



May 30, 2017

Dear Friend,

If you haven't visited IOH lately, I hope you will plan to join us for the next community dinner on July 24, 2017 at 7:30 PM in the activity room. You will witness the hope, love and energy of this special house that you make possible. All ten apartments are filled with families who are working hard to be better and stronger.

Sharon and her two beautiful daughters are just one of the special families who live here. Sharon married early hoping to eventually provide for her girls the stable home environment she so longed for but never experienced growing up. She worked during the day and took night classes until she was finally able to graduate from college. She found a good job working as the head administrator for a medical service center.

She imagined buying a home in a quiet neighborhood, attending church and raising her children in an environment of safety and love. But that would not be her experience. She soon found herself in an environment of verbal and physical abuse. As afraid as she was of repeating a cycle of instability for her girls, she was sure that she could not be a part of normalizing violence and abuse. She eventually was forced to walk away from the apartment and all she had worked so hard for. With an eviction on her credit report, her only housing option was an extended stay motel. Even in this decision, she tried to create the best possible situation for her children. She found a motel near her job and the children's schools in hopes of providing some stability in an environment that felt foreign and unfamiliar.

Sharon and her family spent two and one half years in a motel surrounded by violence, drugs and sex trafficking. She paid \$289 weekly and another \$50 per week on fast food. In the motel, her family only had access to a microwave and mini fridge, making home cooked meals next to impossible. Sharon recalls everything suffering during this ordeal, especially her peace of mind. Her children rode two different school buses home each day and they arrived at different times meaning each child had to find their way alone in this questionable environment.

Overwhelmed by the feeling of being trapped in a vicious cycle, she confided in a school counselor who pointed her in the direction of IOH and just two days before Christmas last year, Sharon and daughters moved in to their own apartment here. She has savings now, a plan to pay off her eviction and yes, she dares to think of owning a home again someday where she and her girls can live in peace.

IOH is a haven for this family and many others. It's a place where graduated families come back to tell stories of triumph and accomplishment for themselves and their children. IOH exists because of your prayers and support. In response to this letter, please consider a gift of \$500 or more but remember, all gifts are needed and appreciated.

With sincere gratitude,

Deborah