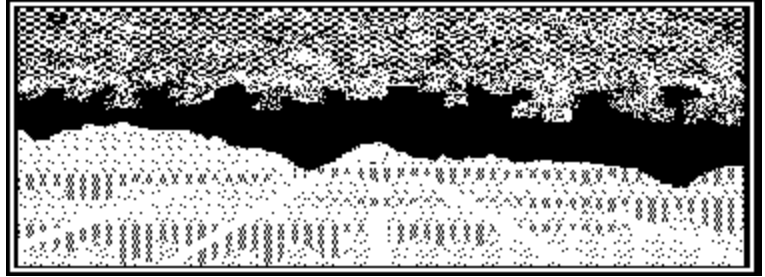


Against All Odds



A Collective Endeavor of Women Who Have Experienced Homelessness

Friendship House, Inc., Women's Ministry, 8th & Orange Sts., Wilmington, DE. 652-8033

ANGELS



Let me tell you about my understanding of angels. I'm a 35-year-old recovering addict with twenty years of active addiction

behind me, and going on two years clean. I've been through many difficulties in my lifetime - some brought on by myself and some not. I've always believed in the power of prayer, even when I had lost my faith. It seemed like whenever I was within inches of death, or just couldn't take it anymore - God's angels somehow brought me out of whatever I was in.

I have a strong belief in God's purpose for my life. I met my first angel when I was twenty-eight. She's an eighty-five year old woman who

believed in me when I was unable to believe in myself. Age was irrelevant between us, because angels know no age and can see our true souls for who we are. I used to pray for a way out of the tunnel of my life, not being able to see the way out for myself. The first thing I had to do was put down the drugs clouding my spiritual connection.

Once I did that I began to see more clearly the signs and hear messages that God has for me. A woman came into the drug treatment program I was in with one of the graduates from a program of the Friendship House Ministries - and the feeling I had was unmistakable. There, in front of me, was the answer to my prayers.

The angels in my life now are these women who show me God's love through their caring and tireless work that they do for me and others like me. They see us for true spirits, and help us through faith and determination to fulfill

our potential. We are ultimately able to stand with confidence on our own as women who are living the true purpose of God's plan.

M. Lavoie

In June of 2005 we received a letter from the children of Ms. Newman's Class at McVey Elementary School in Newark, DE. We were so touched by the thoughtfulness of elementary students, that we wanted to share it with you.

Dear Friendship House,
Room 6 at McVey Elementary raised \$68.00 for the women and children who do not have homes and need help. We have been raising money for the Ronald McDonald House and for you by saving our spare change.

We hope it helps, because we care!

Sincerely
Ms. Newman's Class

Two Friends Move to Delaware

I moved to Delaware with my friend and daughter. We all thought it would be a good idea to start over. We both knew that we would have to stay in shelters, but we followed through with our plans to get a new life.

I'm thankful for the Friendship House because this is the place to go if you didn't have anywhere to go during the day. There are so many different things you can do there to help you accomplish your goals. You can use the phone, copier, make a resume, read the newspaper and there are staff that will help you with personal problems and they listen.

While we were adjusting to living in a new place and learning the way things work, we had a lot of set backs. The worst was when me and my daughter were in a car accident and my car was completely gone. I thank God we both came out of the accident okay. Even though all these things happened, I know that I can come here to make a change and do what I have to do to make a better life for all of us.

S.L. Wise

I was staying with my Grandmother, going to school because my mom felt like she had had enough and sent me there. My Grandmother took me in because I had one more

year before I graduated from High School. My Grandma one day decided that me and my mom were no longer welcomed in her house. So my mom moved in with a friend with no room for me. So off to the women's shelter I went.

Two days later I discovered my friend from High School lived up the street in her own house. She invited me to move in with her and her kid. I agreed to move in with my friend. I received a child support check from my Dad because I was still in school, but for whatever reason they cut my check off without any warning. This was my means of helping my friend with rent and my schooling. I was stranded, and to make matters worse, my friend's lease was almost up and she didn't have any where to go. She called her sisters in Delaware and asked if we could come and start over. Yes, was the answer but the sister could only help a little because each sister had kids and a family of their own.

I heard about Friendship House through the Mary Mother of Hope House I, where I was staying at the time. I've found jobs, used the phone and got water when I was thirsty in Friendship House. This place is really great. It's my light at the end of the tunnel and made my life better. God bless you and may heaven smile upon you.

T.C.T.

My Family & Jesus House

I started coming to Friendship House to get help with birth certificates for me and my children back in 2000. Due to some wrong decisions in my life, I have gone back and forth in a domestic violence situation. That at times has led to my incarceration and probation. I have left and gone back until I realized this last time nothing had changed. I went to Friendship House and they introduced me to Jesus House. Deacon Joe who runs Jesus House made my children and I feel so comfortable staying at his shelter. He had volunteers come out every night to fix us dinner, and just to sit with us. Deacon Joe and his family has done more than just provide us with shelter. I feel like a part of his family. Through the help of Jesus House and Friendship House I was able to obtain permanent housing for my family. I would like to thank everyone for what they've done for my family.

L.B.

Breaking the Cycle

I was born on April 11, 1965, but my life started April 13, 2004. This was the day that I was arrested and

charged with assault. Loneliness, anger and defiance were among my daily routine along with the jail life. I cried a lot but I never stopped praying. I learned to love and trust my only friend. Jesus is his name and I've cultivated a strong personal relationship with him. It wasn't easy at first because I had to let go of the past. See one thing that He's taught me is to forgive. Forgiving makes the load light and easy just like his yoke. Then I had to be humble. Being stripped of all your civilian freedom and rights leaves you open, open for the kill. If your heart is hard you will positively die. I wanted to live!! So I took the only thing that no judge, guard, warden, nobody could take from me and I ran with it. I praised my Father and talked to my Big Brother. I put everything on the table for them to carry because when I left Baylor Correction Center I was going to be a NEW person. My friend assured me that He would take care of me like no one ever did. I had to work out the things that made me stumble. That was the cycle that I've repeated all my life: DRUGS, THE LOSS OF MY KIDS AND MY MOM. I've learned to forgive my mom; I no longer take my kids for granted and I've attended the best parenting class while at WCI. Now I'm at the Plummer Center with 47 days left until I max out. I still fall short and I want to do my own thing but I

think of my friend and all that He went through just so I could love, live and learn about the BEST DAD anybody could ever have.

Today I know, believe, and live the passage that through Christ I can do all things. I pray that this story helps someone because it is a story that I've lived. I know my struggles are only a test of my faith and at times it gets real hard and crazy but I pray and hang on real tight. I've got the best friendship that anyone can have, but what makes it special is that you can have your very own personal relationship with my friend too...

A.

An Extended Thanks to our Volunteers

One of the reasons our Friendship House Women's Center runs well is our group of volunteers. Doris, Anne, Carmilla, Jane and Sue share their time with us to dial and answer phones; greet clients as they arrive; keep the coffee going; make copies and send faxes for clients; and sort the various donations of goods we receive. This is not always enjoyable work and sometimes can be challenging or tedious. We are blessed to have their patience, energy and good nature!

Making a New Life

L.B. has been a Women's Center client for three years. We have seen her go from living in a shelter to living in her own apartment. Here is her story:

I left my husband because he was emotionally abusive. He was controlling and wanted to know everywhere I went, made me talk loud on the phone so he could hear, wouldn't let me have anyone in the house unless I announced who it was. He also drank a lot and cursed. A hospital I went to for help in Pennsylvania got me into a shelter here in Delaware.

I am 56 years old and I have diabetes, claustrophobia, high blood pressure, and problems with my feet. I had trouble while staying in shelters because I had to be out during the day. Walking around was hard on me, but I did it so that I could make a life for myself. I applied for and received Social Security Disability, and a voucher for public housing.

Over the last three years, I have lived in two shelters, a transitional housing program, a studio apartment through the Wilmington Housing Authority, and now I am in a one bedroom apartment.

I appreciate all the help that I have received from agencies here in Delaware and I try to help out women who I meet who need it.

L.B.

TWO RULES

Rule number one: don't ever let anyone tell you dreams don't come true.

Rule number two: listen to your heart, then, listen to your heart!!

After working in Corporate America for over thirty-two years, I was afraid I was becoming hardened to the very things that mean the most in life, and that terrified me. I could almost walk past a person sleeping on a park bench and not wonder what turn in life caused them to be there, I could almost look at a woman board the bus from a motel with four kids and not ask her if she needed a hand, and biggest of all, I wrote a check when one of my most beloved volunteer efforts crossed paths with my JOB.

For a long time I was sad and my heart was sick. I knew

a very important chapter in my life was over and I was just hanging in there, for all the wrong reasons.

Then I remembered a few years ago I helped serve dinner to some guys that were pretty down on their luck and it was one of the best things I had ever done. Right then and there, that evening, I knew that one-day this was how I would make my living.

Now, being a product of the two largest employers in the state for so many years, how does one make the transition? I listened to my heart, that's how! I prayed for God to make clear to me his

will for my life, and then the courage to walk away, but that was the easy part.

The difficult part was having the patience to wait for the opportunity to come along. It did, in the form of Friendship House! In the few short months I have been in this community, I have learned not only about homeless people, but also about the homeless-ness inside me. My clients often unknowingly minister to me as much as I could ever minister to them.

I thank God everyday, because I'm not going to a job, I am going to my destiny!!

Pam Ray

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