



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. [Romans 15:13]

A Message from the President

My association with St. Luke's Guesthouse spans 8 years. During that time there has been one constant – to provide a safe, warm and stable space for homeless people to “catch a break.” A place where people can regroup and start an earnest journey to self-sufficiency and secure sustainable housing, thereby finding stability in their lives – maybe for the first time. That was an objective right from the start and continues to be as we move forward into 2025.

The time has come for me to retire, and I will step down as of January 1, 2025. It has been my honor, my privilege and my pleasure to have served on the Board of Friends of St. Luke's, Inc. since the beginning, and to have overseen the running of the Guesthouse this past year. I will miss all things related to Friends of St. Luke's and St. Luke's Guesthouse: the people, the connectivity, and the opportunity to help those striving for self-sufficiency and seeking sustainable housing. I look forward to time with my grandchildren and with family near and far, reading books (without falling asleep) and enjoying the outdoors. I won't stay away for long and will soon join the growing ranks of volunteers and donors, and of course I will remain a supporter. I am grateful for the opportunity to help make a difference in the lives of those who have spent time at St. Luke's Guesthouse and The Finding Hope Program, or have been helped by Random Acts of Kindness.

The mission of St. Luke's Guesthouse is possible because of our dedicated staff, our maintenance volunteer, volunteers, Board members and your continued interest in and financial donations to Friends of St. Luke's Inc., supporting Random Acts of Kindness, Finding Hope and St. Luke's Guesthouse – together we empower our guests to become self-sufficient.

To everyone we say a heartfelt THANK YOU.

*Tamsin Lucey
President of the Board of Directors*

Random Acts of Kindness

30 blessing bags of personal care items were put together, 15 for men and 15 for women with donations from the Southbridge Middle School National Junior Honor Society, the St. Vincent de Paul-Webster Dudley Chapter and others. The blessing bags will be distributed to people on the street or coming into sober houses.



THANK YOU

to the Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale for donations of Christmas gifts

to the participants in the Community Thanksgiving Service for the Offering of \$530

to participants in the Bemis Scarecrows for Solutions Fundraiser

to the local community businesses for \$800 in donations

**to local foundations for development grants:
Hyde/Dexter-Russell Charitable Foundation
Schwartz Charitable Foundation
St. Vincent's Healthcare Fund
Catholic Campaign for Human Development
United Way of South Central Massachusetts**

to our staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners for your generous resolve to make the dream of safe and stable shelter come true for everyone.



A Reflection by a Board Member: Carla Delacruz Davila

Throughout my journey, both professionally and personally, I've come to realize how interconnected we all are, and how vital it is to lift each other up. What continues to drive me is the belief that everyone, regardless of their background, deserves access to the resources and care needed to thrive.



When I think about why I serve on Friends of St. Luke's Board, it's clear that our mission aligns with my deep-rooted desire to create lasting change. It's not just about offering temporary solutions but fostering long-term growth and stability for individuals and families in need. Our efforts extend beyond addressing basic necessities: We're equipping people with the tools, connections, and opportunities to rebuild their lives.

Serving on this Board allows me to live out my values and contribute to work that not only helps others but also builds a stronger, more resilient community. For me, this work is more than a commitment; it's a calling to ensure that no one is left behind and everyone has a chance to move from surviving to thriving.

Carla Delacruz Davila is an alumna of the Leadership Worcester Class of 2024 and Co-founder and President of The WellStorm, Inc.



The National Honor Society of Southbridge Middle School made Blessing Bags

Caroline's Story: Home at Last!

Caroline and her son Steven (not their real names) came to us at the end of 2022. Caroline had not had her own apartment in several years. She also had medical issues. During her stay she was an example of how a guest can work with St. Luke's expectations. She saved money, searched for an apartment, and followed through with all the tasks she was asked to do.

Several months ago, when it appeared she would not be eligible for low-income housing, Caroline became even more determined to find sustainable housing. By November, she and Steven were settling into a 3-bedroom apartment within walking distance of Steven's school. Caroline plans to participate in Finding Hope.

Caroline did more than merely focus on her own goals. She encouraged new guests when they first arrived and she assisted the staff with small tasks. She was truly a partner with the groups, volunteers, and donors who have made her journey to self-sufficiency possible.

A View from the Staff

On November 13th, at approximately 3 am, a devastating 7-alarm fire broke out on Union Street in Southbridge. 12 families--over 30 people-- were displaced. Tony Haven, our outreach volunteer, was at the site by 8 am, speaking

with responders and coordinating communication among the different agencies. St. Luke's partnered with the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Harrington/UMASS Hospital, Bethlehem's Closet, the Southbridge Fire Department, Catholic Charities, The Center of Hope, You, Inc. Open Sky, Wellstorm, Inc., and numerous small groups, volunteers and community leaders to provide food, transportation, and donations of clothing, toys, luggage, and furniture. By the evening of November 13th, everyone had a place to go.

Erika Ortiz, our House Manager, worked with local agencies to contact those who needed housing. She did screenings for possible admissions to the Guesthouse and she referred the victims to a variety of resources.

Tamsin Lucey coordinated with Tony and Erika to arrange for donations and referrals.

The Southbridge community and surrounding towns came together to make it possible for these individuals and families to rebuild their lives. Our quick actions and cooperation show the power of a community working together in longstanding relationships. The Friends of St. Luke's is grateful to be part of this network.

Mary Jo Mason, Case Manager

News from the Guesthouse

For the months of September, October and November we provided 670 nights of shelter and case management for 17 men, women and children, ages 1 month to 70 years. Over the 3 months, 2 families found affordable housing in a very difficult housing market and one family left to live with relatives. At the beginning of December, we had 5 guests with several more in the intake process.

Finding Hope/Preventing Eviction

We currently have openings for the Finding HOPE program. If you or someone you know is behind on their rent or bills call us at **774-230-6416** to see if you might qualify to join the program.

What Is St. Luke's Guesthouse?

Founded in 2017, St. Luke's is the only homeless shelter serving single men, women, and families in the fourteen towns of southern Worcester County. We receive no government funding and operate thanks to the generosity of local donors, individual, churches, banks, and grants from local businesses, foundations, and organizations.

Joy is worshipful tears

dripped into grateful smile....

Joy is the divine sublime in you. [J. Drew Lanham]



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Website: <https://www.friendsofstlukes.org/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StLukesGuesthouse/>