

OUR SAVIOUR'S **COMMUNITY SERVICES**



Summer 2011 Newsletter | Volume 1 | Issue 2



DALE'S SUCCESS STORY OUR SAVIOUR'S HOUSING

When I walk into Dale's apartment every week it makes me smile, with his festive decorations and love for balloons. You can't help but notice the special care that Dale puts into his home. It is so neatly organized, clean and beautifully decorated.

Dale was homeless for 15 years off and on. He says that he always considered the homeless as his brothers and sisters and that he has compassion for all. He speaks about how even though he is no longer homeless he still thinks of the many people who need homes and he wishes he could help them.

(continued on pg. 2)



IN THE WORDS OF OUR STUDENTS ENGLISH LEARNING CENTER

A few months ago, Ganga Ram Acharya, an English Learning Center student, delivered a speech at the State Capitol during the Literacy Action Network's annual Lobby Day. Below is an excerpt:

"My name is Ganga Ram Acharya. I was born and grew up in Bhutan. Due to the political conflict, my family and I and many other people, had to flee our country. My family and I spent 18 years in Nepal as refugees. I have never gone to school in my whole life, ever. I was head carpenter in Nepal.

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OUR SAVIOUR'S COMMUNITY SERVICES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

We celebrate the difference we make in people's lives, and all that we contribute to the wider community.

We offer free classes in English, math, computer use and citizenship preparation to the newest immigrants and refugees in our community. In doing so, we work to equip them as they seek to become more fully integrated into their new country. We show basic hospitality by welcoming the stranger.

We offer free emergency shelter and a wide variety of support services to those who are homeless. In doing so, we provide a safe and welcoming place to be, for those who seek to begin again. We show basic hospitality by feeding and sheltering those without a place to call home.

On beyond the important services we offer to immigrants, refugees and those who experience homelessness – we feel that it is vitally important that we provide a bridge between the wider community and those who come to our doors. Over this bridge comes the hundreds of volunteers who see and meet and interact with our students and residents.

The importance of this goes far beyond the gift of the many hours volunteers spend, multiplying our efforts. We see that in these interactions, as person meets person – human connections are made. Hearts are opened and minds are changed.

Thank you – to all who join us in our efforts. Whether you are currently a volunteer, a financial supporter, or someone who just learning what it is that we do – we are delighted that you are interested in helping us make a difference!

Sandy Aslaksen
Executive Director
Our Saviour's Community Services



DALE'S SUCCESS STORY (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

Before moving into his home Dale felt stereotyped/judged with people thinking he must be homeless due to being a drug addict or a criminal. Dale states that he initially became homeless due to losing a job and then it became harder and harder to find another one. Dale tried to stay positive while he was homeless, praying and thinking things would change for the better.

Now that Dale has a home he says that he has become more confident with himself. He is happy to have more responsibility and stability in his life. Dale is very proud of his home. He enjoys cleaning his apartment as well as decorating according to each holiday.

Dale has a love for Mylar balloons. He says that he has been collecting them for 15-years. He tries to get a new one for every new season, special occasion and holiday.

He has become better with budgeting. Dale has been able to stretch the \$89 he receives monthly to not only cover his needs, but treat himself once in a while.

Dale expressed his wanting to tell others to "think positive, everything will work out and don't dwell in the past."

Dale says that whenever he wakes up or comes home he "feels like a kid on Christmas morning" looking around and being thankful to call it his home. He enjoys the peace and quiet and the privacy he has with having his home to himself.

Dale expressed how thankful he is towards OSH for helping him get housing. He is also thankful to Salvation Army, his church, Bridging for his furniture, and his current property manager- Christopherson Properties.

IN THE WORDS OF OUR STUDENTS

(CONTINUED FROM COVER)

In November 2008, me and my family came to Minnesota. I came to America for a better life for my children and for their bright futures. I was always interested and eager to learn and study.

Before I came to America, I thought I would be continuing my job as a carpenter, but because of my English language and writing skills, I am not able to find a job. I would like to continue my education until I can speak and write English very well. I really appreciate... my school, The English Learning Center, and I recommend to all the English learners to continue in school until you can achieve your goals." – Ganga Acharya, English Class 4



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VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS / OPPORTUNITIES

OUR SAVIOUR'S HOUSING

Volunteers may be accustomed to serving Our Saviour's Housing (OSH) residents, but volunteers may not know that many of our residents are serving the community, too. Recently OSH began offering group volunteer opportunities to all residents.

The initial projects began right at our facility, where residents helped with cleaning, organizing, and yard work. Efforts have expanded to include packing meals at Feed My Starving Children, renovating homes with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, and stocking the food shelf at Centro. When a tornado hit our north Minneapolis neighbors in May, OSH residents and staff were on a cleanup crew within days.



OSH residents are often eager to give back after receiving so much from their community. Residents empathize with others in hardship and feel a sense of purpose when they can help meet community needs. Some residents enjoy a day's worth of productive labor because they are currently out of work. Others appreciate the opportunity to be active and social.

When the OSH team returns from a volunteer project, residents are happy, peaceful, and proud. They discuss the impact they made and the smiles they shared.

Our Saviour's Housing
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ENGLISH LEARNING CENTER

Three volunteers were honored at the ELC Spring party.

Last fall, Anjali, a math tutor in our evening program proposed and implemented a new format to simplify our math grading system. In addition, she led other tutors in revamping our tests during the holiday break.

In her spare time, Anjali enjoys the city's frozen lakes and the challenge of a short growing season.

One word describes Eric – versatile. He began as a garden helper in May 2010 and later cross-trained as a substitute citizenship and math tutor. This summer he continues in the garden and has a regular shift in the new morning Advanced Math class.



Anjali, Yer, and Eric



Shirley

Shirley, a long-time educator and artist, joined the ELC's morning program as a substitute teacher when the UCAM English School transferred its program to our location. Her recent contribution to the school was a mural created at our Spring Party.

We rely on volunteers to teach all classes at the English Learning Center. We are currently in need of English, Math and Computer teachers in both morning and evening programs. Training is provided for all positions.

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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.



The Thrivent Foundation has offered us a challenge grant. For every dollar you donate between now and September 30, 2011 - the foundation will match your gift by 50 cents. Increase your efforts by making a gift now!

OSCS WISH LIST WAYS YOU CAN HELP

English Learning Center

- Student Book Scholarship Donations (\$18)
- Electric Pencil Sharpener
- Pre-Sharpended Pencils
- Powdered Coffee Creamer
- Plain white copy paper
- BP Gas Gift Cards -- help fuel the school van!
- Rechargeable AA Batteries
- Tea Bags

Our Saviour's Housing

- Socks (adult men's, new)
- Travel-size deodorant (men's and women's)
- TVs and converter boxes (new or used)
- Small kitchen appliances (microwaves, coffee makers, etc., new or used)
- Laundry, dish, and dishwasher soap
- Fans
- Earplugs

Check out our NEW website for a complete list: www.oscs-mn.org

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



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Our Saviour's Community Services



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