

Rumford Group Homes, Inc.



Reporter

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Rumford, ME 04276

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www.rumfordgrouphomes.org

Welcome Home...One Family's Success Story

Below is the story of one family's experience of homelessness during the biggest change of their lives.

Our story is one like many others lately. My fiancé and I found out late in 2011 that we were going to have a baby. He was due in July and we thought that we had plenty of time to prepare. We didn't foresee all of the obstacles that would stand in our way. While we were very excited about having our first child, we were devastated to find ourselves without a home and with no place to raise our new son that was on the way, whether we were ready or not.

In January of 2012, we became homeless. We tried to stay with family, but it didn't work out. We even had to sleep in our car for a few nights. My fiancé had a job, but his income wasn't quite enough to get us an apartment and pay for all of the bills and buy things that

we would need for the baby.

We called many places, and we were able to get into the Rumford Family Center. The shelter is for homeless families and has five different bedrooms. We were able to move in and finally stop worrying about where we would be able to sleep on a daily basis. My fiancé continued to work and we were able to save money and get things for our baby.

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assistance from the case managers who work at the shelter. They helped us apply for housing vouchers, WIC, and other programs that helped us prepare for our son. We feel like we got support that we really needed at a time when everything felt like an obstacle. It was tempting to give up, but that wasn't an option for us. The staff worked on many different

issues with us while we continued to work on goals to get to our own housing. They met with us,



Joshua, born in late July, was the newest addition to the family.

made us feel welcome, and continued to help us work with a system that is really difficult to understand. They also gave moral support and kept our spirits up.

We finally located an apartment and were able to leave the shelter. We moved into our new place and set up the nursery for the baby. We received parenting education and support with getting the rest of the things we needed for him like a pack and play, diapers, and clothing. Our case manager kept working with us, even though we had left the shelter. Then, the rug was pulled out from under us again and we ended up having to leave again after my fiancé was laid off from his job unexpectedly.

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The Rumford Family Center, pictured above, is a 12 bed emergency shelter for homeless individuals and families.



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RUMFORD GROUP HOMES, INC. MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Rumford Group Homes, Inc. to develop and administer programs to enhance the safety and quality of life for children, youth, and families through a quality, comprehensive continuum of care in the fields of social services, education, corrections, mental health, and housing.

Executive Director's Corner

Dear Friends,

We have had a busy and productive summer and fall at Rumford Group Homes, Inc. Summer is a memory. Children have settled into school. Autumn is in the air, with chilly nights and winter is on the way.

We have completed the development of a vocational readiness program that has been launched in our shelter programs. The first course is about to come to an end. This will give our shelter guests skills they need to stand out in the job market and help them on their way to self-sufficiency. We are also looking forward to new staff members joining our homeless services team and utilizing the valuable skills of helping to connect homeless families to needed resources.

We just weathered Hurricane Sandy and at Rumford Group Home's three emergency shelters and we are busy preparing for another long winter. Every year when the weather grows colder, we experience an increase in the number of individuals and families that come to us for shelter and support. We are able to provide a safe and stable environment along with case management to support long-term stability, food, and emergency items to up to 26 individuals in shelter on a daily basis. Our staff of case managers continue to do everything they can to assist homeless individuals and families in accessing permanent, stable housing.

As Thanksgiving nears, we are so grateful to the individuals, businesses, and community groups that support our efforts – from our board members who donate their time and wisdom, to the people who fundraise on our behalf, to our staff members who work tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of our guests. Each, in their own way, helps to advance our mission – with every hour a staff or volunteer works, every dollar they raise, every caring donation. There are so many who help, each in their own way, and we thank them all for their care and commitment to our agency. We could not do it without their support.

As you and your families begin to enter and enjoy the holiday season, please keep in mind that there are many of our neighbors who are not as fortunate and are struggling on a daily basis. Your support is needed more than ever.

Have a happy and safe holiday season,

Alan J. Monier
Executive Director



Agency Welcomes Intern to the Team

Rumford Group Homes Homeless Services is pleased to be working with Jed Wilson, a graduate student from the University of North Dakota. Jed will be helping to support homeless individuals and families in the Norway and South Paris area for the 2012-2013 academic year.

Growing up in a suburban town in the Pacific Northwest, homelessness was largely an absence, an abstraction - something known to me through TV news, but not through direct experience. Mine was perhaps a typical middle class upbringing in regard to issues of class. Particularly in the suburbs or in rural areas, the fact of extreme poverty is collectively repressed, marginalized, kept out of sight. We shelter our homeless, but in another sense we “shelter” ourselves from the ethical demand that their plight imposes upon us. We ignore the homeless in hopes of preserving a false peace.

It was while working toward my bachelor’s degree in Boston that I first encountered homelessness right at my doorstep. As an urban neophyte, thrilled with the enchantments of the “big city,” I would avidly walk the streets of the Back Bay neighborhood in which I lived. It wasn’t long, however, before the veneer of metropolitan excitement was disturbed by the irrepressible reality of destitution. I was stunned to find legions of solitary wanderers amidst the crowds - ragged and broken, carrying the totality of their possession on their backs, frequently talking to themselves in stutters and shouts. One of these, named Lawrence, frequented my street, and I came to know him gradually, first by offering to buy him a sandwich, and later by listening to his fragmented monologues chronicling abuses suffered in alleyways. Though I helped him to the degree that I could, Lawrence was severely mentally ill, as unreachable as I was unqualified to reach him. It wasn’t long before he disappeared, back to the beyond; our brief relationship, for which I am profoundly grateful, marked the shattering of the social boundaries that had hitherto defined my privileged existence.

Years later, I have returned to small town America, this time to the rural landscape of western Maine, where my wife and I are raising a family (as I simultaneously work and

study social work online through the University of North Dakota graduate school). Because of the encounter with Lawrence which proved so transformative in my young adult life, it has been especially meaningful to me to be working with the homeless as an intern at Rumford Group Homes.

As a younger man naively reaching out to those living on the streets of Boston, I was overwhelmed by the ocean of need all around, and ill-equipped to attend to it. Now, working under the tutelage of the skilled staff at Rumford Group Homes, I am learning daily how to better be of service



Above is the Norway Family Center, a 12-bed emergency shelter for homeless women and children. Jed will be working with guests here and at the South Paris Men’s Shelter.

to those who are urgently in need of housing. While the dynamics of rural homelessness are unique, the essential moral calculus is the same in any environment: as long as there are human beings without a safe, warm, and sanitary place to lay their head, it is the duty of organizations like Rumford Group Homes to come to their aid to the fullest extent possible.

It has been my experience that RGH staff members consistently act in the best interest of the guest, working swiftly to help him or her to secure permanent housing while also addressing the underlying causes and conditions that might have led to housing instability in the first place. To that end, case managers at RGH help clients with a whole range of life skills: budgeting and household financial management, resume building and job seeking, and a host of other personal and professional behaviors that will promote fiscal health and reduce the possibility of recidivism (return to the shelter after placement in housing).

Additionally, RGH staff members are advocating for clients to receive adequate services and coordinating with other professionals in the mental health field to ensure the best possible outcomes. Working on a tight budget, Rumford Group Homes is providing excellent care to Maine’s most vulnerable citizens. As winter looms and the nights begin to grow cold, I take solace in the fact that dedicated professionals are working on behalf of the homeless population of rural Maine, and I am honored to be serving my internship in a compassionate and competent organization like Rumford Group Homes.



Jed Wilson, pictured above, will be working with the Homeless Services team out of the Norway Family Center.

Rumford Group Homes Hosts Crisis Network Retreat

The Western Maine Crisis Network is a collaboration between crisis providers in the area which was developed to enhance crisis services and improve the consistency of crisis services in Franklin, Oxford, and Androscoggin counties. The network meets quarterly to discuss issues and to provide training for their collective staff. Agencies involved in the network include Tri-County Mental Health, Evergreen Behavioral Services, Oxford County Mental Health, and Rumford Group Homes, Inc., Turner Family Support Center, a Crisis Stabilization Unit for children.

Rumford Group Homes hosted this year's

annual retreat at St Mary's Women's Pavilion.

Peter Wohl, Director of Outpatient Services at Crisis and Counseling in Augusta gave a presentation on substance abuse in youth. Laurie Cyr-Martel, Director of Crisis Services at Tri-County Mental Health Services in Lewiston presented on childhood mental health disorders. Lunch was provided and the event offered different crisis providers a chance to meet and share ideas.

Rumford Group Homes continues to welcome the chance to network with other providers to ensure the best possible services for the people we serve.

We can do what we do because of you!

At Rumford Group Homes, Inc., we are busy year-round making a difference in our community. Thank you for making it possible for us to provide vital services for children, youth, and families in crisis through our continuum of homeless services including emergency shelter, housing, homeless youth outreach services and case management. Highlights of our 2012 fiscal year include:

- 56 families or 129 persons received emergency shelter
- 13 families participated in our homeless housing programs
- We received 110 referrals for homeless youth outreach services
- 14 youth were enrolled in our Transitional Living Program where they will receive services for 18 months to help them become independent
- Over 100 youth received crisis stabilization services
- We provided 6,430 shelter bed nights
- We provided 9,875 bed nights in our transitional and permanent housing programs

Rumford Group Homes Announces 2012 Joyce B. Roy Scholarship Recipients

Two graduates of Maine High Schools were awarded scholarships from Rumford Group Homes, Inc. Annually, Rumford Group Homes, Inc. awards two scholarships to a student at Mountain Valley High School in Rumford and a student at Dirigo High School in Dixfield.

The scholarship is awarded annually to students who plan to continue their education after high school graduation and work in the social services, psychology, behavioral health or a related field. Students are selected based on their academic achievements, participation in extracurricular activities, and career goals. The scholarships are intended to honor the memory of Joyce B. Roy, who was one of the founding board members of Rumford Group Homes. Mrs. Roy was dedicated to the mission of serving children, adolescents and families and helping them improve their futures.



The Joyce B. Roy Scholarship Recipients are Kirstin Ridge from Mountain Valley High School and Joshua Turbide from Dirigo High School.

Joshua Turbide is a graduate of Dirigo High School in Dixfield. He was a student athlete and throughout high school played soccer, basketball, and tennis. He is attending Husson University in Bangor, Maine and hopes to become a sports psychologist for professional sports teams.

Kirstin Ridge is a graduate of Mountain Valley High School in Rumford. During high school, she was involved in soccer, softball, and gymnastics. Kirstin was also a member of the National Honor Society and the math team. She graduated in the top of her class. She was also employed at the Kawanhee Inn. Kirsten is attending the University of New England in Biddeford and plans to study to be a neonatal nurse practitioner.

Rumford Group Homes Photo Gallery



Photos from our community Halloween Party at the Rumford Family Center



Volunteer in the Spot Light

Sue Frost has been volunteering for Rumford Group Homes for almost a year and has done a variety of different tasks to assist the agency in serving homeless families. Sue has worn many different hats and has cleaned staff offices, organized the shelter, filed, made copies, put together presentations, assisted at special events such as the Memorial Day Picnic, and Halloween parties, and prepared the agency newsletter. She has



Sue Frost is one of the many volunteers who help to support Rumford Group Homes. We would like to thank her for everything she does.

volunteered once a week and has become someone who can be relied upon for hard work, attention to detail, and a caring attitude.

Sue lives in Mexico with her husband Les and two sons, who have also donated their time to volunteer for the agency. Sue's family attends and assists at each community event and they have become the official photographers.

She is currently attending the University of Maine at Augusta and is studying Mental Health and Human Services. She would like to get a job at a non-profit organization where she can have a direct impact on people's lives. Even with raising a family and attending college, Sue has been very generous with her time and she always makes herself available when needed.

Why do you volunteer? "It gives me a good feeling to help out when I can. I like the idea of giving back to the community and helping out either behind the scenes or at events when the guests are there."

What's the best part of volunteering? "I think the best part has been getting to meet people that I normally wouldn't get a chance to. I feel like what I do is really making a difference.

How You Can Help

Imagine not knowing where you will sleep tonight or where you will get your next meal. Now, imagine that the help of one person and one organization could get you through this. Through your support you could be the person that brings comfort and job to your neighbors. Please consider helping in one of the following ways:

Donate Now: Make a donation to Rumford Group Homes at 160 Lincoln Ave. Rumford, ME 04276. Visit our website to learn more about our mission and the essential life services that you are helping to bring to your neighbors.

In-Kind Needs: Rumford Group Homes could not continue to provide the emergency support and meet the basic needs of homeless families and individuals without your support. In-

Kind donations are a great way to support Rumford Group Homes, Inc. Please call (207)364-3551 x212.

Planned Giving: There are many ways you can help Rumford Group Homes secure its future by planning your gifts now. If you find yourself with limited cash on hand but would like to make a significant investment in improving the lives of others, you might consider one of the following planned gift options:

- Gift annuity
- Gift of Stock
- Charitable Remainder Trust
- Remembering Rumford Group Homes in your estate plan

Volunteer: Rumford Group Homes has a variety of volunteer and group projects opportunities. Some of the

ways individuals, businesses, and groups have helped are:

- Host a drive to collect donation items
- Sponsor a pot luck lunch at work with proceeds benefitting RGH
- Offer to be a guest speaker at life skills group
- Teach a cooking class and provide supplies and recipes

Visit us in person: We'd love to see you and give you a personal inside look at what your donation has made possible. To arrange a tour, call Melissa at 364-3551 ext. 212. Thank you again for your support in helping to provide havens of safety, respect and effective care.

Barclays Awards Rumford Group Homes Grant for Homeless Shelter

Rumford Group Homes is proud to be the recipient of a grant in the amount of \$12,000 from Barclays for our Rumford Family Center. The Colleagues in the Community grant is made available each year as a way for Barclays colleagues to support causes that are near to their heart. This year's award will support the twelve bed emergency shelter in Rumford and the new Vocational Readiness program that is aimed at assisting homeless families in securing employment to promoting economic independence and stability.

BarclayCard US is located in Wilmington, Delaware, with a customer service site in Wilton, Maine to help support some of the preferred partnership credit card programs, such as L.L. Bean. There are 100 colleagues who work at the Wilton site and they are interested in supporting local organizations and giving back to their community.

"This grant is very important for us" says Alan J. Monier, Executive Director of Rumford Group Homes, Inc. He states "Support from Barclays will help us to expand our services at our shelter and help families achieve financial security and learn skills to find jobs in a tough job market." Last year, through three emergency shelters, Rumford Group Homes provided 6,430 bed nights and provided emergency shelter 56 families or 129 individuals in Oxford County alone.

Welcome Home continued from page 1...



A week before the baby was due to arrive in July, we found ourselves homeless again out of the blue with no place to go. It was so frustrating because we had just solved our housing problem and felt like we had to start back at square one again. I have never felt so much fear as I did then. The constant panic about housing and the anxiety about having my first baby was a lot to deal with.

We called Rumford Group Homes and asked if we could come back to the Rumford Family Center. We were welcomed back in and staff started working with us again to get us into housing as soon as possible. We had to leave the shelter unexpectedly in late July when our baby came. He was happy and healthy and we were so glad he was finally here, with one small problem, we still had no home for him to come back to. After a few days in the hospital, we returned to the shelter. Our room had a crib in it and Rumford Group Homes made sure we had everything that he needed.

Within 2 months, our case manager had good news. An apartment was opening up in town that we could move into. We had to do a lot of paperwork that the staff helped us with. We were so tired from taking care of our newborn son that we didn't have a lot of energy. We moved into our new apartment at the end of August and we are now happy, comfortable and stable once again in our own place. Our baby has his own room and even a play room for when he gets bigger.

We appreciate all of the help that we received from the staff at the Rumford Family Center. Their support made us feel like we were not alone during a horrible time for us. Thank you for giving us a home while

we really needed it and caring about our family.



Thank you to all of our donors in 2012!

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