



Emma Norton
The Journey Home Begins Here

Cultivating Community & Inspiring Joy



STORING WATERS

values / embracing humanity • cultivating community • sparking creativity • inspiring joy

mission / We connect people to transformational housing, growth, and possibility—realized through their own design – in support of their journey of recovery.

vision / Through access to safe, supportive housing and services, Emma Norton centers on healing and recovery to move beyond the impacts of trauma to celebrate the strengths that every person has within. Collectively we work together to eliminate systemic barriers while creating inclusive communities where all can thrive and grow.





Tonya Brownlow



Ann Girres

“Thank you for helping us build a stronger, more stable foundation from which we can move forward for the next 100 years and beyond.”

—Tonya Brownlow

2024—A Year of Transformation and New Beginnings

In the history of Emma Norton Services, year 2024 stands out as one of its most dynamic. After eight years of dreaming, planning, and constructing our new supportive housing development and headquarters—Restoring Waters—we finally made the move from the former Emma Norton Residence in April. This meant relocating 27 tenants, 30 staff members, and clearing out over 50 years of accumulated belongings. Thanks to the dedication of our team, it was all accomplished in just two weeks. One of the year’s sweetest moments was the farewell celebration, where residents, staff, board members, and long-time supporters gathered to honor the legacy of Emma Norton Residence—a place that will forever live in our hearts for the lives it touched since 1967.

New Spaces, New Connections, Greater Impact

In addition to creating 60 new trauma-informed supportive housing units, the new office space at Restoring Waters offers far more opportunities to collaborate and connect. It’s enabled us to expand the Scattered-Site team with a Housing Navigator, greatly increasing support for tenants across all programs. The building also houses our newest initiative—The Living Room. Anchored within the office space, this program uses professionally trained Peer Support Specialists to provide free, drop-in mental health services for anyone in the metro area. Since launching last October, The Living Room has already welcomed more than 550 visits.

Home to 13 families with three or more children, Emma’s Place is always full of activity. It takes an all-hands-on-deck effort each summer to plan engaging programs for 80 youth, from babies to young adults. After COVID’s deep impact on youth mental health, it has taken years of intensive support to help the community rebuild. Last summer, the youth team hosted Water Wednesdays—weekly water-filled fun that brought smiles to many faces—along with larger celebrations for Black History Month, Juneteenth, and Back-to-School.

Building a Strong Foundation for the Next Century

None of this would have been possible without the strong leadership of our Board and committees, the investment of our government funders, and the generosity of individual, faith, and philanthropic donors who responded to our comprehensive campaign. That campaign met its goal—raising over \$3.75 million to support the capital needs of Restoring Waters, expand programs and services, and strengthen essential cash reserves to weather nonprofit revenue shifts.

Thank you for helping us build a stronger, more stable foundation from which we can move forward for the next 100 years and beyond. We hope we can count on your continued support to help our clients and staff thrive in an uncertain world—your support truly makes all the difference!

In gratitude,

Tonya Brownlow | Executive Director

Ann Girres | Board President (2023–2025)

emma norton program overview | 2024

364

individuals were housed by Emma Norton

96

children and youth were served by Emma Norton

87%

maintained their housing for 6+ months or exited to safe, affordable housing

71%

of our clients identify as women or girls

65%

of our clients are people of color

100%

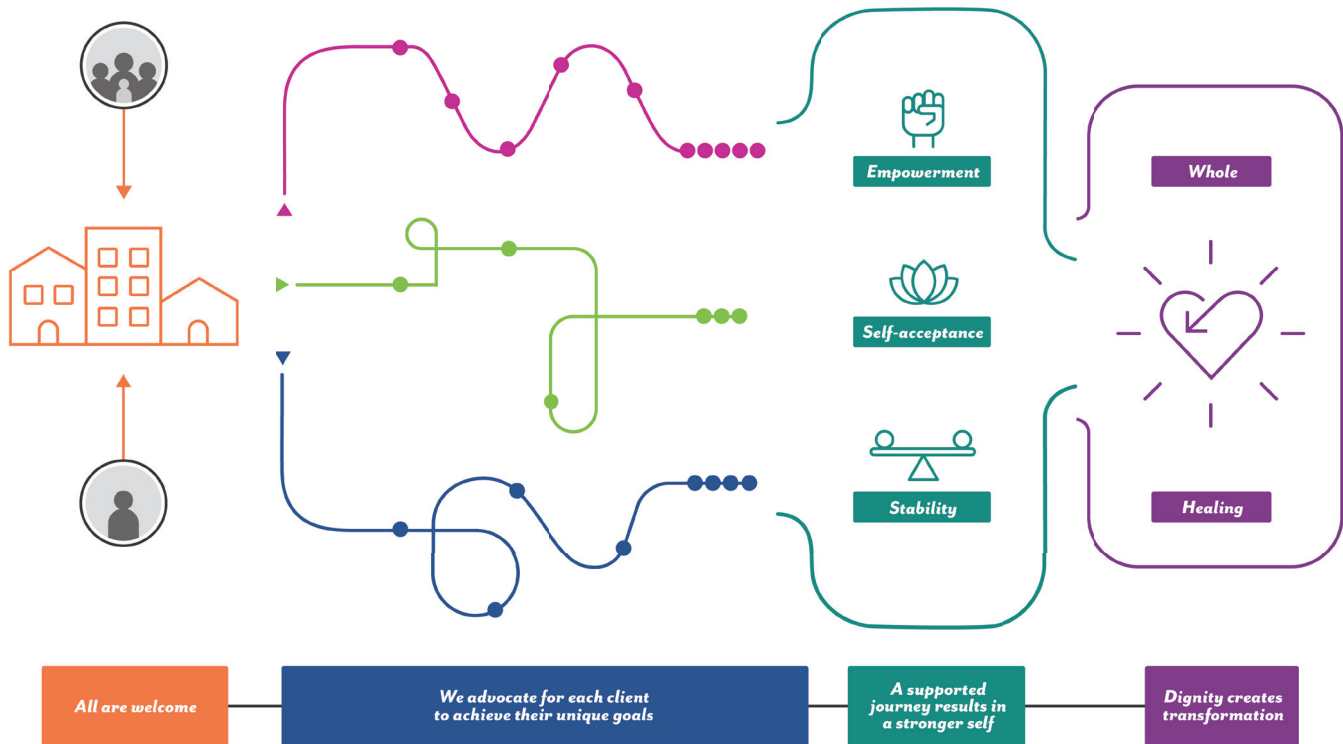
of our clients are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level

Emma's Place | Restoring Waters | The Living Room | Scattered-Site Housing

Based in the Sanctuary Model and trauma-informed care, Emma Norton's programs meet people where they are so they can design a new path forward.

Emma Norton's mission is to connect people to transformational housing, growth, and possibility—realized through their own design—in support of their journey of recovery. As a housing first and harm reduction organization, we believe that housing provides the foundation every person needs in order to make progress on life goals. Using the Sanctuary Model, we take a trauma-informed, whole-culture approach to providing advocacy and supportive services that help hundreds of individuals and families who have experienced homelessness—along with mental, chemical, and/or chronic health issues—reach their goals, restore their dignity, and heal from the inside out. Read on to learn more about our innovative programs and services.

Emma Norton's Theory of Change



The Theory of Change, shown above, is a visual representation of our work. Emma Norton welcomes both individuals and families into our programs, advocates for each person to achieve their own goals along their unique journey of recovery, and supports them in achieving stability, self-acceptance, and empowerment. Ultimately, the goal is healing for the people we serve and for the greater community.

emma's place

Emma's Place has 13 townhomes in Maplewood, providing permanent supportive housing for families with three or more children, who were formerly homeless, and who have at least one family member diagnosed with mental illness, chemical dependency, or other health condition. Emma's Place is uniquely designed to serve larger families, with three-bedroom or four-bedroom units, each with two bathrooms and a full kitchen. It also includes a playground and ½ basketball court, outdoor space, and a community building for services, programming, and activities. Staff at Emma's Place include family/adult case managers and youth case managers who run programming for the youth. Plus, a housing navigator helps individuals and families who are ready to find and move into a home in the community through our scattered-site programs.



27

families were served at Emma's Place and in scattered-site housing

100%

stayed housed for 6+ months or moved to permanent, affordable housing

98%

of eligible children (60 total) participated in youth programming

100%

of adult heads of households engaged in services offered



Marketa
Resident
Mom
Business Owner

“Emma's Place has given us stable housing and a sense of security. It's not a place that holds people back—when families leave, they're moving on to better opportunities and brighter futures.”

Marketa has called Emma's Place home for over two years. A mom of seven and owner of her own event business, she loves the stability, safety, and resources it provides her family. From youth programs like the entrepreneur fair to personalized case management, Emma's Place supports her kids' growth while connecting Marketa to a community of other moms and families she can rely on.



Parents at Emma's Place often remark on what a unique community it is—one where everyone keeps an eye out for each other. The Community Building, which hosts youth programming, events, and staff, was renovated and received many upgrades in 2024. The 13 townhomes surround two playgrounds, a half basketball court, and open green space, helping to facilitate creative play and sharing among the kids, and collaboration among the adults.



restoring waters

75

residents were served at Restoring Waters, including three children

86%

maintained their housing for 6 months+ or exited to safe, affordable housing

70+

volunteers helped with move-in, from welcome bags to cleaning and meals.

92

works of art created by local ACW artists provided to new residents

In April 2024, we permanently closed Emma Norton Residence—which had housed our main site-based program since the 1960s—and opened Restoring Waters. The new housing offers 60 units for individuals and small families, each with a private bathroom and kitchen. Designed with trauma-informed principles, Restoring Waters features natural light, clear sightlines, connections to nature, intuitive wayfinding, and more.

Residents enjoy a range of programming spaces, including an art annex, community kitchen, gardening center, meditation room, and exercise room. While tenants have greater independence and privacy, they still receive consistent support from case managers and peer support specialists. The new space and fantastic location in Highland Bridge in St. Paul have also revitalized volunteering and funding, making room for monthly birthday bingo, ongoing art and nature-based therapeutic classes, and much more.

Roger

Resident
Ambassador

“This is such a blessing. Where else can you get furniture, art, clothing, supplies—everything included? And the people here are wonderful.”

Roger moved to Restoring Waters from temporary housing. He lives with COPD and other medical issues stemming from his past work, and having stable housing with wraparound support helps him stay consistent with medical appointments and better manage his health. Roger loves the community at Restoring Waters and is often found joining activities or chatting with residents and staff in the lobby.

Restoring Waters has a variety of community and activity spaces that residents can utilize for self-improvement, healing, and connecting with their neighbors. One of the most impactful of these spaces has been the rooftop garden, pictured on the bottom left.



the living room

In August of 2024, we soft-launched the Living Room, a walk-in mental health service staffed by peer support specialists that is completely free to all visitors and open to anyone 18 or older in the community. This innovative approach seeks to offer an alternative to emergency services for addressing mental health crises, as well as making mental health care accessible to anyone who needs support. Peer support specialists provide nonjudgemental support from the unique perspective of lived experience, and work with visitors to develop a plan and connect with resources to help them manage the challenges they are facing. A grand opening was held in October 2024, and in May of 2025, the Living Room expanded to include telehealth services.

71

individuals visited the Living Room in the first year of operation

143

visits to the Living Room including repeat visitors; more than tripled in 2025

16

people diverted from emergency room, police, or other crisis services

29

point decrease on average on the Subjective Units of Distress Scale (0–100 scale)

Hours 7 Days a Week • Noon to 8 p.m.
Ph 651.251.2629
E livingroom@emmanorton.org
2265 Hillcrest Ave • St. Paul, MN 55116



Sheree Resident Leader Mom
There's no shame in getting peer support. It helps you realize that you're not the only one who struggles with certain things. Having somebody there who has been through it, it's easier to talk to them."

Sheree and her dog Archie moved into Restoring Waters in July 2025 directly from homelessness. They were living outdoors or doubled up with relatives. She suffers from PTSD and other mental health challenges from a past abusive relationship. She loves the healing programming, Birthday Bingo, and accessible peer support at Restoring Waters/the Living Room and credits her safe home and the healing programming for her sobriety—over one year as of August 2025.

The Living Room is connected to Restoring Waters through a secure doorway into the new Emma Norton lobby and headquarters, making it convenient for residents to access when needed, along with a street-facing entrance for community members. In 2024 & 2025, Restoring Waters resident Sheree and her beloved dog Archie (pictured above) were frequently spotted in the lobby, socializing with staff and neighbors.

Staff across the agency work together to support clients—both residents and Living Room visitors. The Resource Navigator Matt Cady and Clinical Director Lauren Daniel (pictured to the right) often collaborate on connecting clients to resources. Peer Supports like Matt Hedgley (pictured to the far right) meet with Living Room visitors to provide support and collaborate with other staff to bring a full spectrum of resource connections.





scattered-site housing

44

individual residents lived in our scattered-site housing

36

distinct landlords housed scattered-site residents

92%

of tenants completed their initial lease in a new rental

100%

of households with a crisis received services to resolve it

Our scattered-site housing program helps families and single adults to gain independence while continuing to receive support on their path to self-sufficiency. Participants move into rental units with private landlords across Ramsey County and continue to receive comprehensive support from Emma Norton—including assistance with finances, healthcare, education, social needs, and more. Our housing navigator and case managers work closely with clients to find rental units that meet their needs and preferences, helping them achieve their goals—for example, a home near work, family, or a place of worship.



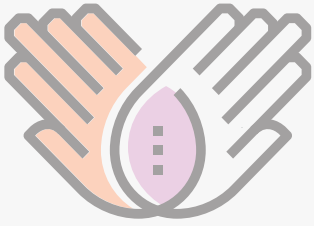
Itayvia
Resident
Survivor
Mom

“My life has been getting better and better since I joined the program. I feel like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders. The security and support from the case managers—all of y’all—have truly been a blessing.”

Itayvia loves her new, modern apartment. With help from her case manager, Ella Washington, she resolved an issue with her previous rental that had been keeping her from moving. She values the program for the support she receives and the ways it has improved her mental health and her relationship with her two sons—who now love visiting her new home!



The Scattered-Site Program offers a unique level of choice in supportive housing programs, empowering participants to choose housing in spaces that support their goals. For some clients, this means getting an apartment near family or work, while for others a priority might be access to a gardening space or in-unit laundry. Scattered-Site clients often express gratitude for the ability to repair family relationships, including re-unifying with their children and/or hosting loved ones in their new home.



Emma Norton Services continues to expand, serving more community members at an even greater level.

Emma Norton was founded in 1917 by a United Methodist woman named Emma Norton to provide a safe and supportive place to live for women and girls coming to St. Paul for jobs, schools, or other opportunities. Over the past century, Emma Norton has evolved to best meet the needs of those most vulnerable in our community. In our new Restoring Waters development, we installed a History Wall (pictured below) to help tell the remarkable story of the organization over its long history. Please scan the QR to the right or visit www.emmanorton.org/about-us/history/ to view more details.



scan to see our 100-year+ history

FROM PAGE 1B

Additional supportive housing is planned

Targets teens, single moms, large families

1917 - The Methodist Home for Girls is founded with a gift from Mrs. Emma Norton to the United Methodist Women (UMW). The home became a National Mission Institute and...

1967 - Emma Norton Residence opens in downtown Saint Paul on Robert Street North, with dormitory-style housing for 50 women. Over the next two decades, ENR houses a variety of...

1990s-2000s - With homelessness on the rise, Emma Norton Residence becomes a critical shelter system. Later the program added case management services, focusing on offering longer-term housing...

2002 - Emma's Place in Mplewood opens to provide supportive housing for large families experiencing homelessness. Helping fulfill an unmet community need. The project...

2015-2020 - Emma Norton implements evidence-based practices, such as Housing First, Harm Reduction, the Sanctuary Model, and Social Emotional Learning. The organization continues to...

2022-2024 - Construction begins on a new innovative trauma-informed architectural building, Restoring Waters, in Highland Bridge. It opened in April 2024 with 60...

HOME + HEALING

thank you! together we did it!

The Campaign for Restoring Waters

Now more than 60 individuals and small families can call Restoring Waters home—today and for decades to come! More than 300 individuals, faith groups, foundations, corporations, and community groups raised over \$3.75 million for Restoring Waters and our new headquarters.

Your support means the world to us.

\$3.75M+
committed

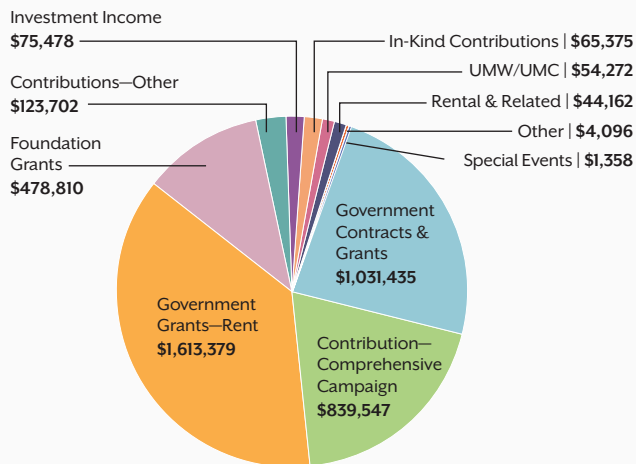
310
donors

finances | assets | liabilities | revenue & expenses

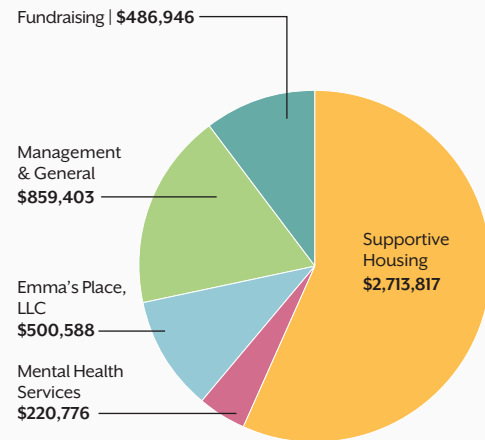
	2024	2023
assets		
Current Assets	\$ 1,321,519	\$ 1,247,520
Deposits Held in Trust	12,227	10,265
Contributions Receivable (Long-Term)	9,804	125,828
Property and Equipment	6,347,603	5,408,395
Cash—Restricted for Comprehensive Campaign	–	410,634
Other Assets	823,327	765,000
Total Assets	\$ 8,514,480	\$ 7,967,642
liabilities		
Current Liabilities	\$ 924,280	\$ 618,667
Deposits Held in Trust	12,227	8,683
Long-term Liabilities	4,883,471	4,094,536
Total Liabilities	\$ 5,819,978	\$ 4,721,886
revenue		
Government Contracts & Grants	\$ 1,031,435	\$ 1,008,347
Government Grants—Rent	1,613,379	1,444,100
Foundation Grants	478,810	438,750
Contribution—Comprehensive Campaign	839,547	949,513
Contributions—Other	123,702	257,843
UMW/UMC	54,272	58,232
In-Kind Contributions	65,375	157,238
Special Events	1,358	67,708
Investment Income	75,478	106,214
Rental & Related Revenue	44,162	113,507
Other	4,096	22,998
Total Support and Revenue	\$ 4,331,614	\$ 4,624,450
expenses		
Programs		
Supportive Housing	\$ 2,713,817	\$ 2,484,165
Mental Health Services	220,776	–
Emma's Place	500,588	507,723
Management & General	859,403	763,859
Fundraising	486,946	336,725
Total Expenses	\$ 4,781,530	\$4,092,472



total support & revenue | \$4,331,614



total expenses | \$4,781,530



board of directors & leadership staff*

board members

President

Ann Girres
Community Leader

Vice President

Kathy Arnold
Peacock Blu Consulting

Treasurer

Erik Hokenson
Finance & Strategy Consultant

Secretary

Beth Lyons
PwC

Jennifer Bessinger
Crown Valley Consulting

Marion Hansen
UWF State President

Shirley Jackson
Community Leader

Laurie Kantonen
UM District Superintendent

Myrna Kuehl
Aurora Sky UWF District
President

Carey Morrison
Community Leader

Shakilah Parker
PM Logistics

Claire Reeder-Fletcher
Target Corp.

Erin Riem
Securian Financial

Jessica Roessler
Marketing Consultant

Alexi Rouhani
Target Corp.

Robert Siegfried
Community Leader

Noureen Wallani
Domestic Abuse Project

Grace Yonushonis
3M

uwf district reps

Shirley Jackson
Aurora Sky District

Marilyn Nickel
Prairie Winds District

Kathy Hulsebus
Headwaters District

Christi Brown
River Bluffs District

Rennae Petersen
Dakotas District Rep

executive team

Tonya Brownlow
Executive Director

Mbemba Camara
Program Director

Lauren Daniel
Clinical Director

Kevin Heil
Finance Director

Gina McCullough
Executive Assistant

Shawna Nelsen-Wills
Advancement Director

Emma Strub
Operations Director

managers & supervisors

Ethan Allen
Property Manager, Emma's Place

Nick Basta
Program Manager, Restoring Waters

Laura Knippling
Youth Services Supervisor

Carmen Mask
Program Manager, Emma's Place

Jennifer Stevenson
Program Manager, Scattered-Site

Amy Walsh
Peer Support Supervisor

Morgan Wychor
Client Support Supervisor

*As of December 2025



Donate today

Help individuals and families thrive in our community!



give now

Go to emmanorton.org to make a real difference for our residents.

volunteer with us

Are you interested in volunteering, having a speaker at your next event, and/or making a gift to Emma Norton?

**Please contact Shawna Nelsen-Wills
Advancement Director
at 651-251-2632 or
snelsen@emmanorton.org.**





Emma Norton

The Journey Home Begins Here

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emmanorton.org

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Emma Norton's website received a glow up!

Check out our revitalized website at www.emmanorton.org to stay up to date on the latest news, learn about our programming, and find ways to engage through events, volunteering, donating, or in-kind donation drives.

