



The Journey Home

Providing transformational housing for women and families on their journey of recovery

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FEATURE STORY

Peer Support Specialists Bring Valuable Experience and Connection to Emma Norton

Two of Emma Norton's key values are "innovating, adapting and staying dynamic" and "transcending challenges with courage and perseverance." Both of these values are strongly present in Emma Norton's new Peer Support Specialist program. In 2018, we welcomed several peer support specialists to our Emma Norton Services team—all of whom have experienced some mental health and/or chemical dependency issues in their own lives—and can bring that experience as an asset to Emma Norton.

The Peer Support Specialists are funded through a special grant by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Emma Norton recently received a two-year extension to continue the program through summer of 2021. Currently we have funding for three peer support specialists at Emma Norton Residence, and for one with the Scattered-Site Housing Program. We are currently hiring for two of the four positions. This program allows us to be innovative and stay dynamic as a team.

Eileen Ward started working at Emma Norton in March of 2018. She has gone through significant mental health challenges since her teens, including depression and very serious bouts of anorexia. After several major depressive episodes in her 20's and 30's, she started getting help and working through her own recovery. After moving to the Twin Cities, she began volunteering with the Local Mental Health Advisory Council (LAC), and served as chair for four years. She also served as a certified Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) facilitator. This new focus and purpose gave her joy, community, collaboration, and immense support with her own struggles. She wanted to share that purpose through a career and attended the Peer Support Training—a two-week intensive training that helps prepare people with mental health disabilities for jobs in social service.

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Emma Norton Residence Peer Support Specialists Eileen Ward (left) and Mark Huberty (right).

"Mark and Eileen are able to relate to our clients in unique and powerful ways and bring a different perspective during team meetings. They have truly helped many of our residents by talking about their shared experience and helping residents see that there is a path forward."

—Jenna Moon, Program Director

LETTER FROM
OUR EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

TONYA BROWNLOW



“Our effort has also been about reaching out to all of you in gratitude and partnership. We know that without your support our work and efforts would not have the resources they need to go from dreams to reality.”

Dear Friends,

Wilder Research released the initial results of the triennial single night count of people experiencing homelessness. While the survey points to gains made to reduce family homelessness across the state by five percent, it also shows a setback as those experiencing homelessness overall *increased* by ten percent.

This increase could be due to multiple factors, including better systems of counting people not staying in shelters, combined with last year’s very visible homeless encampment in Minneapolis. The survey always provides rich data for trends happening in the state, but it doesn’t capture the whole story. For example, veteran homelessness in Minnesota is currently ended or at near zero. Accomplishing this important goal required a high level of coordination of multiple systems and the public support to accept the belief that NO veteran should be homeless.

Similarly to ending veteran homelessness, what we have learned at Emma Norton in the last three years is that where we put our effort and focus is where we make our gains. In the final year of our strategic plan, Emma Norton currently has 25 families and approximately 85 women living either in our site based programs at Emma’s Place or Emma Norton Residence or in their own apartments in the community. **Our effort was about growth and opening more doors—and we did it.**

We now have a vibrant SOAR program and continued implementation of the Sanctuary model. The SOAR program received an expansion grant from the State of Minnesota to increase from one staff to two and provide income enrichment for people with disabilities. In this newsletter, you will read about the new Peer Support Specialists and their role in recovery for those at Emma Norton. What I continue to hear from clients is that they feel the staff are dedicated, respectful, and caring. **Our effort was about improving the services for those that walked through our doors—and we did it.**

As you read more about our accomplishments and successes, please consider making a gift to support opening more doors for individuals and families in need so we can continue making our best effort to end homelessness. (And, all new, renewed, or increased gifts will be doubled in the months of November and December!) **We opened doors for nearly 300 individuals and families last year—and we did it together!**



Emma Norton
The Journey Home Begins Here

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Jenna Moon Program Director
Shawna Nelsen-Wills Advancement Director

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EMMA NORTON

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Eileen Smith | 1911–2017 Her Legacy of Philanthropy Lives on



Eileen Smith, age 96, passed away on April 2, 2017. She was known by her community as a strong supporter of the United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women. Eileen served as the Mission Secretary at Simpson UMC, where she was a member since 1947, and promoted mission projects for the church to support each month.

Eileen and her late husband Burnice Smith lived a modest life, but smart investments and an inheritance from their son's death left Eileen with a significant estate for distribution at the time of her death. Eileen's legacy of giving her resources, time, and energy will live on through a number of philanthropic gifts she left, including a generous donation to Emma Norton. This planned gift was critical to helping us close a budget gap and continue to provide supportive housing and wrap-around services to individuals and families who have experienced homelessness.

Thank you Eileen—your legacy of giving will forever live on at Emma Norton!

GROWTH BY THE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE | 2016 TO 2018

Emma Norton has experienced tremendous growth over the past three years.

197→296

Total Individuals

served throughout all programming.

13→25

Families

housed at one time at Emma's Place and through the new Family Scattered-Site Housing Program.

50→85

Individuals

housed at one time at ENR and through the new Scattered-Site Housing Program.

66→107

Children & Youth

housed and served at Emma's Place and Scattered-Site Housing.

16→42

SOAR Program

has more than doubled the number of clients served.

**LEAVE A
LEGACY**



Legacy gifts of any amount can have a significant impact on our budget and help prevent homelessness for women and families for generations to come.

To learn more about simple ways to include Emma Norton in your planned giving please contact Shawna Nelsen at snelsen@emmanorton.org or 651-251-2632.

Interested in serving on our Legacy Giving Committee, chaired by Mary Gates? Please reach out to Shawna or Mary to learn more!

Help us meet our \$100,000 year-end individual giving goal!

challenge grant

NOVEMBER
DECEMBER
2019



Donate and double your year-end giving impact!

We are excited to announce a \$20,000 challenge grant that applies to all new, renewed, and increased gifts received in November and December of 2019. Double your gift by making a qualifying donation and secure a match from our challenge grant from November 1 to December 31!

Special thanks to several of our long-term donors for creating the matching grant pool of funds.

STAY CURRENT WITH US

- **Join Our Emma E-News List**
Contact Advancement Associate Victoria Virasy at vvirasy@emmanorton.org
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“The peer support specialists add so much to our entire team and organization,” said program director, Jenna Moon. She also expressed the importance of having a cohort of peer support specialists so that they can lean on each other for support and guidance.

“Given my own journey, I want to share with the women at Emma Norton a sense of hope and purpose,” said Eileen, who previously worked as an accountant. “Many of the women feel so miserable and stuck when they arrive. I let them know that I’ve been there and am someone they can talk to, trust, and cry or laugh with when needed. I love the sense of community at Emma Norton and helping women draw on their own strengths to further their individual recovery.”

Mark Huberty was also looking for a change in his life. Formerly an engineer, Mark joined the staff at Emma Norton in the summer of 2018 after taking the two-week intensive Peer Support Specialist training. He has lived with anxiety, depression, and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and wanted to find a way to give back and provide hope to others who were facing similar mental health challenges.

“The first and most important component of my job is being there with a person as they are—as a peer and not as a clinician,” said Mark. “I try to truly recognize and empathize with someone on a shared level—listen to them and not judge while they process all of the pain and trauma they may have faced before arriving at Emma Norton. The ultimate goal is to try and empower them to approach life the way they want to live it and give them the tools and resources to get there.”

Our Peer Support Specialists have had to transcend many challenges with perseverance and courage along their journey. Through this experience, they are an incredible resource to those we serve and to the organization as a whole.

“The first and most important component of my job is being there with a person as they are—as a peer and not as a clinician. The ultimate goal is to try and empower them to approach life the way they want to live it and give them the tools and resources to get there.”

—*Mark Huberty*
Peer Support Specialist



Emma Norton Peer Support Specialists Mark Huberty (left) and Eileen Ward (right) with Emma Norton resident, Bonnie.



THREE EASY WAYS TO GIVE BACK
& GET INVOLVED

The Season of Giving with Emma Norton

Holiday Gift Drive

The holidays are coming up and we need your help! From now until December 16, we will be accepting the following gift items at our downtown Saint Paul location:

- Perfumes
- Scented bath gel + lotion sets
- Coloring books with coloring implements
- Journal sets with pens
- \$25 gift cards to the following locations: Target, Walmart, Aldi, Cub Foods, Lunds & Byerlys
- Winter themed gift bags
- Other gift items

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT DROP OFF
OR HOSTING AN EVENT
CONTACT VICTORIA VIRASY
VVIRASY@EMMANORTON.ORG OR
CALL 651.251.2662

Our goal this year is for every person at Emma Norton Residence, Emma's Place, Scattered Site Housing and in our SOAR program to receive a meaningful gift along with a \$25 gift card to use on something they really want or need.

DROP OFF YOUR HOLIDAY DONATIONS.

Emma Norton Residence | 670 Robert Street North | Saint Paul

Thank you for making the holidays a little brighter for our residents!

Host an Activity at Emma Norton Residence or Emma's Place

Bring some warmth and joy to our residents and/or families this winter season with a fun activity! We are looking for groups or individuals interested in hosting activities such as a Bingo, holiday crafts, spa/self-care sessions, cookie decorating, crafts and more in the cold months of November to March at either location.

HOST AN ACTIVITY FOR RESIDENTS OR FAMILIES/YOUTH.

Contact Victoria Virasy at vvirasy@emmanorton.org or 651-251-2662.

Winter Accessories Drive

Winter and colder weather is right around the corner. We are collecting new winter hats, mittens, scarves, and warm socks/slippers for adults, youth, and children throughout the winter months. If you would also like to donate any new or gently used winter coats, please bring them in for us to share with any new residents or families moving in. *Thank you for your generosity!*

DROP OFF YOUR COLD WEATHER CLOTHING DONATIONS.

Emma Norton Residence | 670 Robert Street North | Saint Paul

Thank you for keeping our residents warm in the winter.



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**Opening
DoorsDinner**

Save the Date

Thursday, April 23, 2020
InterContinental Saint Paul Riverfront

Join us for an evening of fun, philanthropy,
and community in Saint Paul!



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