

Homeless to Housed

Have Mercy – (616) 225-8055

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The Todd & Shannon Smith Story

(names changed for privacy)

Todd and Shannon have been local people all their lives. Todd was raised in Greenville, Shannon in Cedar Springs and Grand Rapids. Spring of 2016 found them doing okay, living in a rented trailer in a mobile home park.

Shannon and their daughter began to have some severe bronchial and skin problems which were ultimately traced to an issue of mold in the home. They moved abruptly from there to live with Shannon's brother's family. As in many situations, friction arose and the brother ordered them to leave in the middle of the night.

They then moved in with Shannon's mother, but the apartment was very small and crowded so they weren't able to stay there for long. However, the mother did help them to stay at a local motel for a while, but that didn't last long. They resorted to moving in with friends, but that was short-lived too.

In all the moving, Todd was fortunate to be able to continue to work and help provide income

and pay expenses in the various places that accommodated them. They stored what furniture they had in a storage unit and continued to seek a place to live. In September, Todd was diagnosed with blood clots in his legs and lungs and put on total work restriction. They were at a loss for what to do.

They met a couple from a church they used to attend and the couple encouraged them to check out Have Mercy in Greenville. By this time, Shannon was an emotional wreck, even to the point of contemplating suicide. Todd's emotions were tenuous too.

It was the first-time Shannon had ever seen him cry. They were not used to having no place to live and having to depend upon others. They had always been self-sufficient.

Have Mercy provided some immediate relief with shelter in a motel and helped them get connected to resources to meet some of their emotional and financial needs, but did not

Who We Are and What We Do



Have Mercy's mission is to reflect the compassion of Christ to homeless families in Montcalm and Ionia counties. We do this by providing temporary emergency assistance while working with them to rebuild their lives. Our goal is to keep these families together, safe, and off the street while helping them solve the issues that led to homelessness.

We promote self-sustaining families through practical steps toward permanent housing, as well as encouraging spiritual growth for long-term stability. Our strengths-based case management approach enables our clients to work toward solutions by focusing on their individual strengths. This partnership is proving to be successful in helping the homeless find their way out of the most difficult situation of their lives. We are so privileged to be a part of their success.



have enough resources to continue providing shelter long-term. The Case Manager reached out to North Kent Guidance Center and Mel Trotter in Kent County.

The Smiths soon joined Mel Trotter's Family Promise program which allowed them to remain together as a family unit. Fortunately, there was a program in place that allowed for their daughter to be transported daily to her established school in Cedar Springs.

(Note: This was the first time that both counties worked together with the same client to provide

the needed services... a totally unheard of concept.)

Finally, Have Mercy was able to get Todd and Shannon approved for an apartment in Belding. Amanda from HM called and said, "Let's get you home!" With their emotions spiraling, they actually moved in the week before Thanksgiving and signed a year's lease.

Throughout the ordeal, they really didn't get much help from family. Todd is still not able to work, but they are making ends meet. Plus, they are paying it forward by helping Shannon's sister get into a home too.

When asked if they had a good Christmas, Todd beamed and said, "Yes, we are so blessed!" Shannon exclaimed, "Officers from the Ionia State Police post brought in a car load of presents! It was wonderful!"

Plus, the Family Promise program invited them there to shop in their Christmas Store. When asked if there was anything else they wanted to share, Todd wanted everyone to know that "You have to step up and do your part. You have to be willing to help yourself in order for others to help you. You have to be willing to do the legwork." And that's exactly what they did!

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