Depaul USA Chicago Fundraiser to Benefit Dax Program for Homeless Students

On June 5, 2018, Depaul USA Chicago will host a benefit dinner at Cortelyou Commons on the DePaul University Lincoln Park Campus. The event, which will benefit the Dax Program, seeks to raise $100,000 to support housing for homeless or housing insecure college students and purchase a second Dax House.

Sharon, one of the Dax House residents and a student at DePaul University, had this to say:

“I came to the Dax House after struggling financially because the job I had was not paying me enough to afford my rent. It was a very big burden on me to carry and still focus on school.

Depaul USA has helped me a lot by providing me a place to stay, food plans and all kinds of help they generously offer. Beyond this, they even check on us very often to know how we are doing either in school or in other areas of our lives – which I appreciate a lot. Today, I can focus and walk around with peace of mind. I am forever grateful to Depaul USA. It has been truly a blessing I don’t take lightly.”

The Dax House provides housing for 4 previously homeless DePaul University students. The Dax program also placed students with host families and in apartments provided by donors.

Since its inception, the Dax program has worked with 28 DePaul University students. Five of these students have since graduated and 18 remain enrolled in the university. Only five students have discontinued their studies.
At Home

It is late April in Chicago and my favorite season, spring, is still struggling to banish winter. As much as I love full-blown spring with its blooming flowers and newly green trees and lawns, I also love this dueling period between the two seasons with its hints and suggestions of the warmth and renewal to come.

Every day at Depaul USA we undertake work that we hope will blossom into new programs or opportunities for our program participants. In this newsletter, you will read the words of young people in Chicago and St. Louis describing how our programs are changing their lives. Depaul USA “picked me up like I was a flower,” the St. Louisan writes. You will also find a story about a house we recently purchased and plan to rehab in Little Rock. New hope and new beginnings in three of our Depaul USA cities.

Spring, however, is not only a time for beginnings. In this newsletter we bid a sad farewell to June Bryant from Macon who recently passed away. June helped launch Daybreak and we will miss her positive spirit and boundless dedication to her homeless neighbors.

Thank you for all you do for Depaul USA,

Charles W. Levesque
President/Executive Director

In Memoriam – C. June Bryant

On February 15, Macon lost a wonderful member of the community and a critical part of Depaul USA. Her passion for social justice led June to become a founding member of Bless These Hands, which helped create Daybreak, Macon’s Day/Resource Center. Her work with refugees, Ugandan women, and the homeless speaks to June’s commitment to justice. The Board of Directors and the staff of Depaul USA extend their sincerest condolences to June’s family.
Supporting Homeless Youth at St. Lazare House

St. Lazare House, which opened on November 1, 2017, celebrated with an Open House on May 2. The facility, which is the first of its kind in St. Louis, is a permanent supportive housing program for homeless youth aged 18-24.

There are many stories to share of the life-changing experiences of the residents at St. Lazare House. Here is one quote:

“After six years of living on the streets, I was just trying to survive. I ate junk food like potatoes chips from gas stations. No one is prepared to be homeless but I had the will to overcome it. Since moving into St. Lazare House, I have my own apartment. The world doesn’t see people like me. I did not have a voice. St. Lazare House brought me back from the dead and gave me a second chance. They picked me up like I was a flower. To me, St. Lazare House stands for peace, honesty and loyalty.”

St. Lazare Hosts Successful Open House

A special thank you to everyone who attended the Open House for St. Lazare House on May 2. It was an inspirational celebration of the generosity of our supporters and the work Depaul USA has accomplished in St. Louis. Thank you for your continued support!

The Path to Independence in New Orleans

James Smith came to The Rebuild Center to see Sr. Kathleen Driscoll because he was tired of living on the street. He was encouraged to get into a treatment facility to get sober, collect his homeless documentation, and return when he completed a program. He returned in August of 2017 and Depaul USA began the process of housing him. James was officially accepted into the Rapid Rehousing for Chronically Homeless Individuals (RRCHI) Program after getting all of the necessary documentation and completing the referral process. He was housed in October.

Since entering the program and being housed, James has been highly motivated to improve his level of stability. He continually looked for work while attending regular AA meetings to maintain his sobriety and in March of 2018, James found a job. He has since continued to balance his work and personal life and states that he hopes to one day be completely self-sufficient. Sister Kathleen and the Depaul USA staff check in with James weekly to monitor his progress and support him in his newfound independence!
Spooky Spokes Bike-A-Thon

St. Louis is excited to be hosting its 5th annual 5k Walk/Run to support PROJECT PLUS/MORE and St. Lazare House. On Saturday, October 6, the Wizard of Oz themed “No Place Like Home” race will take place in historic Tower Grove Park in south St. Louis City. For more information, please contact Steve Wiederkehr at (314) 349-1651 or at steve.wiederkehr@depaulusa.org.

Sleepout in the Rock

Little Rock is getting ready for its annual “Sleepout in the Rock” on September 8, 2018 at Murray Park Pavilion. Hunter Henry, the tight end for the Los Angeles Chargers and a native of Little Rock, will serve as the Honorary Chair for the event. Food is sponsored by First Financial Bank and music will be provided by the Going Jessies.

Tickets start at $300 and all proceeds will go to support Jericho Way, Depaul USA’s Day/Resource Center, providing participants with breakfast and lunch every day, laundry facilities, showers and job placement assistance. For more information, please contact Mandy Davis at mandy.davis@depaulusa.org or at (501) 916-9859.

“Feels Like Home” Gala

The “Feels Like Home” Casino Night, the annual fundraiser for St. Raymond’s House and Depaul House in Philadelphia, will take place this fall again – details TBD. This event raises critical funds to support programs for the homeless. The evening will be filled with an assortment of gaming tables, delicious food, fine wine, open bar, prizes and live music. For more information, please contact Mark Atwood at mark.atwood@depaulusa.org.

Sleepout

On February 22, 2018, Macon hosted over 100 people for its annual Sleepout event, raising over $134,658 for Daybreak. Another successful year thanks to the hard work of the Macon staff, volunteers and board!

Last fall, Depaul USA’s Daybreak Day/Resource Center was selected by Subaru of Macon as one of its national Share the Love charities. As a result, Daybreak, which provides comprehensive services to very-low income and homeless individuals, received a $20,000 donation from Subaru. The donation will help to provide 20,000 meals, employment readiness and job placement, a medical clinic, showers, laundry facilities and access to housing for over 1,500 homeless individuals.
Depaul USA has a new social entrepreneurship program, Rays of Hope, to connect students and formerly homeless adults. Students at William Penn Charter School, an independent school in the East Falls neighborhood, initiated an exciting new project to produce local, vegan soaps. The residents of St. Raymond’s House manage the Rays of Hope project.

The soaps are on sale in local shops and 100% of the profits benefit Depaul USA’s effort to provide dignified housing to our most vulnerable neighbors.

Residents report that they enjoy the enthusiasm that the students bring to the work. One participant, Leonard says, “I look forward to working with the Penn Charter kids. It is amazing how quickly they come up with creative names for the soaps and how upbeat they are so early in the morning. It’s infectious.”

St. Raymond’s House residents also enjoy sharing their knowledge with the students. The residents and students talk about their lives while they work alongside each other. Besides offering a creative outlet, resident participants in the project will earn a profit share from the sale of the soaps. Sam, another resident says, “My favorite part is feeling like I’ve accomplished something.”
Heather Lane House

On April 4, 2018, Depaul USA purchased a two-bedroom house on Heather Lane in Little Rock. The house will be renovated and by the fall of 2018 will be home to an individual or small family exiting homelessness or struggling to find affordable housing.

The Heather Lane house is Depaul USA’s first foray into owning and operating housing in Little Rock. “Depaul USA’s goal when it arrived in Little Rock was to grow and deepen the services at the Jericho Way Day Resource Center,” explained Depaul USA Executive Director Chuck Levesque. “Owning and managing housing for very low-income individuals is a logical next step in our growth in Little Rock and we look forward to more housing initiatives in the future.” Thanks to generous individual donors and foundation support, the purchase and renovation of the house has been fully funded.
Meet the new Development Team at Depaul USA:

In January, Cindy Tyler joined the Development team as the Director of Institutional Giving. Her primary responsibilities include managing private and corporate foundation funding. Cindy has an entrepreneurial passion and is deeply committed to helping inspire people and positively transform communities. She has 15 years of experience building collaborative relationships for nonprofit organizations. Cindy received her BS from DePaul University.

Gardening, planning organizational projects at home, and enjoying friends and family are a few of the activities that keep Cindy busy when she is away from fundraising.

Jessie Dorsey is Depaul USA’s Director of Annual Giving and Events. She is responsible for creating individual donor strategies and growing the events in all six cities. Jessie has a calling for non-profit work and is dedicated to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate.

Jessie earned a Bachelor of Arts in both Business Management and Communication Studies from Luther College in Decorah, IA. After college, she moved to Chicago and worked for Presence Health Foundation where she began her career in fundraising as a Stewardship Officer; providing process-driven development support.

When she is not working, Jessie loves to travel. Through church and study abroad opportunities, she has visited nine different countries. Jessie has a passion for music and plays the trumpet. She loves visiting her family, spending time with friends, and exploring Chicago.

Mark Atwood currently serves at the Relationship Manager for Depaul USA in Philadelphia. Previously, Mark worked in various development roles in the Philadelphia area, including as the Director of Development at Ready, Willing & Able, a transitional work and housing program for homeless men, as well as Interim Director of Development at Community Learning Center and Food Moxie, nonprofit organizations working to improve literacy and health of their local communities.

Mark earned a bachelor’s degree in Media Studies - Film and Television from The Pennsylvania State University and a master’s degree in Nonprofit Management from The New School in New York City. In 2016, he completed a year-long “Leading For Change” fellowship program at Drexel University’s Lebow College of Business in Philadelphia.

When Mark is not working, you can find him at Philadelphia Phillies games, going to the movies, petting dogs, and wishing he could travel more.
We hope you have enjoyed reading about the work of Depaul USA in this edition of Homeward. It is our mission to ensure that everyone has a place to call home and a stake in his/her community. To support us, please complete this section and mail your check (if applicable) to:

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Post Office Box 756
Chicago, Illinois 60690

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Our vision is a world where everyone has a place to call home and a stake in his or her community.

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