



Emma Norton's e-news

March 2026

Dear *{{Informal Name}}*,

Spring has sprung, and we are just a week away from our Early Bird Registration closing for the Opening Doors Gala! In this month's e-newsletter, we're happy to share highlights from community meals and celebrations, upcoming volunteer opportunities, and gratitude for ongoing partnerships that support our clients.

Of course, on top of all of that, we're also preparing for our biggest celebration of the year—the Opening Doors Gala! If you haven't already registered, we hope this month's e-news is the reminder you needed to get your ticket before the early bird deadline of March 31. And if you're not able to join us for the Gala, we've got other opportunities to get involved and celebrate too— thank you for your generous support of Emma Norton!

Opening Doors Gala – Early Bird Drawing Ends March 31!



The 2026 Opening Doors Gala is just 5 weeks away—**Thursday, April 23, at the InterContinental St. Paul Riverfront! from 5 to 8 p.m.** (Welcome table opens at 4 p.m.) There is also just over a week left to be included in the early bird registration drawing— winners will get special Emma Norton swag usually only available to staff! Register [here](#), and direct friends or family you invite to <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/odg26> to get their tickets.

Auction Donations

A key component of the fundraising at the Opening Doors Gala is our live and silent auctions! We're a little under halfway to our goal of 100 auction donations, and have just under 3 weeks left to gather auction donations. If you have a donation to bring in, you can

download the donation form to fill out ahead of time [here](#). To help our donors make the biggest impact, we analyzed data from previous auctions to share what our community seems to bid on the most:

- 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, breadmaking, 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 vvirasy@emmanorton.org.

Event and Table Sponsorship

Our event sponsor and table sponsors are key to helping us reach our goal and invite new people to learn about Emma Norton! 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.

Can't join us on April 23? You can still make a gift-in-lieu of attendance and help support our Fund-A-Need. Gifts can be made at www.emmanorton.org/donate/ or by mailing a gift in to Emma Norton, 2265 Hillcrest Ave., St. Paul, MN 5516. Please add "2026 Gala" in the memo box or line.

With everything our community has been through in recent months, coming together to celebrate healing and make a difference for others is especially important. We hope to see many of you in person on April 23!

Thrivent Choice Gratitude



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Donate or Direct

Thrivent clients: The Thrivent Choice® program is a powerful way to support organizations like ours. Through this program, Thrivent clients with membership can direct how Thrivent distributes a portion of its charitable grant funding. To see if you have Choice Dollars® available, log in to your Thrivent account, click "Direct Choice Dollars,"

and select our organization. Your support helps us grow our programs and help more people on their journeys of recovery.

Every year since we became a Thrivent Choice®-enrolled organization, we've seen the Choice Dollars® grow! Thanks to all who directed Thrivent Choice Dollars® or donated through Thrivent's online giving platform to Emma Norton Services. The grant funds and donations we receive from both you and Thrivent help us to provide transformational housing and supportive services!

Chili, Movies, Bunnies, and More Celebrations at Restoring Waters



During Random Act of Kindness Week, two of our long-time front desk volunteers, **Gay Bartholic** and **Kathy Stevenson**, cooked large batches of chili for the residents at Restoring Waters. Residents and staff came together for this perfect cold weather lunch, with some residents bringing sides to share!

This month we started a new tradition at Restoring Waters, a monthly celebration for all the birthdays, anniversaries, and achievements the residents had that month! We had 8 birthdays and anniversaries to honor this month, and celebrated with bingo and snacks. We're gathering ideas from residents for activities for future celebrations.

Additionally, our partners at **Marvella** welcomed us in for an **afternoon in their movie theater**. Thank you Kevin and friends for the popcorn, lemonade, and amazing theater experience!

Finally, special thanks to **Janet Ewing** and others from **The Well UW Faith** who brought an adorable **bunny-themed craft** to our art room—just in time for spring!

Interested in sponsoring a community dinner at Emma's Place or a community celebration at Restoring Waters? Email snelsen@emmanorton.org for more information.

Volunteer with Our Programs!



Thank you to everyone who has joined our volunteer community in the last year! It's been both fun and incredibly helpful to have a growing cadre of volunteers who can help with both one-time events/activities and ongoing needs in our programs. Whether you're a seasoned volunteer with us, or curious about how you could get involved, we've highlighted some ongoing opportunities to get involved. If you are or a group you're a part of are interested, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Mo at mmaryberry@emmanorton.org for more information.

Emma's Place Clean Up

Anyone with children knows how quickly a clean space can become chaotic when kids start having fun. There are over 75 kids living at Emma's Place at any given time, and that means there is always more cleaning and tidying to be done! This volunteer opportunity is best for groups of 5 or more people.

Front Desk

We're looking for front desk volunteers for any day(s) of the week to assist at Emma's Place in the afternoon to early evening (2-6 pm)! The front desk volunteer helps with answering the door and directing visitors/residents, accepting deliveries and donations, and assisting staff with other small tasks so that they can focus on the clients. Because front desk volunteers need to pass a background check, these volunteer opportunities are limited to people who can volunteer regularly—thank you for your understanding and consideration!

Birthday Bingo

We're seeking bingo hosts for Restoring Waters for May and June! We provide the bingo game, you provide the prizes and call out the numbers! The monthly bingo party is one of the most popular regular activities with our clients, so it is a great opportunity to meet some of the amazing people who live in this community.

In-Kind Donations: Ongoing & Art Supplies

Current In-Kind Donation Needs



In addition to our ongoing donation needs, which can be found on our website [here](#), this month we are seeking donations of art supplies to support the arts and crafts classes in our programs! A resident recently organized the supplies we have on hand at Restoring Waters, and came up with a list of items that will help set up future art classes for success:

- Color construction paper
- Regular color paper
- Elmer's Glue
- Glue Sticks
- Paper Stickers
- Punch Outs
- Water Color Paper
- Coloring Books
- Various Paints: Basic acrylics, metallic acrylics, watercolors
- Elmer's Glitter Glue
- Paint Markers
- Markers

Thank You Panera!



Panera
DAY-END
DOUGH-NATION®



One of the incredible partnerships we've started since moving to Restoring Waters is with the Panera Bread in Highland Bridge. Every Thursday night we get one or two large boxes of baked goods from Panera as a part of their Day-End Dough-Nation program and distribute the food to residents on Friday. These boxes include bagels, bread loaves, and sometimes sweets like cookies or scones!

In 2025 Panera generously gave us over 10,000 baked goods. Just under half of those donations were bagels, which is great because bagels are also the most popular baked good with our residents! Thank you, Panera, for your ongoing support and generosity.

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