

## From Shelter to Stability

# Linda & Freddie: NEVER GIVE UP

*Generous gifts from our donors make it possible for these successes to continue. Thank you!*

The family member Linda and Freddie had been staying with was no longer able house them. As a result they spent several cold nights in their van. During this time they considered their trusty van as “home”; they slept there, changed clothes there, and even ate their meals there some nights. All of their necessary belongings were packed in the back of the van. During the day they continued on with their daily activities.

On a visit to the local library our Willis Dady outreach advocate informed Freddie and Linda that the Overflow Shelter had just opened. They immediately decided to check in that evening. Linda prepared their dinner which she had packed in her bag and they enjoyed their meal in a warm safe environment before heading to bed. Even though the men and women slept in separate quarters, Freddie and Linda were glad to be somewhere other than their van that night.

Freddie spent most days doing odd jobs in various fields he had experience in. He and Linda rose each morning at 5am, warmed up their van, and gathered their day-time necessities. Before departing Linda always checked her calendar

to plan her day. She was diligent about keeping every appointment and speaking with Willis Dady staff about resources that could help better their situation. Every evening Freddie would announce their return to the Shelter with a large smile, often offering to sing a song from the Jackson 5!

Linda worked with a Willis Dady housing case manager to apply and, in January, gain approval for a housing program. They successfully worked together to find housing that would fit the couple’s needs – close to downtown and near a grocery store and their doctor.

When moving day arrived they were both very excited. They admitted they would miss the staff and clients who they now considered friends, but promised they would keep in touch.

I recently visited Linda and Freddie in their apartment. Freddie told me he frequently walks downtown and encourages his friends still battling homelessness to never give up as they, too, can get housing just as he and Linda did. He shared with me that his experience at Overflow helped him to grow up. While there he learned to walk away from situations that in the past could escalate and find him in jail.

During our visit I listened as they recalled those cold winter nights they spent in their van just a few months ago. Both Freddie and Linda are overjoyed to now have someplace other than their trusty van to call home!

*- Denine Rushing,  
Shelter Operations Manager*



*Freddie's one piece of advice for someone currently experiencing homelessness:  
"NEVER GIVE UP!"*

## Director's Notes Transitions...

For the past few months everyone in our community has experienced change due to Covid-19. The Willis Dady staff, volunteers, and clients have been working harder than ever to keep everyone as safe as possible, while continuing to push for housing on a daily basis. We have doubled shelter operations as of March 16, continuing through at least the end of June. We've kept the community overflow shelter open, with new social distancing requirements between the cots in the classrooms.



As of April 10 we have been operating the area's homeless quarantine site, providing transportation, meals, and wellness checks for people experiencing homelessness who require isolation. We have had some major trials, including the need to quarantine several clients due to positive Covid-19 tests and the unexpected deaths of former clients (unrelated to Covid-19). We have had some major successes as well. Several clients who have been homeless for over a decade have signed leases and moved into their own apartments. Our case management team launched a "by-name" list of people living outside in order to bring them water, food, and check on symptoms during the pandemic. As food production needs have increased we are now driving two 15-passenger vans to bring people to and from Frontier Co-op, getting money in their pockets for a hard day's work. The past few months sum up Willis Dady well. We are here to support our community in preventing and ending homelessness, no matter the obstacles, setbacks, and failures. We believe what we do makes a difference, and it must be done.

Looking at how much has been done in the past months makes it all the more difficult to announce that I am leaving Willis Dady at the end of June 2020. For sixteen years I've lived away from my parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, and the time has come for me to return to my home in Minneapolis. I am excited to be starting as the new Executive Director for Clare Housing, an affordable housing and health organization serving people leaving homelessness who have HIV/AIDS. I am thrilled that Clare Housing has a vision I am passionate about; equipping and supporting staff; providing services to those who need them; expanding the stock of affordable housing; and advocating for change. While I am 100% certain Willis Dady will continue to lead the fight against homelessness, I can barely shoulder my loss of leaving the staff, board, and our community partners. I am a much better person having had the opportunity to serve this agency, and I look forward to watching Willis Dady's future success as a loyal supporter and friend.

*Phoebe* - Phoebe Trepp, Executive Director



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**WillisDady.org**  
319-362-7555  
To Find Shelter :  
319-366-7999

## Thank you to our caring donors

*We are proud to display the names of those memorialized and honored by our donors January 1 - March 31, 2020*

### In Memory:

Dick Clobenmir  
Norbert Hemseth  
Buddy Lawrence Hyde  
Deborah Levin  
J.P. Ranck

### In Honor:

Leslie Gilliam  
Jon Rasmussen  
Jin Van Zuuk  
Our Lady of the Poor and in reparation for the oppression of the poor

# How You Can Help ...

## Volunteer With Us

Volunteers with Willis Dady provide essential duties and much-needed program support every day. There are a number of ways to volunteer whether as an individual or a group! Visit our website at [willisdady.org/volunteer](http://willisdady.org/volunteer) or send an email to [volunteer@willisdady.org](mailto:volunteer@willisdady.org) for more information.

## Donate Items



We welcome goods donations! Whether they are purchased or gently used, these donations are needed daily. For a complete list of items visit [willisdady.org/donate#goods](http://willisdady.org/donate#goods), search Amazon for our Wish List, or follow us on Facebook for the most updated needs!

## Leave a Legacy



When you leave a legacy gift through Welborn Society, you provide housing stability for future generations. Please contact Jana DeBrower 319-362-7555, ext. 120, or [development@willisdady.org](mailto:development@willisdady.org) for more information.

## Events & Promotions

### JUNE

HyVee Reusable Bag Program

Kittd #playitforward

### JULY

Noodles & Company

### AUGUST

Noodles & Company

Hops for Housing



Contact us at  
319/362-7555 for details!

8-8 2020

## Volunteer Spotlight!

### Marin Dettweiler

Marin has been a Willis Dady volunteer since March of this year and already has been named Volunteer of the Month! She is an Americorps member who stepped up to help Willis Dady cover our front desk operations during the Covid-19 Pandemic. She helps transfer calls and answers client and community member inquiries during some of the busiest times of the day.



Marin is a recent graduate of Cornell College with a major in Environmental Studies and minors in English and Biology. She also volunteers at Olivet Mission of Hope and is in her first term with Green Iowa Americorps as an Education Coordinator in Cedar Rapids.

We appreciate everyone who has provided goods and services during this unprecedented time. Your kindness has allowed us to remain focused on the safety and support of our clients and, in turn, our community.

**Thank you.**



*Rafael, a former client who was looking for a way to give back, donated needed water for clients living outside and staying at our overflow shelter.*

### Make a Financial Gift

We couldn't keep our doors open without you!  
Thank you!

More than a quarter of our annual operating budget is funded by YOU, our generous Willis Dady family.

**Give securely at [willisdady.org/donate](http://willisdady.org/donate) or**

**Mail a check payable to Willis Dady:  
1247 4th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403**



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## Services Surge Under Strain of Pandemic

Funding received through grants and donations since the middle of March has provided critical aid in maintaining shelter and safety for the homeless. Our caring donors have supported the front-line workers at Willis Dady in providing emergent services along with our regular programs during these long weeks. The following reflects successes in the first nine weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic period in Cedar Rapids:

Safe accommodations at our Emergency Shelter to 70 individuals and to 50 at our Overflow Shelter each night.

Employment & Transportation to and from work for 25 individuals.

Shelter to 12 Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness Prevention Services to over 250 individuals.

Street Outreach to 44 individuals experiencing literal homelessness.

Rapid Rehousing for 61 individuals moving out of homelessness and into their own apartments.

*Operations have changed at Willis Dady to keep our clients and staff safe during the pandemic.*

*A few steps we're taking include taking temperatures multiple times a day and creating additional space between beds at our Overflow Shelter, which will remain open to our community's most vulnerable citizens until further notice.*



*A fond farewell to Carolyn Scherf and welcome to Kelsey Culver, Employment Case Managers pictured above.*

Thank you to 100+ Who Care - Cedar Rapids Metro and Cassill Motors for your support of Willis Dady Homeless Services Employment Programs! With your help we are able to better meet our clients' need for transportation to and from work at Frontier Co-op in Norway, Iowa, with the purchase of a new 14-passenger van!