

## A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### SEASONS OF CHALLENGE AND CHANGE



Happy fall, friends! Wow, what a year it has been – filled with so many unexpected challenges and changes, as well as numerous joys. In January none of us could have predicted a global pandemic impacting every

facet of our lives. In spite of that, our home has remained full as women and children have come and gone, work continued on our expansion and renovation project, milestones were reached, memories made ... I have so much to share with you about all that's been happening at 1325 Cherry Street!

At the start of this year, our board, capital campaign team and fundraising volunteers were putting finishing touches on plans for a ribbon cutting and open house in the spring plus mapping out other events for the year.

We quickly realized we needed to scale back, cancel or postpone all of the in-person gatherings we'd planned and began to explore alternatives. More than 1,000 people tuned in for our *mostly virtual* ribbon cutting and open house July 22. And for the first time in five years, we will not be gathering for our annual "Sowing Seeds of Hope" event in October. Like every one of you, we are challenged to do so many things in brand new ways. These are not easy times, but we are reminded daily that with God, all things are possible.

In this issue of **LEAFlet**, please pay special attention to new ways to support our work here at Mustard Seed. On behalf of those we serve, thank you for keeping our guests in your prayers and for all of the ways you have supported us over the past 25 years.

Love,



## WHAT'S COOKIN' AT MUSTARD SEED

Walk into our home almost any day and your nose will likely guide you toward the kitchen, where you'll find our dear Leona. She might be whipping up a birthday cake or skillet cornbread. Or making soup, chili or stew. Eggplant Parmesan or curried lamb. Her specialties are mouth-watering baked goods and soul-nourishing food, mostly from recipes she learned growing up in Detroit. Generations of guests and volunteers have been mentored in the kitchen by her.



Leona baking her first birthday cake in our new kitchen.

Recently, a current guest approached Leona very seriously with a request. "Miss Leona, can I ask you a question? I don't ask for much ... but do you know how to make Shepherd's Pie? It's really been on my mind lately. I'd like to learn how to make it. Can we do that soon?"

So, Shepherd's Pie is on the menu just as this newsletter goes to print. And if you'd like Leona's recipe, you can download it from the media section of our website or shoot an email to [info@themustardseedshelter.org](mailto:info@themustardseedshelter.org) and we will send it to you.

### Also cookin' in this issue:

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# FRIENDS OF MUSTARD SEED SHELTER

*Helping Us Water the Seed*



Board member Bill Hartl and Amy talk about Friends of Mustard Seed Shelter in a Facebook video.

A few years ago, around the time we were beginning work on our Extend the Branch project in earnest, ideas were flowing about how we would support a larger budget – and sustain Mustard Seed far into the future. Board member Bill Hartl brought forward a detailed plan for **Friends of Mustard Seed Shelter**, a giving program that relies on building an ever-branching network of friends to help “water the seed” and continue Mustard Seed’s transformative work.

We’re happy to announce that we officially launched this new giving program at the ribbon-cutting and dedication in July and we now have about 50 new Friends making a monthly or annual commitment! Becoming a Friend is easy. For individuals, the

minimum annual commitment is just \$50, which can be paid all at once or in monthly or quarterly payments. The minimum annual commitment for businesses, organizations and churches is \$500. Monthly or quarterly payments are encouraged to help avoid the normal seasonal “dips” in our cash flow through the year.

Learn more and sign up today at [themustardseedshelter.org/friends](https://themustardseedshelter.org/friends). You will need to set up a PayPal account, but this is a simple, safe and secure way to set up recurring payments. You can also work directly with Mustard Seed to set up other payment arrangements. Email [info@themustardseedshelter.org](mailto:info@themustardseedshelter.org) or call 989-755-4741. If you need additional information or printed materials, please contact us!

**GUEST SPOTLIGHT** Marchelle and her family recently moved from homeless to housed thanks to their time at Mustard Seed. Marchelle and her three children, ages 16, 14 and nine, came to us earlier this year just before the Governor’s stay-at-home order. Because they had safe shelter, Marchelle was able to stay home from work and be with her children during a particularly scary and uncertain time. She has now returned to work and our **Move Team** and **NEST** volunteers helped the family move to a new apartment. The family is doing great in their new home.



A young guest introduced us to the joys of a “quarantine snack” in early May when we took a stroll to 7-11 on a pretty day.



Youngest member of the Can Do Crew!

We are blessed to be part of a generous, loving community! Since our founding, an important part of our ministry has included helping our guests with starter items for what may be the first home of their own. Over the years, a section of our basement grew to off-site storage areas and what staff and volunteers lovingly called our “giveaway center,” occupying several rooms at SS Peter & Paul Church. Earlier in 2019, a group of dedicated volunteers helped us move this center to buildings on Ring and Burnham Streets in Saginaw.

This small but “always there” part of our ministry has evolved into an ongoing and growing collaboration with Hopevale Church and its Can Do Crew. In 2019, we named the NEST program, which served 127 individuals, encompassing guests of Mustard Seed as well as referrals from 34 agencies, including other Saginaw shelters. **As of September 1, the Can Do Crew and our Move Team have already helped more than 100 individuals transition from homeless to housed or potentially avoid becoming homeless for want of basic household items.**

# BENEFIT ALBUM FOR MUSTARD SEED SHELTER



Help Them Find a Soft Place to Fall



Dr. Don Steele has given Mustard Seed a tremendous gift with this benefit album. See videos on our YouTube channel.

When Dr. Don Steele first visited our home in 2016, he was deeply moved by meeting some of our guests and hearing *their* stories. He also formed relationships with women and children experiencing homelessness and witnessed their transformation during their time at Mustard Seed. Inspired by those encounters and his desire to find a unique

experiencing homelessness. Order CDs and USBs via PayPal donation on our website at [themustardseedshelter.org/album](http://themustardseedshelter.org/album) or stop by these locations to pick up a copy:

**Amazin' Mitten** | 646 S. Main St.  
Frankenmuth, MI | (989) 262-8010  
[amazinmitten.com](http://amazinmitten.com)

**The Listening Room** | 404 Court Street  
Saginaw, MI | (989) 792-3816  
[thelisteningroomsaginaw.com](http://thelisteningroomsaginaw.com)

way to support the work we do here, Dr. Don invited a number of fellow musicians to join him in recording an album as a benefit for Mustard Seed.

*Help Them Find a Soft Place to Fall* is a true labor of love that features songs by several beloved country and "Americana" storytelling-songwriters. Many local musicians took part in this special project. Stories of struggle, perseverance and hope are woven throughout these songs – not unlike the stories of women who find themselves at our home on Cherry Street.

*Soft Place to Fall* would not have been possible without Dr. Don, his fellow musicians, and the businesses and individuals who underwrote recording costs, licensing fees and other expenses associated with producing the album. Thanks to these generous sponsors, we are able to offer this 20-song album for a **suggested donation of just \$25**, every penny of which will immediately be directed to provide vital services to women and children

If you know of a business, organization or church willing to display a poster and/or a small quantity of CDs and USBs, please email [album@themustardseedshelter.org](mailto:album@themustardseedshelter.org) or call 989-755-4741.



The album is available in two formats: CD and USB. Both are beautifully packaged and make lovely gifts.



## NEST NEEDS

- New and gently used furniture and household items
- Move Team volunteers
- A goal for the next year is to purchase a truck with a lift

Learn more about this ongoing and evolving collaboration and see our NEST wish list at [themustardseedshelter.org/next](http://themustardseedshelter.org/next).

*Just as a mother bird selects the right elements to make its nest a warm, inviting home, so do our NEST volunteers.*

Often, those at greatest risk of recurring homelessness have little left over after paying the rent. Buying food takes priority over having a table and other basic furnishings most of us take for granted. We had a call recently from a counselor who said they had someone who reported being sad and depressed because they did not have a coffee pot so they couldn't even enjoy a cup of coffee in their own home.

Beyond helping with the physical move, NEST volunteers help guests personalize their new space and join in celebrating the joyous occasion of move-in day.





## COPIES STILL AVAILABLE THE MUSTARD SEED DOCUMENTARY

Did you miss out on last summer's premiere of **The Mustard Seed** documentary at the Court Street Theater – or wish you'd picked up a DVD to share with your church, organization or book club? Filmmaker Luka Dziubyna spent 10 weeks with some of our guests in early 2019 filming this gritty, no-holds-barred depiction of poverty, addiction and the complex factors that lead to homelessness. The film highlights the work Mustard Seed has done since 1995 to help women and their families end the cycle and move to permanent housing, while finding their role in the

Saginaw community. Call or email us for a copy of the DVD (suggested \$10 donation). The video is also available on Amazon Prime at [bit.ly/mustardseeddoc](https://bit.ly/mustardseeddoc) (Prime members view free).

## MUSTARD SEED TO BE FEATURED ON FAMILY LIFE RADIO

**Focus on Ministry Sept. 28-Oct. 3**

Be sure to tune in to Family Life Radio 99.7 Sept. 28-Oct. 3 and listen for mentions of Mustard Seed Shelter during the station's Focus on Ministry spotlights! We are so grateful to Family Life Radio for helping our stories reach the ears and hearts of more people throughout their listening area. Please help us spread the word!



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amy Bartels Roe, Executive Director  
James Jaime, President  
Kathy Bonn, Vice President  
Sigrid Ewers, Secretary  
Leona Sullivan, Treasurer

Michael Haremski  
William Hartl  
Ayiteh Sowah  
Michelle Stolsmark  
Cheryl Taylor

## CARES ACT TAX INCENTIVES FOR CHARITABLE GIVING

**For taxpayers who itemize**, the 60 percent of adjusted gross income limit that normally applies to cash donations will be waived for 2020 taxes, meaning you could conceivably deduct 100 percent of your AGI to Mustard Seed or other public charities. **If you do not itemize** deductions on your 2020 taxes, you can still reduce your taxable income by up to \$300 for cash donations to any public 501(c)(3) charities such as Mustard Seed Shelter. A married couple can reduce taxable income by \$600 for these contributions. In both cases, donations to donor-advised funds are not deductible.

Please consult your financial advisor or tax consultant to see how these rules apply to you.

## PREFER TO RECEIVE UPDATES BY EMAIL?

Please help us reduce printing and postage costs and build our email database.

Email [info@themustardseedshelter.org](mailto:info@themustardseedshelter.org) or sign up online at [themustardseedshelter.org](https://themustardseedshelter.org).

### OUR MISSION:

*We water the seed of inner strength in homeless women so they can make a better life for themselves and their children.*



1325 Cherry Street | Saginaw, MI | 48601  
989-755-4741 | [info@themustardseedshelter.org](mailto:info@themustardseedshelter.org)

[themustardseedshelter.org](https://themustardseedshelter.org)

