



Arlington
Life Shelter

SPRING 2014

THE ROAD HOME

Stories of hope from the Arlington Life Shelter

Becky Orander, MSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



dear friend,

Spring is here, and after such a long, cold winter, I'm rolling out the red carpet to welcome the warmer temperatures. The cold spells of the last few months put a real strain on the [Arlington Life Shelter](#), and we were operating far beyond our normal capacity to provide warm shelter for anyone who needed it. Your support allowed us to stay open 24/7 when the temperature remained below freezing for days at a time, and that meant warm, safe shelter for those in our community who would have otherwise faced dangerous temperature exposure.

Now that the flowers have begun to bloom, we look forward to setting aside some time for renewal and rejuvenation. Likewise, families checking into the Shelter find renewed hope as they return to self-sufficiency, thanks to support from friends like you.

You're truly helping put our homeless neighbors on "the road home!"

I hope you'll take the time to read Shambrea's story on page 4. She's a committed mother raising her disabled daughter on her own. Thanks to the stability and resources you've helped us provide — including access to critical physical therapy for Shambrea's daughter Riele — the little 2-year-old is spending less time in her wheelchair and more time on her feet. Little Riele has stolen my heart with her bright smile and sparkling gold toe nails. It's amazing when you think how dramatically this family, and so many others, have been impacted by your generosity.

The weather may be warmer, but we need your support year-round as we work to give homeless men, women and children a second chance at life. Thank you for your compassion!

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Family Dinners Remain a Priority at the Shelter

Can you imagine having to choose between paying for food and diapers for your young children, or paying for a roof over their heads?

Jessica and Joshua never expected to be in that situation, until Jessica's work hours were drastically cut right around the time that Joshua lost his good job. With their income reduced, they were no longer able to afford their rent. It was with the safety of their three young children in mind that Jessica and Joshua checked their family into the [Arlington Life Shelter](#).

Without rent and bills looming over their heads, Jessica can save each of her paychecks while Joshua works hard to find a full-time job again through the Arlington Life Shelter's employment program. He's also



"I don't know if you realize how much of a blessing you are."

Jessica, Larissa, 4, Laniah, 2 and Joshua Jr., 1

enrolled in evening education classes at the Shelter.

Jessica feels confident that, with the help of the Shelter's resources, they'll be back on their feet again soon.

"It's the little things that are so important to us," she says. "Staying at the shelter is just like home. Having family dinners together each night, and getting to spend some time with Joshua

and the kids before bed."

Jessica says their goal is to save money and put it toward their next house. With support from friends like you, she says that dream seems more possible with each day that passes at the Arlington Life Shelter.

"I don't know if you truly realize how much of a blessing you are," Jessica says, expressing her gratitude for your compassion. "Thank you."

Volunteers Like Mandy Welch Are Key to the Arlington Life Shelter's Mission

Board members of the [Arlington Life Shelter](#) are so important to our mission to return the homeless to a life of self-sufficiency. Members like Mandy Welch volunteer their time and experience to help give men, women and families the second chance at life they deserve.

Mandy has served in numerous capacities including helping to organize and recruit for the Shelter's annual *Home for the Holidays* event, and helping with our new March fundraising event, *You Are the Key*.

Since dedicating her time to the Shelter, Mandy says her view of homelessness has "completely changed." She explains that it's so encouraging to see that people who have been down on their luck — for whatever reason — are given a second chance at the Arlington

Life Shelter. She remembers talking with one young man in particular. He told her how through the help of the Shelter, he was able to regain custody of his two young children — and now had the structure and support he needed to keep succeeding each day.

"I was so proud of that young man for turning his life around, and also so proud of the Shelter for having a system in place to do that," Mandy says.

Mandy's experience volunteering with the Shelter has been so positive — she encourages anyone else who's interested in helping others to give it a try.

"Anything and everything you can do is appreciated here at the Arlington Life Shelter," she says. "Plus, we all feel better when we're helping someone else!"



Mandy Welch

"We all feel better when we're helping someone else."

EVENTS

The Road Home Tour

Learn how the Arlington Life Shelter helps homeless families and individuals secure employment, become self-sufficient and break the cycle of poverty. Discover our community's "final safety net" in 59 minutes.

Tour the Shelter during the day while shelter residents are working or in school and learn about the homeless families and individuals who call the Arlington Life Shelter "home" as they receive services to get back on their feet.

Learn how the homeless are finding hope amidst chaos.

Saturday, March 29 10-11 a.m.

Wednesday, April 2, 12 - 1 p.m.
(Lunch provided)

Saturday, April 12, 10 - 11 a.m.

Wednesday, April 16, 12-1 p.m.
(Lunch provided)

Saturday, April 26, 12 - 1 p.m.

Please RSVP to Lisa at
(817) 548-9885 ext. 2004 or
lkennedy@arlingtonlifeshelter.org

SAVE THE DATE

Family Work Day

Saturday, April 26, 10 a.m. - Noon

Children must be school age to participate
Admission: Wish list items

Please RSVP to Lisa at
(817) 548-9885 ext. 2004 or
lkennedy@arlingtonlifeshelter.org

WISH LIST

Grocery gift cards
Coffee
Drink mixes
Flip flops (all sizes)

For a complete Wish List, please visit
www.arlingtonlifeshelter.org



Shambrea and Riele

"You are so greatly appreciated."

You've Helped Change a Young Life

Shambrea's voice never wavers as she tells the story that led her to the [Arlington Life Shelter](#). For the past two years - ever since she learned her infant daughter, Riele, was disabled - she's lived a life of fear and uncertainty. But now, finally, she's found the stability she and her children needed all along.

In 2012, Shambrea was working a good job and was so proud of her newest baby girl, Riele. Being a single mother of two is never easy, but Shambrea made it work for her daughters.

But when Riele turned one and still wasn't crawling, Shambrea knew something was wrong. The next several months were spent in and out of pediatrician's offices and hospitals. At first, Shambrea says her boss worked with her - but caring for Riele eventually became too demanding, and Shambrea lost her job.

Shambrea received unemployment for a while, which was enough to pay their rent. But when those benefits weren't renewed last December, Shambrea was left with no job, no money and, eventually, nowhere to live.

In a situation she'd never planned for, Shambrea didn't know what to do - but thankfully she learned she and her girls would be given a second chance at the Arlington Life Shelter. Shambrea was immediately set up with the resources she needed, including physical therapy for little Riele - a critical intervention at this early stage.

With Riele receiving the care she needs every day, Shambrea is newly energized by the fact that she can start looking for work again. She hopes to find a good-paying job with benefits within the next few months - and in order to make it a reality, she's seeing her caseworker daily to learn about job hunting and improve her interview skills.

Shambrea has noticed a real improvement in Riele since she's started receiving therapy - and she's overjoyed by the progress.

"You are so greatly appreciated," Shambrea says. "You've given Riele a fair chance in life - without you, none of this would be possible."