Dear Friends,

“I can’t believe I am moving on!”

Gloria has lived at our Rebecca Johnson Apartments in East Garfield Park for 20 years and calls her apartment and Deborah’s Place “home.” Now, in recovery for several years with a career in healthcare and a car, her apartment is starting to feel “a tiny bit small.” So, when the opportunity to “move on” with a Chicago Housing Authority Voucher came along, she was first in line.

These vouchers give women who continue to need the financial boost of a rental subsidy, but no longer need intensive on-site services from permanent supportive housing, the opportunity to live more independently in their own apartments. Gloria is very excited to be one of the women that will be moving into her own apartment.

Gloria says, “Deborah’s Place spoiled me!”

Gloria is one of the 501 women served by Deborah’s Place in FY21. There is no mistaking that it was a very challenging year as we managed the COVID-19 Pandemic with the help of many partners and support from all of you.

Even more so, during the chaos and challenge, Deborah’s Place stepped up and took hold of opportunities that moved forward our strategic goal of serving 600 women by June 2022. In our annual report last year, we said that in FY21 we would increase the number of women served and expand our health services to meet the growing number of needs. That is exactly what we did.

I am pleased to announce that the number of women we served the year before has increased by 22%. Because of our drive and willingness to serve as many women as we can, we expanded our partnership with the Center for Housing and Health’s Flexible Housing Pool Program to provide services to 40 women. Also, we joined with other providers in an exciting new housing program made possible through the CARES Act – the Expedited Housing Initiative. Through this new initiative we started in FY21, we plan to house an additional 120 women by the end of this calendar year.

With the increase in the number of women we are serving, we have grown our Health Services Staff to meet the increasing needs in correlation to our growing numbers. We are able to do so through the $100,000 grant we were awarded from Impact Grants Chicago.

We have the ability to serve and do our work because of the generous support of people like you. We hope that you find our FY21 Annual Report informative and inspiring.

With Gratitude,

Bruce Traan
Board President

Audrey Thomas
CEO
women made progress towards their goals of stable income, secure housing, and greater self-determination.
153 new residents moved into Deborah’s Place

53 residents moved on to Permanent Housing

97% of Permanent Supportive Housing residents maintained housing

4,091 health-related services were provided
Community Partners

- All Chicago
- Center for Housing and Health/ AIDS Foundation of Chicago
- Chicago Department of Community Development and Planning
- Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
- Chicago Department of Housing
- Chicago Housing Authority
- Chicago Recovery Alliance
- The Emergency Fund

- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Greater Chicago Food Depository
- Heartland Alliance Health
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Illinois Housing Development Authority
- Interfaith Housing Development Corporation
- U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

We are grateful for the many partners we have who are committed to affordable housing and ending homelessness. We apologize for any omissions to this list.

Pro-Bono Services

- Fox Swibel – Legal Services
- Scalambrino & Arnoff, LLP
- Perkins & Will
- Power Construction
“A place of solitude offers a retreat from the opposing forces and diverse demands of living, an entry into a state of peace and unity. Mind and body can retire from confusion and conflict to a sanctuary of clarity and harmony.”
– Anthony Lawlor

For Diane, gardening is her sanctuary and a time where she can focus on herself. In our courtyard at the Rebecca Johnson Apartments, Diane has found harmony through plants and radiates a sense of peace throughout the Deborah’s Place community. Her talents and knowledge of horticulture have not only beautified the building, but have brought her clarity and a safe-space to grow herself.

From a young age, Diane faced many hardships. She found herself in abusive relationships growing up and experienced sexual assault. By the time she was living on her own, she was experiencing a mental health crisis. Because of her paranoia, she couldn’t trust anybody and felt like she couldn’t get help, so she ended up living on the streets.

“When you are sleeping outside you can’t make any plans for your future…I was frequently not in a safe space so I was often unable to create achievable goals.” – Diane

After three years of living on the streets and couch surfing, she was finally placed at our Rebecca Johnson Apartments. After getting settled in her new apartment, Diane finally started to focus on herself. She was able to pursue what she loves because of her newfound stability.

Over the past year, Diane has accomplished a lot. She addressed her mental health, started environmentalism classes, started a great job with the park district and brought beauty to our courtyard at Deborah’s Place.

Diane wanted to put her healing into the physical space of the courtyard, while giving back to the Deborah’s Place community. By doing so, she helped create a space for everyone to heal. At Deborah’s Place, we have a wonderful statue in our courtyard titled “Woman Unchained,” that represents women breaking the chains of trauma and homelessness. Over the years, our beautiful courtyard foliage started to overtake the statue, and for a time she wasn’t visible anymore. Diane took the initiative to clean up the statue and give it a new look, and in return, she felt like she broke the chains of her own trauma.

“I felt responsible for something kind of precious… getting to work with it made me feel so valid and seen and I had been given a great opportunity.” – Diane

Diane’s time at Deborah’s Place has given her the opportunity to grow and find her new path in life. One day she hopes to live by the Pacific Ocean.
99% of our residents are at or below the Federal Poverty Line*

90% of our residents have an identified disability

77% of our residents are African American

74% of our residents are over the age of 45

67% of our residents were chronically homeless

*Income per the FPL (Federal Poverty Line): $12,880 for family of one
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HHL Foundation
Hoellen Family Foundation
Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects
The Home Church
Homestead Affordable Housing Corporation
Impact Grants Chicago
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JP Morgan Chase Foundation Matching Gifts
Julius N. Frankel Foundation
Kazemek Family Fund
Kenilworth Union Church
Kirti Associates LLC - Subway
KPMG LLP
Kuma’s Corner
L.M.O. Foundation
La-Co Industries, Inc.
Lee Family Foundation
Legal & General Investment Management America
Leo J. & Roslyn L. Krupp Family Foundation
Leo S. Guthman Fund
Licedoctors LLC
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M.B. and Edna Zale Foundation
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Samuel and Grace Gorlitz Foundation
Shannon & Associates, LTD
Shayle and Deanna Fox Family Charitable Foundation
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W.P. & H.B. White Foundation
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Wellington Ave UCC
White Castle
Women and Children First Bookstore
Women Investment Professionals
Women’s Jewelry Association - Chicago Chapter
Worsek and Vihon LLP
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority
Deborah’s Place opens doors of opportunity for women who are homeless in Chicago. Supportive housing and services offer women their key to healing, achieving their goals and moving on from the experience of homelessness.