

# HEART MATTERS



Issue 6 - 2026

Working to end homelessness, one life at a time. **CATHEDRAL CENTER**

## Knowing There is Dignity With Every Step

**FROM THE DESK OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – DONNA RONGHOLT-MIGAN**

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**A PARTNERSHIP OF:**  
Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist  
Friendship House



As we look forward to 2026, Cathedral Center has done a little looking back as well. We needed to take a look at what we have done well, what we can do better, what needs to change and how we can put all those pieces together. Because the way things are accomplished in the nonprofit world changes every year...sometimes every month. Too, the way to affect change for those in need of support is highly individualized and nuanced. So, we assess, ask questions of ourselves and create plans that adjust and help us grow. This is not just about which services we provide; it is also about how we provide these services. Our commitment in 2026 is this:

Provide services to pursue our mission, emphasizing **DIGNITY WITH EVERY STEP**.

Dignity is the inherent right of every person to be valued and respected, regardless of history and status.

Each step we take as a team and community contributes to our journey to serve others. We are committed to

improving, growing and embracing change because we know this is what it means to show compassion to the women and families who come to us for support.

We believe in the power of small moments and joy in lasting change.

Some things will change this year that will be smaller and perhaps not noticed by most, but will make a difference in how our women and families experience our support. Using words that are more trauma informed, for example, or helping our people better understand the choices they have. Other changes will be bigger. This includes the expansion of our Housing and Community Services Program. Thanks to the generosity of the Zilber Family Foundation and the trust that the United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County has placed in our team, Cathedral Center is adding a full time case manager to our community team and will be able to support up to an additional 55 families through longer term rent and case management support.

These changes, both big and small, are equal in their importance and impact.

I am asking you to stay involved and stay in touch, as we move forward providing mission focused services... recognizing there is **DIGNITY WITH EVERY STEP**.

Donna Rongholt-Migan  
Executive Director

**THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS!**



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## Urgent Needs

### We Are Currently in Need of:

- Travel Size Body Wash, Shampoo, and Conditioner
- Weekly Planners, Spiral Notebooks, and Colored Pencils
- Nutritional Drinks like Ensure
- Baby Crib Mattress and Sheets
- Diaper Rash Cream
- Wallets

Urgent Needs:



Child and Family Needs:



Community Case Management Needs:



Scan to purchase items off our Amazon Wishlists or email [volunteer@cathedral-center.org](mailto:volunteer@cathedral-center.org) to schedule a drop-off.

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## Moving Beyond Homelessness

### Emergency Shelter

The start of the year has been full of meaningful moments for the Case Management team at Cathedral Center's Emergency Shelter. Our Case Managers have always played a crucial role in walking alongside clients as they identify their goals and work toward stable housing. This past month, that partnership has led to measurable progress, that reminds us how impactful this work can be, as six of eight families and thirteen of twenty-six single adults staying at our Emergency Shelter have secured safe housing or obtained a housing voucher.



These outcomes reflect both the dedication of our Case Management team and the determination and resilience of our clients as they navigate complex systems and take meaningful steps toward stability. Michelle, our Case Manager Supervisor, describes the Case Management team as an "ongoing circle." Each member recognizes the strengths of others and contributes in ways that support the whole. Our Case Managers meet each individual wherever they are, honoring their experiences and recognizing that no two paths are the same. Every client we serve brings unique strengths, hopes, and goals, and our role is to walk alongside them as they pursue stability and self-defined success.

### Community Case Management

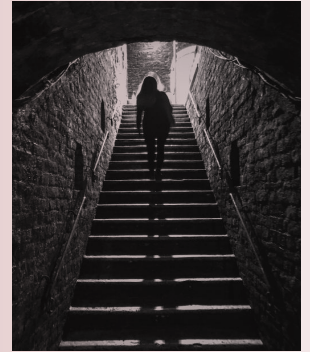
We are honored to share the story of Rhonda, an individual with incredible courage and resilience. When Rhonda was referred to our Community Case Management (CCM) program last spring, she was living with her family while recovering from the trauma of domestic violence she experienced from her former partner. Looking to secure her own housing while living with disabilities that impact her capacity to work, her Case Manager determined that she should apply for the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) for income-based housing – a process that can take a long time and does not guarantee housing securement.



Rhonda continued to move forward during this uncertain period, exploring part-time work opportunities with our Employment Services Coordinator. After two months, her name was pulled for a one-bedroom apartment. While Rhonda managed to use the last of her savings to pay her security deposit and first month's rent to meet HACM requirements, our CCM program supported her by paying her rent for four months. This allowed Rhonda the ability to build her savings, adjust to her new housing, and prepare for her future. Today, we are happy to share that Rhonda has maintained her housing, works jobs within her abilities through a staffing agency, and continues her journey with dignity and independence. She continues to do well, grounded in resilience, hope, and the belief that her future is full of possibility.

### Friendship House

After surviving an unimaginable trauma, human trafficking, during which she developed substance abuse issues as she was given drugs to remain compliant, Deidre now continues her healing journey in our Friendship House program.



One year ago, Deidre returned to the United States and relocated to a small Wisconsin town, where she utilized virtual trauma resources and substance abuse treatment. Through her unwavering strength, she was able to get clean and make significant progress in her substance abuse but continued to struggle with her trauma. Recognizing their limited resources, the shelter Deidre resided at connected with our Friendship House program to help transition her from their small town to Milwaukee so that so that she would have greater access to more resources with expertise specific to human trafficking trauma.

Since coming to our Friendship House program seven weeks ago, Deidre has demonstrated steady courage and resilience in her recovery process. Her priority remains making sufficient progress in her healing so she can return to the life she had prior to the trafficking and continue in her chosen profession of teaching. Through our program, Deidre has received support from Nikki, our Clinical Services Coordinator, who has assisted her with a smooth transition to local services, and Leticia, our new Employment Program Coordinator, who has worked helped Deidre recognize and create plans to achieve her employment goals. Both Nikki and Leticia are working with Deidre to ensure her employment and case management goals are complimentary of one another, are in alignment with Deidre's desires, and have a comfortable pacing so that they can realistically be achieved.

We are thrilled to share that Deidre has made significant progress on her journey as she continues to actively engage in therapeutic services with external providers as well as Nikki. Additionally, she secured a job as a part-time daycare worker while she and Leticia develop a plan for Deidre to transition her teaching credentials earned abroad to become a licensed teacher in Wisconsin. Deidre continues to utilize every resource available to her through our program and remains active in external opportunities as well.

Through the support of the Friendship House Board, we are so grateful to be given the opportunity to be a much-needed safe place for Deidre on her healing and recovery journey, while she continues building momentum to positively transform her life.

**\*Names and images have been changed in all stories to protect the identity of our clients.**



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# Embarking on a New Year of Empowerment

## REINFORCING DIGNITY, NO MATTER THE JOURNEY

As we continue to embark on another year full of growth, teamwork and collaboration at Cathedral Center, we understand that we are driven to remind women and families of the resilience and strength they hold. Through our work and our partnerships with our community, we reinforce the notion that no matter how far you've traveled on your journey toward stability, there is dignity with every step.



Santa's Workshop volunteers and our Volunteer & In-Kind Gift Coordinator, Jeannie (far left), coming together to assist guests in their shopping.

We can't look ahead to the future without also recognizing the fruitful efforts of individuals that have led us to where we are. At the end of 2025, we held our annual Santa's Workshop event, where women and families across our different programs were able to shop for brand new gifts. This event,

where parents are given the autonomy to shop for their own items rather than be told what they are getting, would not have been possible without the generosity of several donors and volunteers, as well as Colliers for donating space for the shopping to take place.

During Santa's Workshop, there is dignity in individuals being involved in the shopping process, in parents being able to provide a special gift and experience for their children during what can otherwise be an uncertain time, and in groups and individuals recognizing they have the means to be able to contribute and spread the joy of the season. Santa's Workshop is just one example of the different services Cathedral Center provides that accounts for an individual's preferences and needs. We understand the basic truth that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and that having the space and opportunity to feel proud of yourself is crucial to moving forward on your journey.

These truths and values consistently guide the work we do, including during the time between Santa's Workshop and now. As we anticipate the first quarter of 2026 coming to a close, we take the time to celebrate our community coming

together to make our 2026 Empowerment Challenge a success! With the intention of highlighting and supporting our services that empower women and families and help women create and achieve goals that lead them on a journey of transformation, the Empowerment Challenge showcases that dignity is not reserved for any one way of life.



Thank you to everyone who accepted the challenge and helped make our Empowerment Challenge a success!

During the Empowerment Challenge, we raised a total of \$49,228 that will help facilitate empowering environments for women and ensure there is dignity in all steps on an individual's journey toward stability. Every gift we received helps support our programs and services that guarantee our clients have a voice in their situation, are equipped to reach their goals, and have agency in shaping their future.

Thank you for being part of Cathedral Center's community and for supporting our work that encourages women and families to understand the dignity that is present in every milestone, setback, and small step forward. Your generosity and willingness to carry out our mission has made these early days of 2026 that much more impactful. We can't wait to see where the rest of the year takes us.



Thank you to all of our Hospitality Groups! (Pictured: Cathedral of St. John The Evangelist Hospitality Group)

## Volunteer with Cathedral Center

### WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT CATHEDRAL CENTER

**1 PROVIDE AN EVENING MEAL FOR GUESTS IN SHELTER**  
Our program offers healthy meals every day of the year to shelter guests. Volunteers can sign up to provide a home-cooked or catered evening meal. Whether dropping off or serving in person, it's a fantastic opportunity for corporate, church, sports teams, or friends to make a difference!

**2 HOST A DRIVE FOR URGENTLY NEEDED ITEMS**  
Challenge others to collect basic needs items and urgent program supplies. Items can be purchased from our Amazon Wishlist!



**3 BE AN ADVOCATE: FOLLOW, LIKE, SHARE POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**



To learn more about our Hospitality Meal Program or other ways to get involved, contact Jeannie Stranzl at [volunteer@cathedral-center.org](mailto:volunteer@cathedral-center.org) or 414-831-0394 ext 2133.



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# mission

**PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES WHILE WORKING TO END HOMELESSNESS ONE LIFE AT A TIME.**

VISION

*Through compassionate care and excellence in service delivery, Cathedral Center will serve as a leader in ending homelessness for women and families with children in Milwaukee. Cathedral Center envisions a community in which women and families with children are empowered to access support to meet all of their basic needs.*



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## Join Our Team!

### CURRENT VACANCIES:

#### - Community Case Manager - \$1,000 Hiring Bonus! (Full-Time)

Responsibilities Include:  
+ Provide comprehensive assessments, case planning, and follow up services to families experiencing housing crises and homelessness.

#### - Child & Family Specialist (Full-Time)

Responsibilities Include:  
+ Develop and facilitate program components and ensure connection to community resources.

#### - Food & Hospitality Support Specialist (Part-Time)

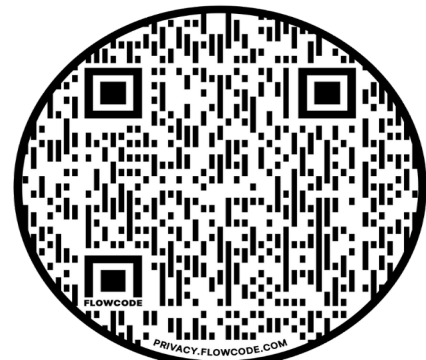
Responsibilities Include:  
+ Plan meals, assist with meal preparation and service, ensure cleanliness in food service areas, and support the overall hospitality experience within our shelter.

#### - Custodial & Facilities Associate (Part-Time)

Responsibilities Include:  
+ Assist in maintaining a safe and clean physical environment at our Friendship House location



TO FIND WAYS TO SUPPORT  
SCAN ME!



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