



Rachel's Light

Greetings!

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer temps and some much-needed sunshine. When June rolls around I'm always in disbelief that we are halfway through another year. This July will be my fourth year with Rachel's Light. I'll never forget being handed the keys to the house and walking the empty hallways praying over each empty bedroom. Reflecting on this, I can't help but think about all the growth we have had as an organization since the day we opened our doors. In this newsletter, I'd like to share some testimonies of residents that have recently moved out.

One morning a woman came into my office crying. I asked her what was wrong and she looked at me and said, "I got the apartment!" Rewind back to the previous November, she was sitting at the table with a professional. I walked by and heard her say, "Going to jail is probably my best option right now- if I go to treatment and drug court, I won't have time to work and I will be homeless again." I looked at her and said, "No you won't." Two weeks later at her court hearing, she agreed to put in the time and work to avoid jail and stay at the house. Four months later, after much hard work, tears, and incredible determination she graduated from substance use treatment and is now living in her very own place. When she moved out, she said to me- "When I came here, I felt like I was in a dark tunnel. I literally wanted to stand in front of a train, but now I see the light and it's so beautiful Amanda."



Amanda Starks

Experiencing homelessness for more than three years, with an adorable, autistic eight year old son (who quickly became our office assistant), another guest reminded us how devastating homelessness can be. They came to Rachel's Light without any health care, identification, support system, and the list continued. With baby steps, hand in hand, we worked on the list to accomplish the necessary things needed to gain housing. When I handed her an apartment applica-

tion, she looked at me like I was crazy and said, "my history", I reminded her that her history is just that, history! After four months of being with us she was accepted into her very own apartment. Seeing the tears in her eyes telling her son with such excitement that they will have a new place and that he can stay at his current school is a moment that I will never forget.

Recently our board voted in a new member to be our Event Coordinator. This woman was a resident at Rachel's Light a year and a half ago, and now shares her incredible story to crowds of people on a regular basis. She is a living example of using her story and journey to give back and serve others. The evening she was voted in she looked across at me with tears and said, "This moment is surreal, talk about full circle."

Women are strong and resilient, and while I've only written about a few who embody this, there are more that inspire us every day. Seeing women continue to say this is not my story anymore, my past circumstances WILL NOT define me, inspire and motivate us at Rachel's Light. To be able to work with motivated women and their children, who are looking up to them, is an honor.

We are able to do the work that we do because of our supportive community. It is because of you and your belief in us that we can carry out our mission, so these life-changing testimonies can be told.

As always thank you to all who support us, together we are truly stronger.

Love and blessings,

Amanda Starks



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SPECIAL QUOTE

"Living is the art of getting used to what we didn't expect."

Eleanor C. Wood

Expand Your Skills—Network—VOLUNTEER!

Are you looking for a place to surround yourself with like-minded people who are positive influences in the community? If yes, then we'd love to tell you more about our volunteer opportunities at Rachel's Light. Whether you have one hour or one day per month, we have a flexible capacity to fit your likes and more importantly, your schedule.

We're looking for people who are committed to themselves, their community, and want to help others.

Email volunteer4rachelslight@gmail.com



WE have NEW T-SHIRTS! They available for purchase through this link at [Court Sports](#) (XS-4X)!

SHOP FOR A CAUSE!?



Off Like a Kite Boutique in Medford, MN will be hosting a fundraiser on Thursday, September 21, 2023 from 4-7 PM where 20% of all sales proceeds will go directly to Rachel's Light! And it's easy...all you have to do is **SHOP!**

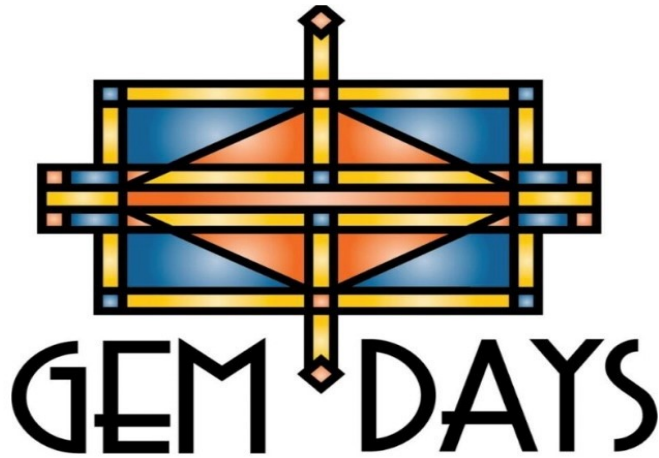
Off Like a Kite Boutique in the Medford Mall is a local shop offering designer handbags, clothing, shoes, jewelry, home décor and children's garments. And, there's more...enjoy mocktails and appetizers while you browse.

Thank you to Susan and her staff for their willingness to provide to Rachel's Light and the community.



UPCOMING EVENTS...COME AND SEE US!

JULY 20 — 22, 2023



Come see us during **Gem Days** in Central Park-downtown Owatonna—Friday at 10 AM! We will have games, painting and more for the kids!

SAVE THE DATE!

THURSDAY | September 21 | 2023

Off Like a Kite Boutique

Shop for a Cause!

4:00 PM—7:00 PM



Steele County Fair 2023!

COME SEE US IN THE FOUR SEASONS BUILDING!

Friday, August 18, 2023

4:00—7:00 PM!

Learn more about Rachel's Light & how you can make a difference!

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED IN 2023

**Steele
County
Free Fair**



BOARD MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT: Deanna Ripka and Beverly Bremer

We're shining the brightest of lights on our board members; Deanna Ripka and Beverly Bremer. Deanna serves as the board chair president and Beverly as the vice chair. We're so blessed to have this duo leading Rachel's Light.

In recognizing our board members, we asked them why they decided to join the Rachel's Light Board?

—DEANNA RIPKA—

When I was working towards my bachelors degree in social work, I volunteered and completed a field experience at the previous shelter, Lily Sparrow. I got to know many of the women who lived there and during this time I learned that many people who experience homelessness lack support in their lives and how drastically typical events or "bad luck" can negatively impact their situations. This really spoke to me and since then in some capacity I have either volunteered, or worked in positions where I could advocate or support people who have experienced homelessness. I also believe God was pushing me to serve and felt compelled to listen. When I learned the benefactors of Lily Sparrow were looking for a core group of people to continue to address the needs for a homeless shelter as they were planning to pass the torch, I reached out to be part of the group as I saw a need not only in Steele county, but in rural southern MN to provide safe, supportive housing to women and their children. I was able to be a member of this integral group that came together to form Rachel's Light. Since then, I've become president of the board. It has been fulfilling to see the vision of what the core members saw as needs come to fruition now at the shelter.



—BEVERLY BREMER—

When I first heard about Rachel's Light, I knew it was something I wanted to be a part of and was excited to be accepted onto the Board. I enjoy working with the great people that make up the team and I am glad of the little things I can do to make a difference. However, I am mostly glad that as a member of the board, I am able to support the people who truly make a difference everyday—Amanda and her staff. The women that come to Rachel's Light have been on a difficult journey, many of them with their children. To see the difference that being at Rachel's Light makes in their lives and knowing that I had even a small part in that is a wonderful feeling. I can't say enough how incredible Rachel's Light is and how fortunate I am to be a part of it.

THANK YOU to the following people and organizations for supporting us!

Gopher Sport

First Baptist Church

The Bush Foundation

Jolene Balvitsch

Christine Warehime





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.

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| Diapers (Sz 3,4,5) | 3M strips | Paper Towels |
| Bleach | Copy paper | Clorox Wipes |
| Printer Ink: #952 Color & #952 XL black | Affresh cleaner for washing machine | New Vacuum |
| Softener Salt | New pillows | Plastic hangers (adult) |
| Light Bulbs (Indoor) | New Towels | Twin sheets (new) |
| Small Clear Totes w/lids | Fitted mattress covers | Small garbage cans |
| Hand Soap | Shower Curtains (new) | Ziplock bags—all sizes |
| Laundry Soap | Gift Cards (Fleet Farm, Kwik Trip, Wal-mart, Target) | Cork board |
| 13 gallon trash cans new | Gas Gift Cards (Kwik Trip) | Postage Stamps |
| 13 gallon trash bags | Toilet Paper | Toilet bowl cleaner |
| Disinfectant Cleaner | | Kleenex |
| Floor Cleaner | | Deodorant |
| Size 11 closed-toe sandals | | |

FIND US ONLINE!

Rachel's Light is online.

Check us out!



WANTED!

Chair members for our board and **committee members** to help bring our activities to life! We have a spot for you. We are looking for:

- Communication coordinators (two people)
- Personnel Chair
- General volunteers for events

Email Rachel's Light:

volunteer4rachelslight@gmail.com



Rachel's Light appreciates any and all contributions. **MONETARY DONATIONS HELP WITH RENT, UTILITIES & STAFFING COSTS.**

MAIL: PO BOX 118 OWATONNA MN 55060

ONLINE: USE OUR SECURE ONLINE PORTAL ([SECURE.MYVANCO.COM](https://secure.myvanco.com))



THANK YOU!