FROM HOMELESS TO HOME AND HELPING THEM STAY THERE  
1027 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504  
814-454-6088

**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**  
INTEGRATING HOUSING AND HEALTHCARE  
1033 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504  
814-456-8073

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