

Heartland Family Service works to prevent and end homelessness

By Kayla Eggenberg

Hearthland Family Service has touched countless lives. For some, the nonprofit is their saving grace when they need just one month's rent to get back on their feet. For others, the support from its services is the difference between being homeless and having a safe place to sleep at night.

On average, Heartland Family Service serves more than 30,000 individuals each year. A large part of its services is made up of housing and financial stability support.

Abby Showers, permanent supportive housing director, oversees all permanent supportive housing programs as well as the street outreach program.

"We help prevent people from becoming homeless," Showers says, "If they have an eviction notice on their rental property, we help pay for it so they can stay in their house instead of coming into the homelessness world."

Heartland Family Service offers 50 different programs that encompass several different areas, including child and family programs, prevention and

counseling programs and housing and financial stability. The goal of these programs is to help clients ultimately experience safety and self-sufficiency.

Brittney Braegelmann, housing specialist for rapid rehousing, is focused on providing immediate rehousing services so her clients can get back on their feet. Heartland Family Service assists the homeless with rent deposits of up to 12 months.

"I focus on getting them set up with community resources in order for them to become more self-sufficient," Braegelmann says.

Under the housing and financial stability area, more than 11 homeless service programs include prevention, street outreach, rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing.

"All of the different programs have different levels and types of housing so we can help all of the different rent levels of people that need housing in the homeless world," Showers says.

Whether Heartland Family Service helps a family make rent for just one month so they don't lose their home, or supports them long-term until they can



Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless

get back on their feet, the nonprofit is focused on providing immediate support.

“There are people who might just need prevention services or just need help getting that first rent paid, and they’re good to go,” Showers says, “Or there are people that need three to six months of rapid rehousing services and some help booking housing.”

Braegelmann says some of her clients just need a little bit of support, and she knows with her assistance and support with Heartland Family Service rehousing services, she is also providing emotional support for her clients.

“I think being able to just see those steps taken and seeing the progress within themselves is really special,” Braegelmann says.

