

Hometown Banking Based on Community Service

TowneBank supports many local and national nonprofit associations, organizations, and events. We are honored to support the vital role these organizations play in our community.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

THE DWELLING PLACE FINDING A PLACE TO CALL HOME

“Mimi,” a diminutive kindergartner with an abundance of

personality and a seriously “old soul,” came to the shelter with her mom. While her mother unpacked, Mimi took a seat and said, “Don’t worry, I’ll occupy myself.” This tiny resident with shiny black hair had a comfortable grace and an easy smile. Would she remember staying in a homeless shelter? If so, what would stand out? Other children? The room? Or maybe her mother’s face, as new dreams replaced anxiety and fear.

The Dwelling Place, an ecumenical family shelter, is working to make the impossible possible. “Families who are homeless and without hope find a respite, structure, and a pathway to a new future,” says Trish Manthey, executive director. “Everything about our agency says, ‘You can make it. You can be productive. You are worthwhile.’”



The Dwelling Place, which derives its name from Psalm 90:1, began in 1979, when a group of clergy and lay people, united by a concern for the homeless, began exploring how to help families in need of temporary shelter. In Hampton Roads, families make up more than 55 percent of the homeless population, and homeless families mean homeless children. In fact, the average age of a person in a shelter is nine. And children of homeless families are at risk for speech and health problems, malnutrition, developmental delays, and poor

school performance. The Dwelling Place is on a mission to change those facts.

The twofold purpose of The Dwelling Place is to provide safe and secure emergency shelter for the homeless, and to assist them in achieving self-sufficiency. Programs for families include counseling, housing and employment assistance, and educational and parenting workshops. The children are offered tutoring, computer skills development, art therapy, and community field trips.

Hampton Roads residents have generously supported The Dwelling Place with their time and treasure. Last year, 766 volunteers gave

more than 5,100 hours of their time, and an art sale and auction helped raise funds for the agency. The community also benefits in a reciprocal way. “Helping families in crisis has a huge impact on the Hampton Roads area,” Trish said. “As families stabilize and move forward, they are likely to give

back to the community and help others in turn.”

TowneBank senior vice president and mortgage sales manager, Shirley Sasser, serves on The Dwelling Place board. “Shirley personifies the TowneBank commitment of giving back to the community,” Trish said. “From her vantage point as a mortgage banker, it might have been easy for her to ignore the homeless. But instead, she has reached out and made a commitment to our agency that is amazing.” To learn more about how you can help, visit www.thedwellingplaceva.org. ♦

