

Dear Friends,

There's a wonderful legend about three curious blind men who go to "see" an elephant. Being blind, they observe the massive beast by touching it, and each of them knows instantly what the elephant looks like...or so he thinks. "*It's like two big trees without any branches!*" "*It's like a rope!*" "*It's like a wall!*" They're all absolutely right...and absolutely wrong. The elephant is all of these, but so much more.

We tell this story because West Suburban PADS and the elephant have something in common. Most of the people who know PADS know only one piece of us, our Emergency Shelter program. It's a vital piece. But it's just one of the five parts of PADS that are essential to ending homelessness in your community.

The many people who "touch" our shelters every year include individuals and families who are homeless in the 20 suburbs of near-west Cook County, as well as the one thousand volunteers, 55 faith communities and 12 site congregations who make it possible for us to feed and shelter these guests, and the PADS staff, interns and partner agencies who help guests transition out of homelessness.

Like the trunk of the elephant, shelters are our most visible feature, our "face" to the public.

But only 10% of PADS' cash budget is allocated to this program. Surprised?

In part, that's because of in-kind donations – including 37,098 meals and 19,000 hours from our generous shelter volunteers during the 2009-2010 season. But it's also because **the remaining 90% of our budget is devoted to the intensive support programs and resources the majority of our guests require, beyond the shelter, in order to break the cycle of their homelessness.**

A quarter of our guests stay in the shelter for only a night or two. That's all they need to resolve their crisis. The other 75% face complex, sometimes numerous, obstacles to stable housing. For them, the solution isn't straightforward, and it won't be fast.

For them, we offer a robust supportive services program from our day-time, year-round Support Center in Maywood. Here they can access basic services (showers, laundry, clothing, computers), case management (medical, mental health, substance abuse treatment and developmental disability services) and life skills counseling (self care, financial management, emotional health and interpersonal skills).

For them, we provide three supportive housing programs -- Transitional Housing for working individuals and families; Permanent Supportive Housing for

individuals who are homeless and have a mental health diagnosis; and Rapid Re-Housing, which provides short-term financial assistance to quickly house and stabilize our shelter guests.

For them, we created an employment readiness program called Career Passport, helping individuals identify and resolve their long-term barriers to getting and keeping a job.

And for eligible individuals and families facing homelessness, our Homeless Prevention program thwarts the cycle into homelessness with a security deposit and/or first month's rent.

There is much more to this elephant than just the trunk.

Over the past 18 years, we have learned one thing for sure – that anyone can get (and stay) housed, living to their full potential, if given the proper support.

If you believe in our solution to homelessness and want to be part of it, please consider a tax-deductible donation to West Suburban PADS. A donation of \$20 can fund the purchase of a state I.D. card for a homeless individual to use when seeking employment. \$500 can buy one hundred transit passes for Support Center clients needing transportation to and from medical appointments. \$1,000 can help us prevent a family from losing their home.

Every contribution, no matter the amount, brings us a step closer to ending homelessness in your community. We thank you for your support and compassion.



Lynda Schueler
Executive Director



Laura Kliever
Board President