



metamorphosis

Summer/Fall 2008

FINDING REFUGE IN RECOVERY

It is estimated that about 3.5 million people nationally are homeless over the course of a year. Approximately 26 percent of individuals who are homeless have issues with substance abuse, according to the 2006 United States Conference of Mayors 'Hunger and Homelessness Survey.' While there is no clear evidence that one condition causes the other, experts and researchers agree that poverty and addiction increase the risk of homelessness.

In a 2007 Point in Time Survey of Milwaukee's Homeless Citizens, mental illness and alcohol and drug abuse were the most prevalent conditions among the 714 individuals interviewed. The interviews and Point in Time census was conducted by the Milwaukee Continuum of Care for the Homeless. The results from the same report showed women made up 44 percent of the homeless population in Milwaukee.

Though women encounter many of the same issues surrounding those who are homeless and addicted to drugs and alcohol, there are some concerns that particularly affect them.

Typically caregivers, women make up the majority of the population who are homeless with their children. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported that the number of

homeless families is growing with women often serving as the only adult. Specifically, 11 percent of homeless adults are parents with children, of which 84 percent are single women. Also, this is one of the factors that contribute to why women are more likely involved in the child welfare system.

Additionally, women who abuse substances commonly live or seek temporary shelter with men who buy, prepare and distribute drugs that initiate and sustain their alcohol and drug use. These relationships are often violent. A substantial number of homeless women have reportedly experienced some form of physical or sexual abuse. Some even became homeless by fleeing abusive relationships and start to abuse drugs and alcohol in response to trauma. Less educated with fewer skills to obtain a job, women have less access to stable housing.

One of the largest concerns for women and their children is access to adequate health care and substance abuse treatment. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless,

homeless individuals generally do not have health insurance. This includes access to Medicaid. Lack of documentation and stable housing makes it difficult to contact women on waiting lists for substance abuse treatment, medical or pre-natal care.

At Meta House, women who abuse substances have an opportunity to break the cycle of unstable housing through the agency's Meta Housing Program. Meta Housing consists of 28 one, two and three bedroom furnished apartments located throughout four facilities.



In addition to accommodation, residents of Meta Housing have access to supportive services such as case management, alcohol and drug abuse counseling, parenting, literacy, children and youth services and job retention assistance. Women can live in transitional apartments for up to two years and permanent housing for as long as they want. In 2007, 39 women and 46 children lived in Meta Housing.

SAVE THE DATE!

Hear Meta House graduates share their powerful stories of homelessness and addiction at our annual fundraiser, *A Day for Meta House – From Homeless to Hopeful: Finding Refuge in Recovery*. Join us Friday, December 5 for this free breakfast or lunch at Pier Wisconsin on Milwaukee's Lakefront.



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Meta Moments, August 28, 2008

WHY WOMEN ABUSE SUBSTANCES

Thursday, August 28, 12-1PM

Meta House Residential Facility

2626 N. Bremen Street in Riverwest, Milwaukee

A Day for Meta House Annual Fundraiser,

Friday, December 5, 2008

FROM HOMELESS TO HOPEFUL:

FINDING REFUGE IN RECOVERY

Breakfast 8AM-9AM or Lunch 12PM-1PM

Pier Wisconsin/Discovery World on Milwaukee's Lakefront

Call Wendy at 414-977-5807 for event details or visit www.metahouse.org.

If you shop at Pick'nSave, please fill out their Saver's Card Application indicating the following charity code number: 506160. Through their We Care Program, Pick'nSave will donate a percentage of the money you spend to Meta House. If you need a Saver's Club Application, you can get one at any Pick'nSave store. If you already have a Saver's Club Card, please consider updating your application to include charity code 506160.

CURRENT WISH LIST

- Tupperware
- Bowls
- Plates
- Water Pitchers
- Pots & Pans
- Cups
- Silverware and Kids' Silverware
- Lawn Chairs
- Kids' Bike Helmets
- Twin Bedding
- Bath and Kitchen Towels

META HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thank you Meta House Board of Directors!

President, Jennifer Bartolotta; President-Elect, Tonit Calaway; Treasurer, Kristen Beres; Secretary, Janice A. Rhodes; Ex-Officio, Anne Reed; At-Large, Pamela Mattox; Members: Brozine Brown, Bridget Carey-Ruffin, Nancy Joseph, Ann Navin, Anna Oakes, Victoria Pryor, Jane Stromwall, and J.D. Watts.

Metamorphosis is written by Trish Davis.

metahouse.org

FROM META HOUSE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FRANCINE FEINBERG



Statistical and anecdotal evidence have long linked the overlapping relationship between substance abuse and homelessness. Since women are more often the caregivers, they represent a large percentage of individuals who are homeless with their children.

We often witness this first-hand at Meta House. Many of our clients come from impoverished circumstances, are unemployed, and have little to no education. Some even have co-occurring mental health disorders that often stem from trauma. Add substance abuse to this equation and access to stable housing becomes increasingly difficult.

In keeping with our mission to provide holistic, comprehensive substance abuse treatment for women, we launched our Meta Housing Program in 1999 to help women along their journey of recovery and self-reliance. The goal of the program is to provide safe, affordable housing for women and their children to help them focus on recovery and treatment and slowly readjust to their communities.

We take great pride in our award-winning housing program. In 2000, Meta Housing was recognized with a national Best Practice Award by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). During a recent site visit, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) - under the National Department of Health and Human Services - commended Meta Housing for being a model program addressing the needs of women who abuse substances.

We know that the housing component of Meta House is important to the women we serve. Results of a three-year study of women who had been in Meta Housing for one year showed that 77.5% continued to be alcohol and drug free and 61.5% were either working, students or receiving Social Security for a mental or physical health disability.

We hope you will join us on December 5 at *A Day for Meta House*. Homelessness and substance abuse is the event's theme. We believe it is important to raise awareness about this issue because of the way it uniquely affects women and children in Milwaukee.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

CORPORATIONS VOLUNTEER AT META HOUSE

We would like to thank the following corporations who have spent their time and energy working on various volunteer projects for Meta House.

Over the past year, **Manpower** has given time, planning and expertise in the creation and implementation of a series of employment-related workshops for Meta House clients.

Recently, volunteers from **Rockwell Automation's** Information Platform Business gave their time and talents to help spruce up our landscaping at the Meta Housing Program. Pictured here are four of Meta House's 23 **Miller Brewing Company** volunteers relaxing after a busy morning of painting, cleaning, sorting and gardening.



VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED - ADVOCACY

Are you passionate about the need for substance abuse treatment? Do you have a flair for navigating the legislation process? Meta House is looking for an intern or volunteer who is interested in public policy and social change. The volunteer would work with a regional chapter of advocates who use their personal experiences of recovery to inform Congress and State Legislators about addiction, trauma, poverty and violence.

HELP NEEDED - DATABASE MAINTENANCE

Good with computers? Have a little extra time each month (or flexible work schedule)? Meta House is currently looking for individuals to assist with database maintenance. Volunteers are needed for a few hours each month. Days and times are flexible, but must be during regular business hours. Strong computer skills and attention to detail a must!

Interested? Please contact Carryn Sami for details at 414-977-5802.

META HOUSE IN THE NEWS

o In a recent editorial published in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Meta House Executive Director, Dr. Francine Feinberg, responded to survey results that list Wisconsin as having the most people who admitted to driving while under the influence of alcohol. Dr. Feinberg addressed Wisconsin's long and challenging relationship with alcohol abuse and the state's alarming rate of child-bearing age women who binge drink. To read the full article, go to: <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=751680>

o Meta House has been awarded the 2008 Family-Friendly Employer Award by *Metroparent Magazine*. Each year, the Family-Friendly Award is given to companies or organizations leading the way in helping their employees create a better balance between personal and professional life.

Helping Women Through the Progression of Recovery

A JOURNEY OF HOPE



An only child, Antoinette felt as if she could never please her mom. She developed low self-esteem and constantly struggled with their distressful relationship. By age 15, she started using marijuana and amphetamines. At 18, she was introduced to cocaine.

In spite of her cocaine use, Antoinette continued to hold jobs and even began taking prerequisite classes in pursuit of her dream of becoming a nurse. But at 33, she began using crack and that changed everything.

Her life began to unravel and within a year of using crack, Antoinette, a mother of three, quickly lost her car and job. Her family was eventually evicted from their apartment and Antoinette and her two younger children found themselves on the street. Her older child left prior to the eviction and went to live with relatives. The family spent a short time in a Milwaukee area church shelter.

"I was still in denial," Antoinette said. "I still felt I could just get a job and everything would be okay."

From the shelter, they ended up at the homes of friends who were also abusing drugs. But the option of sleeping on her friends' floor was short-lived because they were not comfortable with the presence of Antoinette's four and 10-year-old children.

Living on the streets with her children became exhausting, and Antoinette was ashamed that she could not provide a better life for her family. She went back to live with her mom but the existing rift between them had not been resolved. So, she enrolled in a transitional living facility and joined Meta House's Outpatient Program.

"Getting high was killing me and my children and the process had to stop," Antoinette said. "I knew I wasn't being the best mother but it was difficult to stop getting high to do what I needed to do for them. I was homeless and hungry with my children and I have never been there before. It just hurt."

Meta House staff worked with Antoinette and helped her get alcohol and drug counseling. She also learned about the devastating effects of alcohol on the woman's body through health education classes and developed tools on how to be a nurturing mother through Meta House's parenting classes. Once she completed the Outpatient Program, she moved into a three-bedroom Meta Housing apartment, where she was reunited with her oldest child.

"I loved the Meta House apartment. To me, it was like I accomplished something," Antoinette said. "It was like stepping back into the real world and seeing what I could do [on my own], and trusting myself to get back into society. I was doing something with my life and all three of my children were able to live with me."

While at Meta Housing, Antoinette was able to begin a nursing program. She lived in Meta Housing for approximately two years before moving to permanent housing, where she has been for the past three years. She graduated from nursing school in May 2006 and currently works as a Registered Nurse for a Milwaukee County nursing home.

Your contributions are critical to Meta House. Please help us to provide essential services to women recovering from substance abuse and their children.

Yes, I want to support Meta House!

\$2,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$35 Other

Name _____ Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Check Enclosed _____ MasterCard _____ Visa _____ Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Please make checks payable to Meta House, Inc., a 501 (C) (3) not-for-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

Thank you!

Please detach and mail to: Meta House, Attn: Development, 2266 N. Prospect Avenue, 4th Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202.