



Emma Norton's e-news

February 2026

Dear *{{Informal Name}}*,

Over the past month, we've been working extra hard to support our community. With ongoing uncertainty, many clients and staff had additional needs, including basic needs and more mental health related. We also saw an increase in Living Room visitors as our residents and community sought to navigate this moment. We saw our staff, volunteers, donors, partners, and clients stepping up to support each other.

This month we want to take a moment to breathe and reflect on our accomplishments. We recently published the latest issue of our annual report, which shows the incredible growth we've had in recent years, and reminded us of all there is to celebrate. Speaking of celebration, this month we're also starting to prepare for the Opening Doors Gala on April 23, which is *just two months away*. Read on to learn more about opportunities to get involved!

Our Annual Report – Embracing Change and Celebrating Growth

"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, Scattered-Site Client



As mentioned in the introduction, the latest Emma Norton Services annual report is now available online! [You can read it on our website here.](#) It highlights our tremendous 2024 and 2025 with the opening of Restoring Waters, expanded and healing programming, and the opening of the Living Room! We hope you enjoy learning about our successes and growth, along with hearing from current and past clients—Marketa, Roger, Sheree, and Itayvia. *Thank you for helping to make this growth possible!*

Save the Date for the Opening Doors Gala – April 23!

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday • April 23 • 2026
5–8 P.M. ∴ Intercontinental Riverfront
Saint Paul

Opening
DoorsGala
Emma Norton Annual Event & Silent Auction



Mark your calendars, the **2026 Opening Doors Gala** will be held on **Thursday, April 23, at the InterContinental St. Paul Riverfront from 5 to 8 p.m.** (check-in begins at 4 p.m.)! With everything our community has been through in recent months, coming together to celebrate and help make a difference for others is even more important than usual.

Registration

We'll be opening individual registration in just one week on **Monday, March 2**, and we'll have a prize drawing for everyone who registers before April 1! If you have people in your network you'd like to introduce to Emma Norton, let them know to save the date—the Gala is a great way to introduce new friends to our community!

Event and Table Sponsorship

If you're interested in attending as an event sponsor or table sponsor, you don't have to wait for registration to open! Please reach out to our Advancement Director Shawna Nelsen-Wills at snelsen@emmanorton.org for more information. [Click here](#) for details about our sponsorship packages.

Volunteering

Our volunteer community helps make the Gala a success every year, and there are a lot of different ways to get involved. There are even volunteer opportunities to support in the weeks leading up to and days following the Gala! Email our Volunteer Coordinator Mo at mmayberry@emmanorton.org for more information, or [click here to sign up](#).

Seeking Opening Doors Gala Award Nominations



Do you know a person or group who has made a big difference for Emma Norton

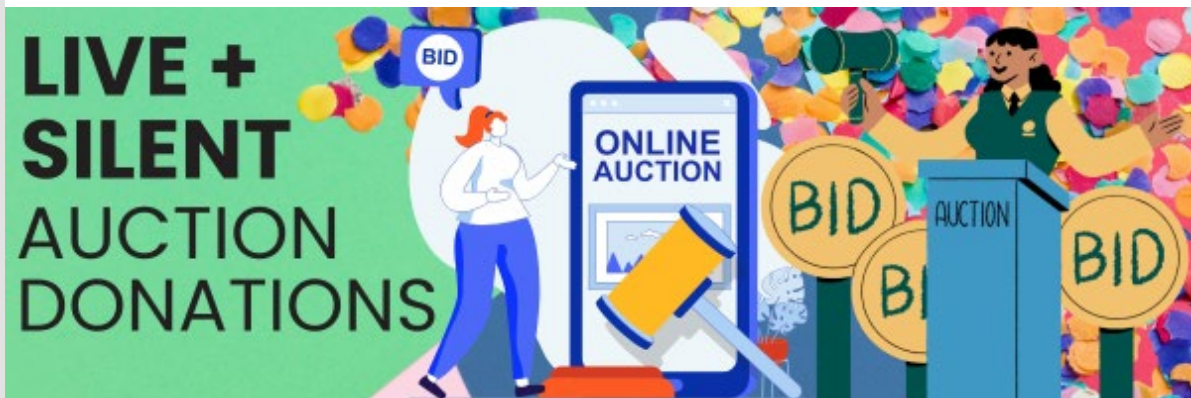
Services this past year? You can nominate them for an award at this year's Opening Doors Gala! (And yes, you can nominate yourself!)

We're seeking nominations for the three following awards:

- *Heritage Award:* Given to an individual who has a long-standing relationship with Emma Norton and has made a major impact on our mission. (2025 Winner: Shirley Jackson)
- *Opening Doors Award:* Given to an individual or organization who helped open doors and create new housing or services opportunities for Emma Norton's residents. (2025 Winner: Ryan Companies)
- *Champion Award:* Given to an organization who was a champion for or helped champion Emma Norton during the past year. (2025 Winners: MN Conference UMC and MN UWF)

Please send nominations to SNelsen@emmanorton.org by no later than Wednesday, March 11!

Silent & Live Auction Donations



A key component of the fundraising at the Opening Doors Gala is our auctions. Last year our community came through with so many donations that we barely had room to display everything, which caused some amazing auction items to be under-bid on. Because of this, we're shifting our auction strategy to focus on the items that we see consistently perform well with our Gala attendees, including:

- *Themed baskets: Successful themed baskets combine tangible goods with gift certificates and/or have a clever and consistent theme! Themes that have been popular in the past: Local Experiences, Family-friendly Activities, Luxury Relaxation and Spa, and Gourmet Food or Coffee.*
- *Experiences + Services: Donate your time/skills for an activity/service or talk to a talented friend or family member about what they could donate! Examples include a guided foraging walk, therapeutic massage, sound bath experience, etc.*
- *Local business gift cards: Support the auction AND a business you love!*
- *Baked goods + treats: Wildly popular every year—a single pie can go for \$100!*

For more information about the auction or to coordinate a donation drop off, please

contact our Advancement Associate Victoria at virasy@emmanorton.org.

We're grateful for your support of the ODG auction! Please understand that not all items donated may be used in the auction for a variety of reasons. Such donations will be made available to our residents through our programs.

February Cooking Class + Volunteer Needs



Earlier this week, we had a fun activity at Restoring Waters in the form of a chili cooking class hosted by volunteer Pam. We put out a sign-up sheet for the class a week ahead of time, and all the spots and waiting list filled up so quickly. Before we even had the ingredients in, we had three residents waiting to get started, and as the smell of it simmering from the community kitchen spread throughout the hall, more people joined!

We're still seeking volunteers for our February & March bingo parties at Restoring Waters! Interested in hosting bingo, a cooking class, or other activity for our clients? Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Mo at mmayberry@emmanorton.org or visit our [volunteer page here](#).

Support Gardening at Restoring Waters



With snow falling freshly this week, it may feel like spring is far away, but gardeners know now is the time to start planning! The rooftop garden has been an amazing space for our clients to beautify and care for since we moved in, and this year we want to take it to the next level.

We are seeking donors to either donate or support our purchase of **two 50-gallon rain barrels** for our rooftop, as well as donations to support the **installation of a sunshade**. Each rain barrel costs approximately \$150, and sunshade and installation will cost

approximately \$1,000+. If you wish to donate to support this project, [you can do so here](#) (add gardening supplies in the memo box) or please contact Shawna at snelsen@emmanorton.org regarding a special donation.

Thank you for supporting our clients connecting with nature!



Special thanks to The Game Show Studio for hosting Emma Norton for our All-Staff Appreciation Day in November 2025. (Unfortunately, the \$1M check is just a prop, but we hope it brings good fortune in 2026!)

***Thank you for your support and partnership in 2025.
Wishing safety, prosperity, and joy to you and all in the New Year!***

Share the good E-News!

We love our many supporters and volunteers, but don't keep us to yourselves. Please share this E-news with your friends and family, like us on social media (see below), and let others know about the great work we are doing to help end homelessness and help women and

families thrive!

Make a [donation today](#) to help us continue to provide safe, stable homes for women and families on their journey of recovery.



Our Contact Information

{{Organization Name}}

{{Organization Address}}

{{Organization Phone}}

{{Organization Website}}

{{Unsubscribe}}



Emma Norton

The Journey Home Begins Here