

REJECTING HOMELESSNESS TO BUILD A BETTER LIFE FOR HIS SON

For a long time, Daiquan Davis's house in Trenton had been a safe haven. He lived there since he was in elementary school with his mother, grandmother, uncle, and his three younger brothers.

But after his mother and grandmother passed away, the home fell into disrepair. His uncle, who owns the property, couldn't afford the utilities. So one by one, they disappeared – no more water, no more heat, no more electricity.

Daiquan, his brother and their uncle continued living there, while relatives took in two younger brothers. For three years, their circumstances grew worse. Then, Daiquan fell in love. His girlfriend got pregnant, and Daiquan knew he needed to change his life.

"I used to be real antisocial and depressed because of where I lived. I never wanted to be there," Daiquan said. His expanding family "was all the motivation I needed. I knew I really had to get up out of there. I had my son on the way, so I had to make that step to get out for my son."

So Daiquan reached out to the CEAS Center in Trenton. CEAS stands for Coordinated Entry Assessment System. The center collaborates with community partners like Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton to link homeless adults and unaccompanied youth ages 18 to 21 to housing and housing-related services.

That's how Daiquan first met Monique Rashford, a case manager with Catholic Charities' Rapid Re-Housing program in Mercer County. Rapid Re-Housing is short-term rental assistance and services. It's intended to help people get housing quickly, become self-sufficient, and stay housed. Applicants must be employed or employable.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY THE GOAL

The program funds the security deposit and first month's rent and 70 percent of the second and third months' rent. At the same time, clients are required to put that



▲ Daiquan and Monique Rashford, a case manager with Catholic Charities' Rapid Re-Housing program in Mercer County.

70 percent into a bank account, as a way to build savings. Staff teach clients budgeting strategies and provide food and furniture assistance as needed. At the end of that three-month period, staff can extend support, if needed, to ensure housing stability.

Catholic Charities offers Rapid Re-Housing in Mercer and Burlington counties – and recently received funding to expand the program to Ocean County.

In Trenton, Rashford helped Daiquan find an apartment, and the family moved in last June. Baby Kamari was born in October, and his parents were thrilled they were able to bring him home to a safe, clean apartment.



A Message from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

By the time this newsletter arrives to your home or church community, we will be heading toward spring. (Not that we had much of a winter!) It's a good time to pause and ponder how well we've been doing with our New Year's resolutions or goals we put on our vision boards. Not great? If at first you don't succeed, try again! Getting there? If you are on track, bravo!

I'll bet wherever you fall on the spectrum, you have hopes and dreams. But a dream is just a dream until you put it into action. Hope is a feeling of expectation, something we aspire to do or be. It's important, but it's only a start to get us where we need to go. A friend told me she recently went on "the vacation of a lifetime." She and her husband had dreamed of the trip for awhile, but something always got in the way. Finally, they put their dream into action by taking small, manageable steps to achieve it. Now, they are living their dream.

Our consumers too often have not even dared to dream. Maybe they failed many times. Maybe no

one ever encouraged them to dream. Perhaps they've been surrounded by so much poverty and violence that they felt worthless or wondered: "what's the point?" Some come to us out of pure desperation, not even because of hope. We meet them where they are, so that one day, they will feel hope and dream of a better future - and make their dream a reality through small, manageable steps. Healing takes time. Our compassionate, professional staffers understand this and are ready to support our consumers on their recovery journeys.

The Spirit shares some of those victories. Your prayers and financial support empower us to open the door to hope and give people the courage to dream for transformation and a better future. Thank you for being our partner!

With warm regards,

**Marlene Laó-Collins,
Executive Director**



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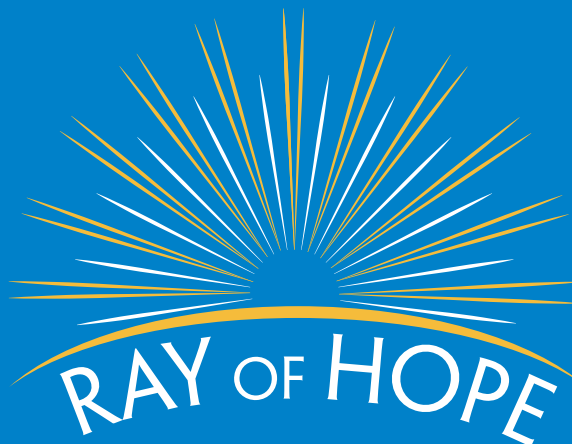
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Tickets and sponsorship information at: [CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org/events](https://www.CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org/events)
Contact Jenn Leip at (609) 394-5181, ext. 1137

A FAMILY RECOVERS FROM TRAUMA AND FINDS ANOTHER 'FAMILY'

There was a time when the sounds of anger filled Teresa's house. Her boyfriend let his fists and foul language fly so much that she, their two sons, and her daughter lived in fear.

Teresa thought therapy could change him, and for a while, it seemed to work. But one day in 2013, Teresa saw her partner sexually abuse her daughter, who was then just 10. Police officers arrested and quickly deported him, and the family hasn't seen him since.

But their troubles didn't end. The children, traumatized, had withdrawn. Teresa's youngest, a 6-year-old boy, barely spoke. Her middle child was always angry and fighting. Her daughter couldn't sleep, harmed herself, and dreaded school because some books triggered unwanted memories of the sexual abuse she'd suffered. For Teresa, parenting became a challenge, as she struggled with her children's complicated needs and her own quick temper that she'd developed from years of stress and abuse.

In 2014, she connected with Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton's Family Growth Program in Monmouth County. Therapists there specialize in treating children and families who have experienced sexual abuse and other trauma.

Teresa and all three of her children began counseling there.

GETTING THE FAMILY INVOLVED

"We teach kids coping skills, relaxation, feelings identification, and other tools they can use when they experience symptoms of trauma," said Caroline Glidden, a marriage and family therapist with Family Growth who worked with Teresa's youngest son. "We want the whole family very involved, because we also teach the parents all these things so that they can help their kids."

Therapists encourage children to write "trauma narratives" of what they experienced in order to help them process it.

Teresa's counselor taught her self-care strategies to boost her mental health, because a parent who isn't in a good place mentally may not have the patience and other tools required for parenting.



▲
Caroline Glidden, a marriage and family therapist with Family Growth who worked with Teresa's youngest son.

They also helped Teresa understand how her own childhood trauma, which included abandonment and sexual abuse, echoed into her adulthood. But Teresa learned how mindfulness and positive thinking can help her avoid dwelling on the past.

She especially appreciates that the help came with no strings attached.

"I didn't have insurance, and they didn't charge a single dollar," Teresa said. "The kindness they showed me was everything."

Teresa is now engaged to a "very nice and responsible" man. And her children – now 17, 14, and 13 – have promising futures. Her daughter will graduate high school this spring with plans to study art in college. Her middle son attends a private high school on academic scholarship and has his sights set on Harvard University and a career in neurology. And her youngest son? He's talking again.

"I thank God for Catholic Charities. People like Caroline change our lives, just by listening to us and talking to us," Teresa said, gesturing to Glidden. "It's like Catholic Charities is my other family. When I see people struggling with their life now, I say: 'Go to Catholic Charities, you'll find help there!'"

FOR INFORMATION about the Monmouth Family Growth Program, call Program Director Jane Meyer at (732) 747-9660, ext. 7106.

PROVIDING IMMEDIATE AT THE "URGENT CARE OF



Come out for a night of fun, great prizes, refreshments and hope for those living with domestic violence! This "tricky-tray-style" Gift Auction with more than 400 baskets is our biggest fundraiser of the year and allows Providence House to continue offering free and confidential services to domestic violence survivors.

WHEN: **FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2020**
Doors open at 5 PM
Winners announced starting at 7:30 PM

WHERE: Georgian Court University
The Wellness Center
517 Ninth Street, Lakewood, NJ

COST: Tickets are \$20 each

FOR INFORMATION about Catholic Charities Providence House Domestic Violence Services or the Gift Auction, call (732) 350-2120.

Moving around the world can be stressful. Moving around the world with a husband whose health begins failing to a place where you know no one else?

"Reeeeeeeally stressful," said Rose Ashley, who found herself in exactly that situation in 2017.

So when Rose saw a highway billboard advertising mental health services at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton, she didn't hesitate to pick up the phone. She connected with Catholic Charities' Early Intervention Support Services (EISS), a short-term stabilization program in Mercer County for people in emotional distress or psychiatric crisis.

The program is "like the urgent care of mental health," said Danica Ravello, director of outpatient and crisis services. "We're really catching people when they're asking for help, rather than when the agencies can provide the help, because a lot of times there are waitlists and barriers to treatment. With this treatment modality, they're able to access treatment immediately and when they're ready."

At EISS, Rose met with a counselor for a month, following that up with two additional months of counseling through Catholic Charities' Guidance Clinic in Trenton.

"It really did help me," she said. "I was able to offload and really talk about the stresses happening to me. I learned about boundaries and self-care strategies I could do to keep

REJECTING HOMELESSNESS (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

"I feel good, like I came a long way. I'm appreciative of what I have now. At the same time, I'm trying to push forward and better myself," he said.

His one-bedroom apartment is on the fifth floor. "There are a lot of steps," Daiquan laughed. And his brother, now 21, still lives with him. So he hopes to move to a larger apartment when his lease is up in May. And eventually, he plans to buy his family a house.

"I want everything on one level. I want a balcony too," said Daiquan, who works at Target but plans to

get a commercial driver's license and become a truck driver. "I see us in a cozy, nice little place – a place where I want to be."

As he proudly scrolled through photos of his son on his phone, he added: "I don't want him to go through the things I went through. I want a better life for him. I want him to have every success."

FOR INFORMATION about Rapid Re-Housing, contact Monique Rashford, case manager, at (609) 394-8847, ext. 2502.

RELIEF MENTAL HEALTH

myself sane. Shifting focus to my strengths really helped too. I felt relieved and really good about myself – I felt like I was gaining my strength back as an individual.”

Rose felt so confident in the services provided by EISS that she applied to work there. Now, she’s a mental health peer advocate and case manager, helping overwhelmed new clients feel at ease as they begin treatment.

“Clients come in very reserved. I share a little bit about what happened to me, and I can see their whole body relax,” said Rose, who worked in mental health for 20 years in New Zealand, her native country, before moving to the U.S. “On a personal level, I want them to know that it doesn’t matter where you come from, what ethnicity or socio-economic status you are: Mental health affects everybody across the board.”

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Besides rapid access to treatment, the EISS model also works well because it removes barriers to recovery, Rose said. For example, the program has bilingual staff and offers free transportation to and from its Hamilton offices for anyone who needs it.

“It made such a huge difference for us when they said: ‘we can pick you up and drop you back home,’” Rose said. “It really reduced some stress, so that my husband and I could focus on his health.”

There’s also always food on hand for clients, from snacks to microwaveable dinners, because staffers know that hunger can be distracting and impede recovery. Plus, food represents comfort, Rose said.

“Food is universal. It shows: ‘Hey, we care, and we know you’re going through something,’” Rose said. “We’ve had clients who come here who have it so bad, and we learn in intake they haven’t eaten in a few days. Little things like snacks can make a huge difference in someone’s recovery and make them feel cared for.”

EISS is a busy program, with 75 to 100 walk-ins a month, Rivello said. Only 10 other New Jersey counties have EISS services.

“I’m actually blown away by this program,” said Rose, who plans to return to school soon to finish her degree. “I’ve seen firsthand the good work this program does, and I feel blessed to now work here and help people.”



▲ Rose in front of EISS.



▲ Jaclyn Lopez, Rose Ashley, Danica Rivello, and Eudora Klee, all part of the EISS team.

FOR INFORMATION about Early Intervention Support Services, contact Danica Rivello, director of outpatient and crisis services, at (609) 256-4200, ext. 7211.

TAKE CHARITY ON THE ROAD

DONATE YOUR OLD CAR

Anyone who knew Abraham Laó knew his car. The green Honda Accord served as a spotlight for his devout faith, with its license plate of JNC3V16 (John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”)

“Everybody in church knew whose car that was. My parents were proud to shine a light on their strong faith,” said Marlene Laó-Collins, executive director of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton.

After Laó passed away in 2016, his grandson Eric drove the car. Last year, the family decided the 2004 sedan had outlived its usefulness.

“The car was a profound symbol to our family, because it was dad’s car, our loving patriarch. I didn’t want to just trash it or give it to a junk guy for scrap,” Laó-Collins said.

She knew immediately what to do with it. She went to Catholic Charities’ website and clicked through to its “Car Donation Program” under the “Ways to Give” tab.

People can donate any type of vehicle, from cars, trucks, and motorcycles to ATVs, boats, and motor homes, even if they no longer run. Donors call a toll-free number or fill out a simple online form. The San Diego-based company Charitable Adult Rides and Services sends someone to pick up the vehicle and signed title, and handles all the details afterward. The donation then can be claimed as an income tax deduction.

“My experience was very positive, and they were incredibly pleasant people to work with,” Laó-Collins said. “All I had to do was clear out the car, tell them where it would be, and take off the license plate – which I forgot to do. But even that wasn’t a problem, because I just called them back and they returned it to me the same day.”

A LASTING LEGACY

The Car Donation Program is a small but growing way for Catholic Charities to raise much-needed funds to



▲ Marlene holding her father’s license plate.

support its work serving the region’s most vulnerable residents, said Nancy Tompkins, Catholic Charities’ director of Development and Marketing.

Car donations brought in nearly \$12,000 last year, up from about \$9,500 in 2018, she said.

“It’s a really easy way to make a difference in your community,” Tompkins said. “We take the headache out of the process of getting rid of an unwanted vehicle, and at the same time, our donors have the opportunity to really help someone in need.”

For Laó-Collins, the donation also gave her great comfort. “To me, Catholic Charities is a special organization. It really helps people,” she said. “My dad was very supportive of Catholic Charities and the work I do here. He was a donor. I just knew he would love the fact that it was going to Catholic Charities, and that even after he was gone, he was supporting Catholic Charities. There was no second thought for me. That car was doing nothing sitting in the street. But now it benefits the people that we serve.”

TO LEARN MORE about Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton’s Car Donation Program, call 844-470-GIVE or (844) 470-4483 or visit <http://catholiccharitiesrenton.careasy.org/HOME.html>.

Considering Leaving a Legacy Gift?

Consider extending your generosity beyond your lifetime by naming Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton in your will. A bequest in any amount provides you the opportunity to match your philanthropic goals with Catholic Charities’ needs.

To discuss leaving a legacy gift, please contact Nancy Tompkins, Director of Development and Marketing, (609) 394-5181, ext. 1161, or ntompkins@cctrenton.org.

SURVIVING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPED GIVE HER A POWERFUL VOICE

Danielle Patrice met the man who would become her husband at college in Tennessee. They were two Northerners who bonded over their cultural differences while living in the South. When Danielle's mentally ill mother died by suicide in 2009, he helped her navigate the heartache, and their friendship evolved into something more.

Their love didn't last.

"This is someone I completely trusted at the lowest point of my life, but he turned out to be the devil," Danielle said.

Verbal abuse evolved into physical attacks. By 2012, Danielle feared for her life and the safety of their young son. So she reached out to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton's Providence House Domestic Violence Services in Burlington County for help.

After a brief stay in Providence House's safe house, she returned to him. That's not uncommon. On average, a woman will leave an abusive relationship seven times before she leaves for good, according to the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

The couple had another son in 2013. But the violence worsened. So in 2018, Danielle left him for good and reached out to Providence House's outreach counseling center to heal. There, she found solidarity with other women in the program who had survived her same journey.

"Hearing the stories of other women was really powerful. We could share resources and learn from each other. It felt like that was the beginning of me learning my purpose," Danielle said. "That really laid the groundwork for my advocacy."

FROM TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH

She is now divorced and works as an activist and motivational speaker, talking about the trauma she survived in hopes of helping other women.

She knows that her experiences are common struggles that hold lessons for abuse survivors. For example, she



▲ Danielle, now an activist and motivational speaker.

and her sons, now 9 and 6, became homeless and still live in transitional housing because her ex long ago quit contributing to the household, ran up debt, and still provides no support. Such financial abuse occurs in 99 percent of domestic violence cases, according to the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

And studies show that childhood trauma increases one's risk of intimate partner violence in adulthood. Danielle spent some time living in Providence House's safe house when she was in third grade.

Danielle also advocates for legislative changes, such as exonerating victim defendants (victims who get criminally charged for defending themselves from domestic violence) and mandating sensitivity classes for law enforcement.

"I used to be so scared to speak publicly. I sometimes stuttered as a kid when I spoke in class," she said. "But this gave me the power to speak. Recovering from domestic violence is a long fight. And for me, it's still a fight, even now. But I'm fighting for my children. I want them to know I fought and I created a voice for myself. I'm powerful all by myself."

FOR INFORMATION about Providence House Domestic Violence Services, call (877) 871-7551 in Burlington County and (800) 246-8910 in Ocean County.



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This year marks the 31st anniversary of our Guardian Angel Dinner Dance! This signature fundraiser attracts more than 350 attendees and generates over \$300,000, crucial support that empowers us to serve 100,000 people each year, regardless of religious affiliation. Each year, we honor individuals and organizations from our community who have positively impacted our ability to help the poor and vulnerable. Join us on September 26th to applaud these community partners who, in their own unique way, inspire and offer hope to those in need.
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Mercer County: Mary Jo Herbert
Monmouth County: Dr. Jack V. Kirnan
Ocean County: Oceanaire Women's Golf Association

For tickets, event sponsorship, program ad, or to donate to the silent auction, please contact Events Coordinator Barbara Yuson at (609) 394-5181, ext. 1159, or byuson@cctrenton.org
CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org/GADD2020