



Rachel's Light

I am often asked what Rachel's Light means to me, followed up with *Who?* And, *What are we?* As these can be pretty deep questions to answer, I'm reminded of the gracious support surrounding all those around me, and in this spirit, I have the pleasure of sharing our updated vision statement with all of you. It states, "Restoring hope and ending homelessness one woman at a time."

Shortly after we opened our doors there was a common theme that continued to repeat itself. We would see that many of the women and their children would frequently be in and out of different shelters, unable to find and/or sustain a permanent housing solution. We have worked diligently in creating programming to support our vision, and most importantly, end the cycle of homelessness. Programming includes and is not limited to, identifying different and unique barriers, connecting women to community resources, and becoming a support system to every person that enters our doors.

We have established an atmosphere of love and compassion at Rachel's Light, and much of this is credited to our dedicated employees. They are more than people who work here, they are family. Further, we're supported by our board which is a working board, going above and beyond because they believe in our cause, in us, and are passionately fulfilling our mission through their discussions, decisions, talents and time.



Amanda Starks

Our work allows us to experience crossroads with people as they overcome past behaviors and adversities and start making decisions that feel uncomfortable. These are challenging circumstances to work through, yet as we advocate alongside the women fighting through undesirable challenges, we're able to see the victories, some are so small, but they're wins all the same. And we're here for the wins!

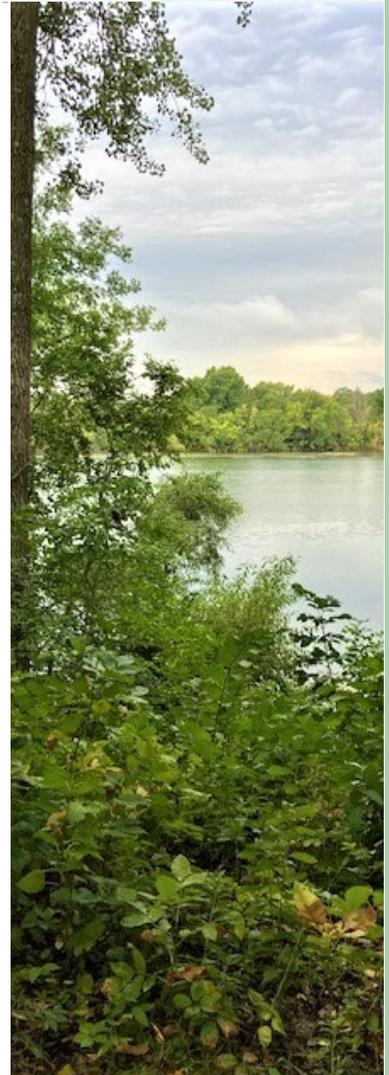
When a person experiences housing insecurity, they often have one or more other areas in their life that have also faltered; perhaps they're in a legal or custody conflict or worse, have even had their rights terminated with their children. We have been there to guide women as they work to get healthy so they're able to reunite with their child, overcome a past struggle with addiction, or clear a prior eviction. Our progress to see the wins wouldn't advance at the speed and frequency to which we've all become accustomed without the community we have in all of you. We celebrate the women who have said no to addiction and yes to a new journey. For the children who are so in love with their mother and serve as their biggest cheerleaders. And for *all* the children who are strong, resilient, and brave. They are the true inspiration! We stand with the women who are all so brave and deserving, and finally said ENOUGH to the toxic/abusive relationships that devoured their lives. For the women who are grieving the losses of the past, a dismantled family, and the dreams they never thought they would have to let go of, we see the wounded and sit with them. For all who are struggling with mental illness and exhaustion, we see you and recognize the need for supportive services. The list goes on and on, but our hearts are bigger, our understanding for situations is deeper, and our love, much stronger. Everyone has a unique purpose and all who have entered our home once as visitor, has become a victor, not victim, over their circumstances.

Your support drives us do the work that is carried out each day. Together, we can and will make a lasting impact in the lives of women and children.

As always, thank you for your continued support in bringing the homeless home.

Love and Blessings,

Amanda Starks



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SPECIAL QUOTE

"The point is not to pay back kindness but to pass it on"

Julia Alvarez

A PLACE FOR EVERYONE... JOIN RACHEL'S LIGHT!

Volunteer with Rachel's Light

Join our board:

- Communication Coordinators (2)
- Fundraising/Event Coordinator

We are also seeking:

- Part-Time Volunteer Coordinator
- A videographer (can be a student/intern)

These positions will take approximately 10 hours per month.

All the job descriptions are posted on our [Face-book page](#), or if you prefer, please reach out to

volunteer4rachelslight@gmail.com.

Mentor with Rachel's Light

Are you interested in making an impact in a woman's life?

- Give guidance, support and inspiration to our guests.
- Share your talents, knowledge, life lessons and patience to someone in need.
- This opportunity will take about one hour/week. Training and support are provided. Start making an impact today! Contact Liz Keck 507.456.8802



Raising Awareness: Homelessness & Domestic Violence Awareness Months



According to the Minnesota Housing Partnership, there are critical needs for housing, especially low-income renters in our area.

- Steele County has one of the lowest ratios of affordable units per 100 renter households; at 64%.
- From 2000-2019, median renter income decreased in 60% of counties in the Southern region of MN. Median rent in Steele County in 2000 was \$697 and in 2019 it was \$770 (increase of 10%). It has continued to increase with the soaring cost of housing.
- 58% of homeless adults in Minnesota have experienced physical or sexual violence; women and people who identify as LGBTQIA+ experience this violence at higher rates (Wilder Research, 2018)

A majority of homeless adults have health conditions which impact their lives.

- 81% - chronic physical health condition
- 57% - serious mental illness
- 64% - substance use disorder

33.9% of Minnesota women and 25.1% of Minnesota men experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner rape, and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes. In 2021, 26 Minnesotans lost their lives to intimate partner violence, according to [Violence Free Minnesota's 2021 Homicide Report](#).

[A New Approach to Domestic Violence](#). Doctors and other healthcare providers can take the lead in spotting domestic violence and intervening before it worsens.

More information on page 5



RACHEL'S LIGHT
Open Table Event

4:00 – 7:00 PM
Sunday ■ 11.13.22

Eat In | Take Out

Join us for soup selections,
bread, coffee & cookie

Trinity Church Fellowship
Hall ■ 609 Lincoln Ave S
Owatonna MN

PLEASE JOIN US!

11.13.2022



Rachel's Light

OUR STORY

In September of 2019, Rachel's Light opened its doors and arms to women and their children seeking a better life. While we've helped so many families, we've gained so much more with each home secured, with each family strengthened, and with the generous efforts that guests have shown by simply returning to the house and community to give back. Now, we are asking for your support and to share in a community eat-in and take out meal on Sunday, Nov. 13 from 4-7 PM at Trinity Church for our 4th annual event.

*Handmade Pottery available
while supplies last*

Cash or check
freewill donation



NEW!
Donate securely

VANCO

www.rachelslight.com

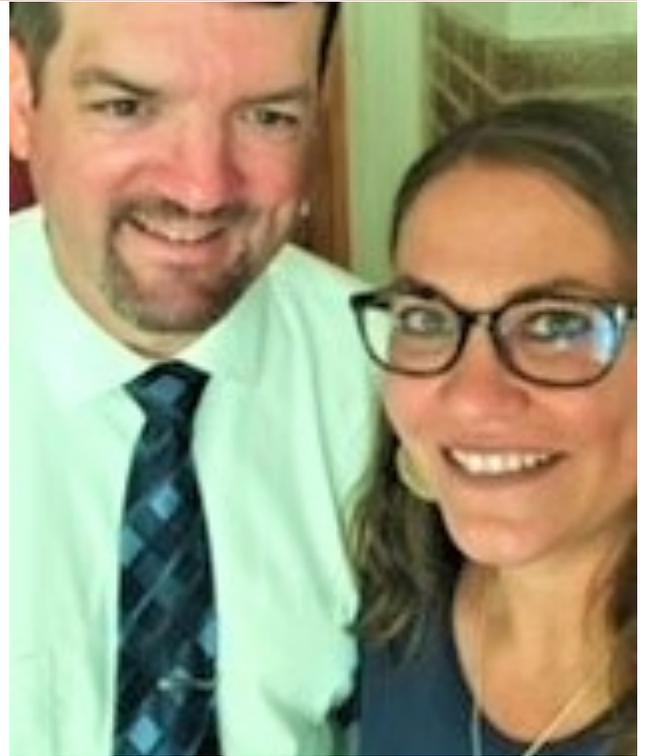
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Jen Sheehan

THANK YOU, Jen, for your gracious dedication to our Rachel's Light community. You positively impact everyone around you. If you've been to our Open Table Event, you've likely seen Jen in action. Her highly organized, inclusive way of engaging everyone has resulted in wonderfully executed events.

As Jen is preparing for our Open Table Event, she had time to share some insights with the Rachel's Light community. We're fortunate to have long-standing volunteers like Jen. They are the reason why our efforts are successful, and fun!

Tell us about your background, including how long you've been volunteering Rachel's Light:

As a licensed social worker, I have had the privilege during my career to walk alongside many community members, supporting and empowering them along the way. Having a resource in our community that supports women and children who are experiencing homelessness is important to me, so it was important for me to figure out a way to help Rachel's Light fulfill its mission. I started volunteering with Rachel's Light in early 2019 as a member of the Fundraising Committee. I have helped with many fundraising efforts, but my focus is mostly on planning the Open Table Event.



Jen and her husband, Jason

Share a memorable moment with our community around volunteering:

As a child, I used to love volunteering in my church and community in various ways. I was able to learn at an early age that I got so much more from volunteering than I gave. I used to say "I wish I could volunteer for a living."

What is the most rewarding part about your work?

I have seen firsthand how hard the staff and volunteer board members have worked to start and maintain Rachel's Light. They are truly unsung heroes! From the beginning, the commitment they have shown is remarkable. I am also inspired by the success stories that have come from the house. I know that running Rachel's Light in a way that is so focused on the future success of its guests comes at a price. It is rewarding to see the community continue to step up to support this beautiful organization.

What other things are important to add?

One important lesson I've learned about giving and volunteering is to really identify whose need I am filling. I think we often want to do things that feel good to us, but may not ultimately be the need of the person, organization, or community. One example of this is that it feels so good to give physical items (like paper towels, diapers, etc.). However, if that is not the actual need, it defeats the purpose, which no one wants! So I've learned to stop, ask, and listen for what the need is - whether that is the gift of time, money, or physical items.

What advice would you share with others, or perhaps a golden nugget of wisdom that was shared with you, that led to seeking a volunteer opportunity?

Our entire community benefits from lifting others up. Everyone has a different gift. Find a way, no matter how big or how small, that works for your life to share your gifts.



THANK YOU to the following organizations for supporting us!





OCTOBER WISH LIST Many generous supporters have asked how to best support Rachel's Light? The list below are general items we use to keep our house running smoothly. Items in bold indicate higher priority items, or something we're currently out of, and as always, *Thanks for asking!*

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| Postage Stamps | Affresh cleaner for washing machine | Full size body lotions/body wash |
| Printer Ink Cartridges: #952 Color/#952xl black | Clorox wipes | Baby wipes |
| Softener Salt | Pillows (New) | Diapers (sizes 3,4,5) |
| Bleach | Gift Cards (Fleet Farm, Walmart, Target) | Depends size Medium |
| Clear totes w/lids (small) | Gas Gift Cards (Kwik Trip) | Shower curtains (new) |
| Tylenol Cold & Flu (adults/kids) | Toilet Paper | 13-gallon trash cans (new) & garbage bags |
| Cough Medicine (adults/kids) | Paper Towels | Toilet bowl cleaner |
| Towels (new) | AAA batteries | Floor cleaner |
| Softener Salt | Maxi pads w/wings overnight protection XL | Copy paper |
| Dish soap | Cork board (new) | Vacuum (new) |
| Fitted Mattress Covers (new) | 3 M strips | |

Please email our donation coordinator to arrange for donations, at donate2rachelslight@gmail.com



Housing & Domestic Violence

Understanding the Intersections

Domestic & sexual violence are leading causes of homelessness for women and children. The need for safe and affordable housing is one of the most pressing concerns for survivors of violence and abuse. Many survivors face unique barriers to accessing shelter and affordable housing due to the power and control dynamics involved in abuse and the economic and trauma impacts that result. Barriers are often exacerbated for those most marginalized in our society and with the least access to resources, including many survivors of color, Native Americans, immigrants, those living in poverty and in geographic isolation, formerly incarcerated survivors, and survivors with disabilities. System factors also contribute to discrimination and can create further challenges.

-National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
vawnet.org



DONATE TODAY!

Rachel's Light appreciates any and all contributions. Monetary donations help with rent, utilities and staffing costs.

MAIL: PO BOX 118 OWATONNA MN 55060
ONLINE: RACHELSLIGHT.COM (CLICK ON DONATE WITH VANCO)
OR SCAN QR CODE:

