

*"Comfort, O Comfort my people, says your God.
Make gentle your words," Isaiah 40:1*



December 2018

Dear Friends of Thea Bowman House,

What a beautiful image we are given in these words from Isaiah! Who among us would not be touched by a kind word in a world so often torn by harsh and divisive language? Who among us does not want to reach out and comfort those whose lives flash daily across our screens? Whether it is wildfires, endless storms and floods, families being separated or violence in all its forms, we are reminded that we are a people in need of healing and consolation.

The children and families that we see everyday are deeply affected by what has become the "new normal" in society.

The gentlest of words are needed for the three brothers who await placement in foster care after they learn that their single father could no longer care for them. Mere words fail when 10 year old Michael realizes that his mentally ill mother will likely die of drug addiction. He hasn't seen her in months and clings ever so tightly to his grandmother. Perhaps Amelia, the cranky 2½ year old toddler, will be soothed by the familiar lyrics of her favorite naptime lullaby. Her exhausted mother has worked double shifts all week to make ends meet and has little time for bedtime rituals with her daughter.

We must never forget to notice the most unlikely of gifts for they are without price. Sam, one of a growing number of homeless patrons, finds a warm parka in just the right size at our food pantry and a bonus blanket and can opener as well.

Sometimes that gift of encouragement comes in the high five of the volunteer tutor who finally breaks through to 12 year old Lisa as she solves an incredibly difficult math problem. It is celebrated again in the form of a cheer when Sara finally passes her swimming test at summer camp. It is the miracle that happens in the pre-k classrooms as children from all parts of our globe learn together to speak the language of love.

Thea Bowman House just turned 32 years old in October. Hundreds upon hundreds of children have now passed through our doors, each one of them with a unique story. You can meet "alumni" in almost every corner of our city. It is heartwarming to realize that these now grown "children" are bursting to share their memories, their accomplishments and even their wildest dreams. They have gone into careers as social workers, medical professionals, business people, and teachers. Some are janitors, truck drivers, clerks and cooks. Still others have dreams that have had to be put on hold. They are proud parents who want to share some of the adventures that were part of their time at Thea Bowman House with their children, whether it be the monthly birthday parties or that summer camp experience.

Our role model, Sister Thea Bowman, embodiment of unconditional love, spent her life comforting people. She was a champion of inclusiveness and diversity. One of her favorite quotes was "Go! You have a song that will never be sung unless you sing it..."

In closing, we would like to thank each and every one of you, our benefactors, for helping so many of our "little ones" to share their song with a world in need of their gifts and talents.

We would appreciate any contribution that you might make to our annual holiday appeal. We wish you "glad tidings of comfort and joy" in this beautiful season.

Gratefully,
Jane Domingue

Thea Bowman House is a non-profit child care center serving children and families in and around the city of Utica, New York. We provide quality care to some of our community's most vulnerable children and youth in the hope of breaking the cycle of poverty through educational and social enrichment and support.

The mission of Thea Bowman House is to provide a safe, nurturing environment to enable culturally diverse children and families to achieve their full potential. The foundation on which Thea Bowman House is built is *agape*, unconditional love.



Programs & Services

Pre-School Day Care:

Licensed child care for children ages 18 months through five years, all day throughout the year. Transportation and meals are provided. Capacity: 75

After School Program:

A structured program for school age children, including tutoring, gym, creative development and field trips. Transportation is provided. Capacity: 100

Universal Pre-K:

NYS certified teachers provide a half-day program through the Utica City School District to help prepare children for kindergarten. Capacity: 150

Kids With Promise:

A structured program for youth ages 12-18, completely free of charge, promotes social- and self-responsibility and offers academic support. Capacity: 40

DOVE (Domestic Violence Ended):

On-site support services and counseling for those who need help with issues of domestic or community violence.

St. Clare's Cupboard & Cleophas' Closet:

Emergency food pantry and secondhand clothing shop, all provided free of charge to anyone in need. Provides food packages of three meals a day for three days.

Peace Garden:

A garden in memory of children who have lost their lives to violence and a memorial reminding us that peace begins with each person and is shared with those around us.

Movin' On Up:

Child care assistance for single parents seeking higher education in post-secondary school.

2018 Statistics

November 2017 - October 2018

Meals Served

<u>Month</u>	<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Dinner</u>	<u>Snack</u>
November	2154	3178	1648	2160
December	1815	2869	1622	1989
January	2153	3565	2021	2351
February	1941	2894	1396	1994
March	2200	3499	1886	2193
April	2182	3332	1459	2367
May	2464	3834	1708	2549
June	2359	3022	1213	2248
July	2471	2603	0	2581
August	2324	2468	0	2455
September	1674	2471	1662	1673
October	2494	4339	2213	2387

Food Pantry

Households Served - 1871

Children Served - 1999

Adults Served - 2887

Elderly Served - 243

Total Individuals - 5129

Total Meals - 46161



Thea Bowman House Board of Directors

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

