

Our Mission

Our Saviour's Community Services

Increasing Skills, Improving Lives.

Our Saviour's Housing

We are a community of hope for those who need a home. Our mission is eliminating homelessness by providing shelter, support and a chance to start over.

The English Learning Center

We are a learning community of refugees, immigrants and advocates. Our mission is building knowledge for better lives and livelihoods.

Make your donation today!

Donate online at osom-mn.org/donate or use enclosed envelope.

Our Saviour's Community Services The English Learning Center — Our Saviour's Housing

OSCS Wish List	
ELC	OSH
Student Book Scholarship Donations (\$18 buys a book for a student!)	Socks (adult men's, new)
Reading Glasses	Travel-size deodorant (men's and women's)
Tea	TVs and converter boxes (new or used)
Rechargeable AA Batteries	Small kitchen appliances (microwaves, coffee makers, etc., new or used)
Wide-rule spiral notebooks	Laundry, dish, and dishwasher soap
A Digital Video Camera	
A Digital Projector	

Connect with us on Facebook!
facebook.com/oursaviourshousing and
facebook.com/englishlearningcenter

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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From The Executive Director

Welcome to the newest newsletter from Our Saviour's Community Services! Perhaps you've noticed, we've changed our name. With our new name we hope to better communicate with the wider community the scope of the work we do. It remains our mission to serve our local community.

Also with this name change, we have decided to combine our newsletters. Each time we issue a newsletter, you will now have the opportunity to read more about our two great programs; the English Learning Center and Our Saviour's Housing.

Although our name has changed — the important nature of our work has not. We remain committed to providing educational opportunities for the newest refugees and immigrants in our community and offering safe shelter and housing for those who are homeless.

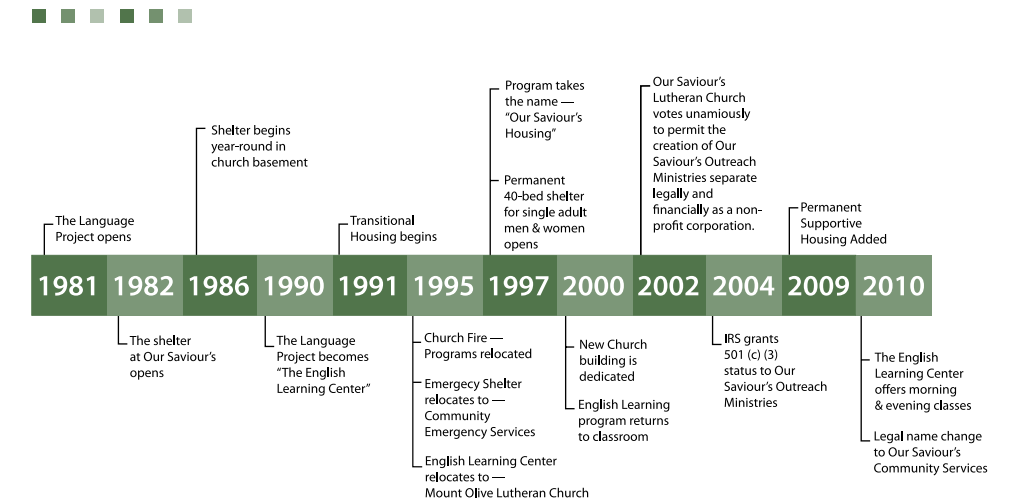
Both programs are growing. Be sure to read about the opening of our morning program at the English Learning Center. This has nearly doubled our ability to provide classes that meet the needs of those in search of English language learning. Be sure to read about the expansion of our

Permanent Supportive Housing program at Our Saviour's Housing. With more people safely settled into their very own apartments, we are excited to be part of the local solution to long-term homelessness.

We make a difference to this community. We make a difference in the lives of people. And as you join us, you make a difference too. Stay in touch with us and let us know what you think. Each of you is an important part of our work.

Sandy Colakson

Organization Timeline



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Beatrice's Journey

Beatrice fled her country of Cameroon, Africa and came to Minnesota with asylum status in the summer of 2006. She reluctantly had to leave her children, job of 15 years as a Social Worker advocating for women experiencing domestic violence, and her home. She came to America not knowing anyone or how to speak English.

Beatrice's family from Cameroon sent her just enough money each month to rent a small room. She brushed up against homelessness because her landlord sold the building she was living in. Beatrice felt lost and alone in Minnesota until the beginning of 2008 — she obtained a part-time cleaning position, began learning English at the English Learning Center, Our Saviour's Housing (OSH) sister program, and moved into Our Saviour's Transitional Housing program.

She remembers feeling instantly safe at OSH. The staff pointed her in the right direction with helpful resources. Her dream was to obtain full-time employment (someday advocating for battered women again), to be reunited with her children, and to own a home.

While living at OSH for almost two years, Beatrice rapidly improved her English, obtained another part-time job as an On-Site Supervisor assisting adults with developmental disabilities, and saved her money to achieve her dream.



Beatrice and son

Beatrice took the bus at 5 a.m. for two-hours to make it to her first job on time in Plymouth and then to her next job afterwards. She would return home at 9 p.m. each night.

January 2010, Beatrice saved enough money to fly her two teenage sons, Toussaint and Beernard here to live with her in a small apartment. OSH provided the reunited family with furniture, food, winter gear and resources.

Beatrice began working with Thrivent Financial, who matched her savings by 300% and with City of the Lakes to purchase a house in 2009. After much persistence and determination, Beatrice and her family moved into a beautiful house, in Northeast Minneapolis the summer of 2010!

Beatrice believes she has been lucky — she attributes her success to organizations that supported her throughout her American journey, great organizations like OSH.

“The staff at OSH believed I would succeed even when I didn't. They encouraged me to continue moving forward,” said Beatrice.

What's next? Beatrice wants to return to college for an American Social Work degree (she graduated in Cameroon with a Social Work degree that will not transfer) and someday advocate for women who have experienced domestic violence.

Volunteer Highlights/ Opportunities

Volunteers come to Our Saviour's Housing eager to give, and they share generously. However, most volunteers also find that they receive just as much from their experience and our residents. We asked some of our volunteers, “*What have you learned during your time at OSH?*” Here are their answers:

“I have learned that OSH really helps people regain hope.”
— Julie Magnus

“I get to see firsthand that even the small tasks (I do are) a big help. Staff are able to focus more on clients, and the residents are able to see that someone cares enough to help.”
— Gina Kubits

Want to experience for yourself what our volunteers are talking about? Contact Colleen at volunteer@oshousing.org or 612.872.4193 x3.

Aziza's Graduation



Aziza

Whether it's reading their first English novel or learning, for the first time, to write their own name, ELC students have so much to be proud of. Still, given the many demands of life in a new country, it is rare that students can stay in our program long enough to climb through the levels and reach “graduation.” And yet, that is exactly what one student, Aziza, just did.

Aziza entered our program in 2008, a few months after arriving here from Ethiopia. She joined English 2 and hit the ground running! Aziza's attendance was impeccable, and her dedication was clear. She climbed three English levels since 2008, in spite of taking a year off to have her child. Now she has tested out of even our most advanced class. The day after hearing this news, Aziza took and passed the entrance exam for a local GED-prep program. She intends to pursue a career in nursing, and we at the ELC have no doubt she will succeed.

Volunteer Highlights/ Opportunities

In early September, the English Learning Center (ELC) opened our doors for the first time in 30 years to offer a morning program. We were thrilled to be joined by eight talented volunteer teachers from the UCAM English School originally located in downtown Minneapolis. Collectively they have spent 78 years teaching English to newcomers in the community. Their continued involvement at the ELC has been crucial to our successful semester. In addition, we hired a Morning Program Assistant, Van Driver and Custodian.

The morning schedule includes open computer lab and English classes—four days a week. To relieve us of

the challenging task of recruiting morning teachers, several volunteers taught multiple shifts. In the future, the ELC hopes to add more ancillary classes, such as math or reading circles.

As with any Adult Basic Education school, student attendance can fluctuate — especially when it comes to the cold winters of Minnesota. Our current enrollment has been steady with nearly 70 regular attendees and 21 volunteer teachers. We anticipate our student body will increase in 2011. Thank you to all the morning volunteers and staff who made it all possible!

To learn more about daytime opportunities at the ELC please contact Yer Lee, Volunteer Coordinator at 612.874.9963 x2 or e-mail yer@englishlc.org.

Some of Our Morning Teachers

