



# on the home front

news from simpson housing services

## Ebonee and Takyra

Family Advocate Sharon Lige´ reflects on a family moving forward

**W**hen Ebonee and I first met, she was dealing with a lot of pain and hurt. She was not able to meet with me without crying or breaking down.



Ebonee and her daughter Takyra at the Simpson School Readiness Workshop.

Ebonee was not employed when she started the Simpson Family Housing program. She did not have much income, did not have adequate transportation, and did not have daycare. But what she did have was drive, motivation, and determination.

Ebonee also had a real motivation to better herself and to create a prosperous life for herself and her daughter. Ebonee would meet with me weekly, seeking out resources, checking-in regarding housing matters and the raising of her daughter, and working on her job search skills.

Ebonee has always had an awareness of self-care. She makes sure she takes good advantage of resources and services that will help her to achieve her goals. She became a familiar presence around Simpson. Even on days that she wasn't meeting with me, she was in the office utilizing the computers, internet service, telephone and other

*continued on page 7*



Malcolm, left, and his dad Ivan are graduates of the Family Housing program. Malcolm is a freshman at McNally Smith College of Music and Ivan is attending St. Paul Technical College for writing. Their stories were featured in the video on Simpson that was presented at the MCN awards ceremony. Go to [www.simpsonhousing.org](http://www.simpsonhousing.org) to view the video.

## Simpson Housing Services receives Nonprofit Award

**W**e are honored to have been selected to receive the 2009 Minnesota Nonprofit Award for Excellence in a Large Organization. The award is sponsored by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) and Map for Nonprofits.

In qualifying for the award, Simpson Housing Services demonstrated that we align with MCN's Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence, in the role that our nonprofit plays in society, in governance, planning, transparency and accountability. Judges were impressed with our diverse board of directors, outcomes-based evaluation process, and growth over the years.

As a supporter of Simpson, congratulations go out to you as well. Go to [www.minnesotanonprofitawards.org](http://www.minnesotanonprofitawards.org) for details on the award.



25<sup>th</sup> annual Homeless Memorial March and Service

Thursday Dec 17



Dan Poorman, President of the Simpson Board of Directors and Executive Director Julie Manworren with the 2009 Minnesota Nonprofit Award for Excellence in a Large Organization.

Simpson was presented the award (sponsored by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) and Map for Nonprofits) at an award luncheon on November 6 at the MCN annual conference.



**Our Mission**

To house, support and advocate for people experiencing homelessness.

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simpsonhousing.org

# Executive Director's Notes

Dear Friends of Simpson Housing,

Simpson recently received the 2009 Minnesota Nonprofit Award for Excellence. While we are deeply gratified to receive this recognition, the real honor belongs to all the men, women, youth, and children in our programs who work to end their homelessness.

As you read through this newsletter you will see how Ebonee, Yvonne, and Samuel have persevered despite the obstacles that have brought them to homelessness. Simpson's role is to provide competent, caring, committed advocacy and housing assistance along the way.

For many of the people in our programs, their experience with a Simpson staff member is the first relationship that they have had in life that promoted their best interest and believed in their ability to create a better future.

We do important work that we could not do without your support and partnership. Thank you to our board, staff, volunteers, donors, community partners, government contractors, and leaders.

**We have a unique opportunity to prevent future generations of homelessness.**

We have much left to do as we work to eliminate homelessness in our community. Yet it is good to take a moment to look each other in the eye, and say, "Bravo!" This acknowledgement adds momentum to our work.

Despite overwhelming economic conditions, with your partnership and support, we remain committed to the fact that no human being should be homeless and every person can be housed.

We know that our shelters serve as the entry point on the pathway to housing stability. We recognize that we have a unique opportunity when we are working with a family in housing to prevent future generations of homelessness.

Thank you for caring about our work. Together, we can prevent and end homelessness.

Sincerely,

Julie Manworren  
Executive Director  
612.455.0841  
jmanworren@simpsonhousing.org

## 25<sup>th</sup> annual Homeless Memorial March & Service Thursday, December 17

A large puppet has led the memorial march for many years. Allysen Hoberg of St. Stephen's shelter tells how the puppet was created.



Years ago, representatives from numerous organizations that serve the homeless community, sponsored a conference called "Out of the Shadows." It was specifically designed for people experiencing homelessness.

The event prompted a conversation about changing the way people see homeless people, bringing them "out of the shadows." The theme represented the fact that so few people even know that each night several hundred homeless people sleep right behind the Target Center.

We wanted to create something solemn for the homeless memorial that also spoke to the cold, the winter solstice, and the deep sadness our community feels during the memorial walk. Many clients helped build and design the puppet for the memorial march and service.

Large paper mache' puppets historically represent a sort of solidarity movement. The moon face on the puppet was given deeper meaning when John Luna, who probably worked the hardest on creating the puppet, passed away a few years later. His last name (Luna) means moon.

- Allysen Hoberg, Shelter Manager  
St. Stephen's Human Services

Read the entire story at [www.simpsonhousing.org](http://www.simpsonhousing.org).

# Sam K.

Men's shelter advocate Robert Hoffman helps shelter guest Sam K. get to the heart of the matter

Sam had stayed with us at the Simpson Men's Shelter for a night here and there over the last few years, but won a 28-day bed in February of 2009. "When you don't have to worry about where you're going to sleep, eat, and shower each night, it allows you to focus on some other things. Knowing where you're going to sleep each night gives you some peace of mind. It makes you feel like you belong somewhere," he said.

As I worked with him as his advocate and got to know him better, we had numerous conversations about what had happened in his life and how he'd

**Knowing where you're going to sleep each night makes you feel like you belong somewhere.**

gotten here. Sam is intelligent and charismatic, but he had struggled to keep jobs and healthy relationships in his life. While he was staying at the shelter, he visited the jobs room at St. Stephen's (a resource for job seekers experiencing homelessness) and put together an amazingly complete work history dating back to when he was eighteen years old.

Sam said to me that he knew that more than bad luck was playing a role in his relationships with employers and loved ones and that he suspected there was "something underneath" that he needed to address.

Sam enrolled in a local mental health group as we helped him look for housing programs that focused on helping support his efforts to address his mental

**During the time he spent at Simpson, Sam made some decisions to shift gears in his life.**

and emotional health. Although he was proud of having worked all of his life, he came to the conclusion that the work he needed to do now was "on himself."

Today, Sam is housed through the Spectrum Homeless Project that works to house people currently experiencing homelessness and holistically address their mental health concerns. Sam has also returned to the work force and is working at getting closer to his son. During the time he spent at Simpson, Sam made some challenging and positive decisions to shift gears in his life and focus on breaking the cycle that he'd repeated in the past.

-Robert Hoffmann, Simpson Shelter Advocate



left: Shelter advocate Robert Hoffman and former shelter guest Sam K. Robert worked with Sam to help him determine his barriers to maintaining housing. Sam is working and is in housing.

## Steve Carlson, Program Director of the Spectrum Homeless Project says this about Sam:

Sam has set his mark high with regard to success and he somehow, in spite of setbacks, keeps on seeking his goals. Currently Sam is working a job where he has to take the light-rail to the Mall of America, a bus from there across Bloomington, and the last several blocks he rides his bike. At shift's end, well past the time the final bus has rolled by, Sam rides his bike all the way back to the mall to catch the light rail, a trip that takes a good hour. That to me is a reflection of his passion, drive, and commitment to his own success.

## 2009 in our shelters

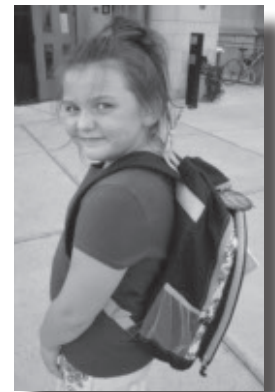
From January through September of this year, shelter advocates moved over 60 men from the shelter into housing.

From January through September in our women's shelter, we served 206 women. Our Women's Housing Partnership places guests from our women's shelter into housing. Over 91% of the women enrolled in the program are in housing.



Greater Twin Cities  
United Way

below: Alexyss loves her backpack. The School Readiness Workshop is the highlight of the new school year. All the school aged children in our family housing program receive a new backpack and the required school supplies for their grade level. Many Simpson volunteers help by donating all the supplies.



below: Staff members from Allianz Life Insurance helped to fill all the backpacks with school supplies for the event.



## Simpson Celebrates Community recognizes our community partnerships



*front row, left to right:* Simpson UMC members Clyde Gates, Mary Gates, and Charlotte Gray; Bishop Sally Dyck.  
*back row, left to right:* Rev. John Darlington-Simpson UMC and Joyce UMC; Simpson Executive Director Julie Manworren.

### Burnie Smith Award for Sustained Service

*This award is in honor of Burnie Smith, Simpson board member from 1982 – 2006. The award is given to a recipient who has demonstrated unflinching support for Simpson over an extended period of time.*

### Simpson United Methodist Church

Twenty-seven years ago, Simpson United Methodist Church (SUMC) opened its doors to the members of its neighborhood who were sleeping on the street. Could they ever have imagined that they were setting into motion the development of Simpson Housing Services?

Their spirit of hospitality and commitment to the basic dignity of each human being continues in the work that Simpson does today. SUMC hosts our annual service memorializing Minnesotans who died while homeless. They served as the administrative office location for the agency for twenty-three years, and the shelter has been located in the church basement for twenty-seven years.

Hosting a shelter for people experiencing homelessness for twenty-seven years is not easy service. We thank them for launching Simpson Housing Services and for continuing to give unflinching support to our ongoing success.



Simpson staff members Brian Bozeman and Mary Gallini. Brian is the shelter manager and Mary is the manager of our single adult housing programs.

The Simpson Celebrates Community event was held on Thursday, October 15 at Old Arizona Studios in Minneapolis. Initiated in 2006, this annual event is an opportunity for us to thank our partners within the community who have worked with us to end homelessness. The event culminated with the presentation of the Simpson Celebrates Community awards.

### You Are Remarkable Award

*This award is given in recognition of the tremendous strides made by a family or individual who has participated in one of the Simpson programs.*

### Yvonne

Women's Housing Partnership staff member Breanne McNeil describes Yvonne as: "A very strong, kind-hearted, loving, and smart woman."

Yvonne was one of the first participants in the Simpson Women's Housing Partnership, the single adult housing program that places the most frequent guests from our women's shelter into housing with ongoing support services. She has been steadily and happily housed for a year and a half in the same apartment building. While she was experiencing homelessness and staying at the women's shelter, she held down her job in food service at the metro dome, a job that she has to this day.



You Are Remarkable Award recipient Yvonne and Simpson Housing Specialist Breanne McNeil. Housing specialists work closely with participants in the adult housing programs.

Yvonne was accepted and is attending Minneapolis Community and Technical College where she will graduate

with a Human Services Degree. Throughout all these accomplishments, she has reconnected and

**Yvonne has reconnected and has grown closer to her three children and her grandchildren.**

has grown significantly closer to her three children and all of her grandchildren, who she now happily sees on a regular basis. Her tenacious spirit has helped her achieve all her goals.

Housing Specialist Breanne adds: "This woman has endured many hard times in her fifty-some years and has taken the good out of these hardships and created a better life for herself."



*left to right:* Board member Ken Middlebrooks; Jennifer Ho, Executive Director of Hearth Connection; Simpson Executive Director Julie Manworren.

### Champion Award

*This award is to honor an individual who has advocated for public policy and/or community change that is helpful to Simpson and the people we serve.*

#### Jennifer Ho, Executive Director of Hearth Connection

Jennifer is a tireless and committed advocate for public policy and community change and her work has directly impacted Simpson Housing Services and the people we serve.

Jennifer has led the Minnesota effort to demonstrate the return on investment of public funding for housing and support services for families, youth, and individuals who have experienced long-term homelessness.



Without her resolute, thoughtful, and compelling leadership, the \$13 million dollar allocation in the state's 2009-2011 biennial budget for the Long Term Homeless Services would not have been a reality. This funding supports our Family Roots Alliance and COHR Hearth teams, housing forty-one families (including 222 family members) and sixty-three individuals.

### Your Support Makes a Difference Award

*This award is to thank and honor an individual, faith community, foundation, or corporate donor who has invested significantly in the work of Simpson.*

#### Jim Frey and the Frey Foundation

This year's award honors both Jim Frey and the Frey Foundation of Minnesota. This foundation has a clear and strong voice on the issue of affordable housing. In 2005, the foundation made the decision to take a more strategic approach to its funding and address a major issue.

Minnesota was just beginning to embark on its initiative to end homelessness by 2010, and this

**We are able to provide support for approximately thirty families as a result of this foundation.**

foundation was committed to the success of the initiative. The family board sat down with representatives from the Family Housing Fund, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and the Corporation for Supportive Housing. Supportive housing (supplying basic services that can help people overcome problems that might otherwise put them back on the street) seemed like a perfect fit.

"That led us to kick off an affordable housing initiative that has an emphasis on supportive housing," Jim Frey, president and CEO reported. "If I'm doing any kind of advocacy work, it takes the forms of talking about the urgent need for individuals, foundations and the public to step up and play their parts," he added. Jim Frey serves as the vice chair of Heading Home Minnesota.

The Frey Foundation has invested \$220,000 in funding at Simpson Housing Services (two successive two-year grants each providing \$55,000 per year). The first grant supported the launch of our supportive services at Elliot Park and the second supported the launch of intensive supportive services at Passage Community Housing. Simpson Housing Services is able to provide quality support services for approximately thirty additional families as a result of the support of this foundation.



*above:* Simpson board member Renee McGivern and Jim Frey, recipient of the Your Support Makes a Difference Award.

*below:* Simpson board member Diane Fisher, Jay Cook and Simpson board member Karen Rye.



*far left photo, left to right:* Simpson emeritus board member and long-time advocate for the homeless community Patrick Wood; Mikkell Beckman, St. Stephen's Human Services Executive Director; Jennifer Ho, recipient of the Champion Award.



### Simpson Celebrates Community Volunteer Service Award

*This award is to honor a Simpson volunteer or group of volunteers who have made a substantial contribution to Simpson and the people we serve.*

#### St. Thomas the Apostle

**T**his church's work with us began over two years ago, fueled by kindness, enthusiasm,

passion and the idea of furnishing the new homes of families entering one of the Simpson Housing Services transitional housing programs.

A team of church members began by educating their parish on issues of homelessness and of the

**“Volunteers pick up items and deliver directly to the new homes of families.”**

work of Simpson. They encouraged members to donate furniture so that people could move into apartments that feel like a home. The church community rallied and the items began to flood in. In addition to furniture, members also donated art, lamps, rugs, as well as new household items.

The parish members donate countless hours of time and limitless amounts of energy. Volunteers pick up items from various locations and deliver directly to the new homes of families. In November 2007, the first family received items through their efforts and since the beginning of the partnership, they have furnished the homes of fourteen families in our family housing program.

This group is an overall supporter of the mission of Simpson. In late 2008, they set out to raise additional funds for the agency and in early 2009 donated over \$14,000 to the agency. Family Housing Program Manager Cincere Burns says: “The commitment and passion of this group is amazing to me. I am honored to have worked with them from the beginning of this project. They are committed to both the homeless community and to Simpson.”

**View our volunteer opportunities**  
[www.simpsonhousing.org](http://www.simpsonhousing.org)

*left to right:*  
Family Housing Program Manager Cincere Burns; Tom McGuire, Bill Nolan, and Sheila Pierce from St. Thomas the Apostle.



Juanita and her family are in our Rental Assistance Program (RAP). They recently moved into their new home. In addition to furniture, toys, household items and accessories, St. Thomas the Apostle brought flowers for Juanita.

Please remember Simpson and the work we do to end homelessness in your estate planning.



left to right. Gaby Brausam, Mike Endrizzi, and Arah Bahn. The Dreez Climbing Team serves frequently at the women's shelter.



Lyndale UCC has been serving meals at the men's shelter for over twenty years. Church member Fred Kuhnen chops green peppers.



The Tzu Chi Foundation serves monthly at the men's shelter. left to right: YC Lee (Tzu Chi); Simpson Executive Director Julie Manworren; Jennifer Lo and FT Lian (Tzu Chi); and Simpson board member Ben Reed.

## Ginger and Adelle

The first volunteers to serve dinner at the women's shelter continue cooking after seven years

**G**inger and Adele, from Good Samaritan United Methodist Church in Edina, were the first volunteers to cook and serve dinner at the Simpson Women's Shelter seven years ago. They have returned nearly every month with their kettles of hot food, colorful tablecloths, cheery flowers, and their warm smiles.



The guests staying at the shelter love to see them come. And when they're asked why they continue to volunteer, they respond, almost simultaneously: "We just love it. We love the friends we make and the interaction with the women. And it's nice to help out and give back to the community."

Ginger and Adele believe that the chocolate they bring every month is perhaps the most welcome sight when they visit. The bags of make-up, toiletries, purses, paperbacks, coats and gloves are also treats. Ginger says: "We like things to be special. Everyone likes the same things and we like to bring the extras that the women may not get very often."

**We recognize that homelessness can happen to any one of us. Anyone can have a little bad luck.**

When everyone is sitting around after dinner (guests, volunteers, and staff), sipping coffee, eating brownies, chatting, and learning to crochet from Adele and Ginger, the shelter is more than just a safe place for the night—it's a coffee clutch and a place to belong. "We recognize that homelessness can happen to any one of us. Anyone can have a little bad luck."

## Timely donation needs

household cleaning supplies  
blankets and new pillows  
new men's and women's thermal underwear  
lip balm  
men's and women's gloves and hats  
holiday gifts for our shelter guests  
Metro bus cards

### Ebonee and Takyra *continued from page 1*

office equipment to complete job searches. She is now driving her own car, working a full time job and has since graduated to the Simpson Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

Ebonee has always been a very active parent. Upon entering kindergarten, she rarely missed a day of "in-house" check-ins at her daughter Takyra's school. She always explained that she wanted to be her daughter's primary teacher, focusing on what she needs to do at home with her first. Ebonee also

**Ebonee is very dedicated to making sure her child has the best education.**

actively participates in our Soar parent workshops and family events. She is quick to lend a helping hand or share information about resources that she has researched and discovered on her own.

Ebonee stands tall now, walking upright and head-strong. She strives to be the best that she can be, and encourages others to do the same. Once you have met her, she is unforgettable, remarkable, and distinguished in your mind. She is proud of who she is. Others have described Ebonee as resourceful, hard-working, determined, consistent, appreciative, caring, kind, and loyal. She is a supportive friend and a concerned, thoughtful, dedicated, and fun parent. Ebonee is very dedicated to making sure her child has the best education and the best of everything she needs.

Trials and tribulations have come through her life, and inevitably will continue to rise. But Ebonee continues to push forward. Ebonee recently volunteered to assist the family housing team interview for a new staff member and added a lot of great input in the process (her recommendation was hired!)

*-Sharon Lige, Simpson Family Housing Advocate*



Simpson Housing Services has met all standards and is qualified to display the Charities Review Council Seal, which demonstrates accountability to donors and funders.

**giveMN.org**  
Click. Contribute. Change Your World.

Search for our Simpson Housing Services page at the newly launched [givemn.org](http://givemn.org) site.

100% of your donation will go towards our work with people experiencing homelessness.



Educating our society about homelessness can lead to change.

Invite Simpson staff to facilitate a discussion at your workplace or faith community.

Contact us at  
612.874.8683.



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*Retired - 3M*

Patrick Wood  
*Longtime advocate for the homeless community*

**Our mission.** To house, support and advocate for people experiencing homelessness.

winter 2009

# on the home front

news from simpson housing services

## Simpson Housing Services

2100 Pillsbury Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
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Visit  
[www.simpsonhousing.org](http://www.simpsonhousing.org)  
and sign-up  
for our e-news

## 25<sup>th</sup> annual Homeless Memorial March and Service

**Thursday, December 17**

5 pm | **March & Silent Vigil**  
Hennepin County Government Center

6:30 pm | **Service of Remembrance**  
Simpson United Methodist Church

7 pm | **Community Meal**  
Simpson Men's Shelter

All are welcome. Shuttles to the march will depart Kmart, Lake St & 1st Ave, Mpls. at 4:20 pm sharp  
Go to [www.simpsonhousing.org](http://www.simpsonhousing.org) for full event details