

Simler: 'One less family that is homeless'

Community voice

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2014 was an exciting year for DuPagePads: 392 people obtained permanent housing, 145,501 meals were served, 44,284 nights of shelter were provided and 1,360 individuals were assisted including 241 children in 144 families. One of these families was Angel's, and she shares her journey below.

"With nowhere to go, my children and I walked to DuPagePads. With a lump in my throat, tears in my eyes and my pride in my purse, I told them, 'I need help.'"

A myriad of challenges led Angel to this point. She had been through an abusive marriage, suffered health complications, lost her \$42,000-a-year job and no longer had a place to call home for her and her children. Angel describes her life at that time as being, "downright depressing!"

Angel says the staff at DuPagePads offered her a helping hand.

"They were there to root for me – that type of cheering section helps you face your giants."

In February 2012, Angel moved into her own apartment.

"My case manager greeted us at the door and said, 'welcome home.'"

Tears welled in Angel's eyes as she looked around her furnished apartment.

"There were bags and bags. They had taken care of every detail, from light bulbs to dishes and everything in between."

Angel and her children had been doing well until this summer when Angel faced immense pain, which called for an emergency room visit and immediate surgery. Her son, who had accompanied her in the ambulance, was told by the doctor that he could not stay overnight.

"I was hysterical and with no relatives to call, I contacted my DuPagePads case manager."

Angel's case manager showed up to the hospital at 4:30 a.m. to pick up her son. Following the surgery, she brought Angel's children back to visit her and assured them that their mother was going to be OK. Angel says that DuPagePads has "been my rock through this trying time."

"From a ride to the grocery store to providing cleaning supplies, DuPagePads does whatever they can to help. Because of DuPagePads, my children can stay at their school in Naperville; there is one less family that is homeless, one less child on the streets. To my DuPagePads family,

words cannot express the gratitude and admiration I have for you! Thank you for never letting go!"

Interested in assisting families and individuals like Angel? Visit our website, www.dupagepads.org/donate to see how your donation can make more success stories possible. We look forward to a new year as we work together to end homelessness in DuPage County.

Carol Simler is president and CEO of DuPagePads.

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