

From the community

DuPage PADS helps the homeless recover from illness with dignity



By [Buddingh & Associates, Inc.](#) May 22 at 4:15 p.m.

The recession has taken its toll on the nation's economy with 12.7 million people unemployed, according to recent statistics. Losing a job can have a domino effect, sometimes even resulting in homelessness. When her company went out of business, paramedic Genie Meenan was not only out of work, but eventually had no place to live until she contacted DuPage PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter). Located in Wheaton, DuPage PADS has helped the homeless live better lives since 1985. Unfortunately, Meenan's situation grew more serious when she became ill with cancer and was hospitalized.

Over more than 25 years, DuPage PADS has expanded its network of services to include assistance for clients who need recuperative care after surgery or illness. PADS Case Manager Tim Paul said he links clients to services offered by DuPage County including housing, Medicaid and the Department of Human Services.

"After Genie left the hospital, we helped her find a short term housing solution in lieu of shelter while she was recovering," Paul said. "We also helped her with transportation, food and finding a long-term solution."

When a potential client seeks help from PADS, trained staff members assess what the client might need with the goal of housing in mind. Those needs might include assistance in filling out a disability application, transportation to medical or social security appointments, a referral to a disability attorney or help in applying for the food stamp program. Individuals and families are referred to the DuPage PADS Client Service Center to meet their basic needs and given support to redirect their lives. To help individuals gain meaningful employment clients are referred to the DuPage PADS employment program for career development and opportunities to become job qualified, along with onsite GED classes offered, and help with basic skills.

If respite care is needed, case managers collaborate with local agencies and congregations to secure short-term solutions at times utilizing motel stays. PADS case managers take the clients to the motel and make sure they have food and access to a microwave and refrigerator. They also make at least one wellness check visit for this short term stay.

Meenan is now recovering in a short-term care facility and is on the waiting list for DuPage PADS Supportive Housing. She said that PADS is “awesome” and is thankful for their support.

Homelessness does not have to mean hopelessness when illness strikes. DuPage PADS connects its clients with resources to help them on the road to recovering their health, while maintaining their dignity.

For more information about the programs offered by DuPage PADS, call (630) 682-3874.