

# LEAFLET



News and Updates from Our Home on Cherry Street

Mother's Day 2022

## A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### HONORING MOMS



"I'm so thankful to my mom, Karen, for the gift of life."  
— Amy

Hello, friends! We are doing something a little different for Mother's Day this year (yes, Mother's Day is coming up on May 8!), combining our April Leaflet with our traditional Mother's Day appeal. This issue is dedicated to moms — those we serve here in our home, as well as all of the moms in our lives.

Moms are always on our minds at Mustard Seed Shelter — from our earliest days, they have been part of our mission statement. By watering the seed of inner strength in women who are struggling, we are also helping them make a better life for their children. So, when you support Mustard Seed with a gift of any amount, you are making a difference today and you are impacting future generations. That is a powerful gift!

Sharing the story of one or more guests has long been a tradition with our annual Mother's Day letter. Today we are able to provide a warm, welcoming space for up to 40 individuals, including up to seven moms with their kids.

Guests on the single side of our home are also often moms, so at any given time, we might have 15-20 moms here on Cherry Street. The circumstances and stories are as varied as the individuals. We've highlighted a few stories on the next page, but I encourage you to visit [themustardseedshelter.org/stories](https://themustardseedshelter.org/stories) to read more. We'll be adding more stories throughout the year.

**If you are looking for a special gift to honor a mother in your life this Mother's Day, please consider Mustard Seed Shelter.** We will send a card, email or text message on your behalf, or provide you with a graphic and message you may use. You can even give a Friends membership if you choose. Make your gift online 24/7 at [themustardseedshelter.org/give-now](https://themustardseedshelter.org/give-now), where you will find a list of many giving options – or use the enclosed envelope.

On behalf of all of those we serve, thank you for making it possible for Mustard Seed to extend welcome, love and shelter to moms and their families this Mother's Day and all year long.

Love,



## OUR TEAM IS BLOSSOMING!



Stacey

Trina

Shelly

Please join us in welcoming our newest team members — Stacey Forejt, Trina Morrow and Shelly Stolsmark.

Stacey and Trina are recent guests; Shelly is also a former guest and a long-time member of our board of directors. All three serve on our Guest Services Support Team, providing professional case management services to improve stability, self-sufficiency, and personal growth and development for our guests.

## FRIENDS OF MUSTARD SEED SHELTER

Friends make a monthly or annual commitment to sustain the work of Mustard Seed. We are grateful to all who support our work by sharing their time, talent and treasure. Contact us about becoming a Friend, planned giving options and volunteer opportunities. Visit the Give Now section on our website to see more ways to help.

**Since launching our Friends program in July 2020, we have grown to 300 strong!**

We always have room for more friends — individuals and organizations.

**IS IT TIME  
TO RENEW YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP?**

# A SPRING BOUQUET OF STORIES

Many are college educated. Some come from loving, supportive families, and others are survivors of childhood abuse and neglect. Often, those experiencing homelessness struggle with drug addiction, mental illness, learning disabilities and other challenges that make it difficult to hold down a job and pay for housing. Medical issues can turn temporary setbacks into lifetime struggles. Over the years, we've gathered writings, video and audio testimonies of the life-changing impact of Mustard Seed and we are creating a space on our website to house them. Peruse the "bouquet" of excerpts here and then visit [themustardseedshelter.org/stories](http://themustardseedshelter.org/stories) to view our growing garden of stories from those who make up our Mustard Seed family.

**"I'M SO THANKFUL  
TO BE AT  
MUSTARD SEED.  
I CAN BE MYSELF HERE.  
I CAN BREATHE."**

— Emerald

At just 22, Emerald says her journey has been a long one. She bounced from house to house throughout her childhood and says she is now trying to break generational curses to prevent her own (future) children from experiencing what she has. Emerald now has a job and is going to college. She's setting goals for her life and working toward them, giving God glory every step of the way.



**"NOT ONLY DID MUSTARD SEED PROVIDE US WITH A COMFORTABLE PLACE TO TRANSITION OUR LIFE, BUT THEY ALSO ASSISTED MY FAMILY IN FINDING HOUSING WHEN WE WERE READY - AND NEVER MADE US FEEL LIKE WE NEEDED TO HURRY OR WERE A BURDEN."**

— Stacey

A master-level social worker and award-winning sociological researcher, Stacey became homeless as a result of drug addiction. Stacey and her two children spent 3 months at Mustard Seed and moved to their own home last fall. She is now our Guest Services Coordinator, helping guests make a plan for their lives and connecting them to services and resources in our community.



**"MUSTARD SEED HELPED - AND CONTINUES TO HELP - ME TO GET BETTER AS A PERSON. AND IF I CAN GET BETTER, I CAN HELP SOMEONE ELSE GET BETTER."**

— Trina

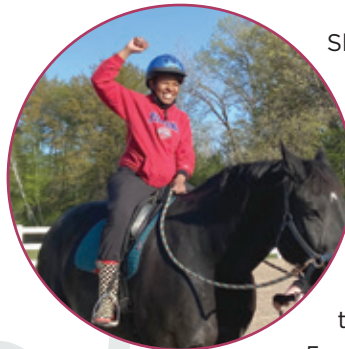
Trina celebrated nine years of sobriety this year, after struggling with a crack addiction for more than half of her life. She was a guest at Mustard Seed twice — most recently in 2020-2021, moving into her own apartment last June. Trina is now a member of our Guest Services Support team and occasionally shares her awesome culinary talents with us. Her secret barbecue sauce will knock your socks off!



**"RISING ABOVE IGNORANCE IS WHAT I PLAN TO DO. I KNOW IT MAY BE HARD, BUT I FEEL I CAN ACCOMPLISH IT. HOW ABOUT YOU?"**

— Teki

She's a poet. A dreamer. A survivor. Teki had big plans for her future while studying environmental toxicology at MSU, then illness sidelined her plans. Even though she eventually found good-paying work in factory jobs, work-related injuries and domestic violence led to her becoming homeless for nearly 5 years. Teki spent close to a year at Mustard Seed. Today she is in her own place, taking classes at Delta, dreaming big and (re)discovering her passions. The quote above is from Teki's "inspirational creed."



**JILLIAN PAETZ BROOKS**  
JUNE 6, 1978-OCTOBER 19, 2021

A beloved member of our Mustard Seed family who battled with addiction for 25 years, Jillian found sobriety, discipline and a sense of self image in a loving community atmosphere at our home. Our golf outing this year is dedicated to Jillian's memory.





# AROUND OUR HOME



The first few months of 2022 have been busy in our home! We're not quite back to "normal," but as housing options begin to open up again, we are seeing more families move on to the next step in their journey faster. No matter the length of stay, we celebrate numerous special moments while they are here — from birthdays and holidays to starting school to new jobs and more. Here are some highlights since our last update:

A record 60 families were provided with Christmas gifts and gift cards thanks to so many generous secret Santas! This is not something we have ever promoted, but is an important part of our tradition and ministry. We are grateful to all those who help us continue our tradition of making sure current and former guests feel loved and special at Christmastime.

- Already this year we've welcomed **16 guests**.
- As of April 1, we have **19 women** and **15 children** at our home.
- **14 guests** have moved into **permanent supportive housing**.
- **4 guests** found **employment**.

We are now holding weekly **parenting classes** on site, in partnership with **Youth Protection Council**. Five moms completed the first session and the second session is in progress. The unique, home-based education program reinforces strong family bonds by involving parents and their children.



There's always time for cupcakes!

Thanks to a special friend of Mustard Seed, we enjoyed an outing to see the circus — what a treat!



Saginaw's annual Point in Time (PIT) count was Feb. 23. Along with other shelters and homeless assistance providers — and a whole slew of awesome volunteers — we take to the streets at least every other year to conduct a count of individuals experiencing homelessness in our community.

If you saw folks in neon orange attire like Kandice and Stacey walking around Saginaw in late February, they were helping with this sobering and very necessary task.

Irene and Leona take a break after preparing corned beef and cabbage for 40. Phew!



During her winter internship with us, our SVSU intern, Kandice, was an essential part of daily life at our home. Here she is helping kids with their homework.

SVSU Occupational Therapy students brought lots 'o fun for everyone with arts and crafts for St. Patrick's Day.



Tiesha signed her lease with Saginaw-Shiawassee Habitat for Humanity! She and her two sons — and one on the way — were able to move into their home in early April.

Soon we will have a special fitness area in our home, thanks to a grant from the St. John Lutheran ELCA Saginaw Legacy Foundation. This former downtown Saginaw church served our community for 168 years and has left a loving legacy that will live on at Mustard Seed and with those who spend time here.



# SHELTER NEEDS

**SUMMER CAMP CREW** — As we look ahead to the summer months, our team would like to provide regular daily activities for the younger guests here at our home. This would be ideal for a youth group, family, work team or group of friends who love to do arts and crafts, play games, sing songs and plan other camp-like activities. *Time commitment: 2-4 hours depending on activity*

**AMAZON PRO** — Did you hone your Amazon shopping skills over the last two years? We could use your help setting up a wish list for our home! *Time commitment: est. 2 hours initially/as available for periodic updates*

**WORDPRESS GURU** — We have an ongoing need for someone to help keep our website updated and in tip-top shape. *Time commitment: a few hours a month*

**VIDEO EDITOR** — We have an immediate and ongoing need for someone to help with editing and potentially creating new videos. *Time commitment: a few hours a month*

**GUEST WELCOME SETS** — New pillows, towel sets (hand, bath towel, washcloth) and collapsible mesh laundry baskets are an ongoing need.

Guests are provided with these items for their stay at Mustard Seed and take them when they leave. We can also always use basic cleaning supplies (no bleach) for our home and to help guests setting up new homes.

**HOUSEHOLD ITEMS FOR NEST** — Spring cleaning and have gently used items needing a good home? Please contact NEST, a collaboration with Saginaw's Partnership Center. For details, visit [saginawpartnershipcenter.org/the-nest-program](http://saginawpartnershipcenter.org/the-nest-program).

## 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](http://themustardseedshelter.org).

# UPCOMING EVENTS



**Friday, April 29 5-10 p.m.** — Mustard Seed Night at Oracle Brewing | 122 M. Michigan Ave.

Visit Oracle any time in April and enjoy their Pints for Positive Change beer of choice. Oracle is a gratuity-free establishment, so all tips go directly to support women and children experiencing homelessness in our community. Join us on April 29 for a festive evening to celebrate and support Mustard Seed. You can also get pints, growlers and howlers to go. [oraclebrewing.com](http://oraclebrewing.com)

**Sunday, May 8** — Mother's Day — pray for all moms

**Saturday, Aug. 20** — 2nd Annual Sowing Seeds of Hope Golf Outing at Beech Hollow Golf Course

Sponsors and golfers are needed!

Email [golf@themustardseedshelter.org](mailto:golf@themustardseedshelter.org) or visit [themustardseedshelter.org/golfouting](http://themustardseedshelter.org/golfouting) for more information.

**Thursday, Oct. 6** — 6th Annual Sowing Seeds of Hope Fall Fundraiser at SVRC Marketplace

Email [amyroe@themustardseedshelter.org](mailto:amyroe@themustardseedshelter.org) to inquire about sponsorship, donate raffle items or join our planning team.

**thrivent**

Mustard Seed is a **Thrivent Choice®-enrolled organization**. Through the Thrivent programs, we are eligible

to receive grant dollars, fee-free donations and support from Thrivent Action Team service projects.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Kathy Bonn, Vice President  
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Michael Haremski, Treasurer

Ayiteh Sowah  
Shelly Stolsmark  
Leona Sullivan  
Cheryl Taylor

## OUR MISSION:

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



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