A Support System Unlike Any Other

Pregnant and homeless. Those are two words that you may not often pair together or even think of, but that is exactly where Amanda was five months ago. At a first glance, you probably wouldn’t assume that Amanda was homeless. She appears just like any other young woman poised on the brink of a promising future. Her smile is bright and her demeanor is calm as she holds her daughter who has her mother’s dark hair and rich brown eyes.

What you don’t see when you look at Amanda is how she spent most of her pregnancy living in the Open Door Women’s Center as she sought out permanent housing. As the birth of her baby grew closer, so did the worry she wouldn’t have a place to stay when her child came. “It was extremely hard to be pregnant and homeless,” she said. “It was a very rough experience. There were many times when I broke down and didn’t know what to do.” Her prayer was answered three days before giving birth, when she was approved for housing through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, finally having a place to call home.

Amanda had nothing to furnish a nursery for her child so Marge Palmerlee charged the newly formed group, Women 4 Degage, with the task of pulling their resources together to outfit the nursery. Within two days, they were able to furnish the entire nursery with a crib, dresser, changing table, clothes, and many other amenities to fill the room. When it came time for Amanda to head to the hospital, her plan was to take the city bus to the hospital. Julie Kendrick, Program Manager, who worked closely with Amanda over the last few months caught wind of this and knew she could not allow Amanda to go through this experience alone. Julie drove her to the hospital and stayed with her through the entire birth.

Today, Amanda and her daughter are happy and healthy. Amanda is on the pathway to employment through the R.I.S.E. Up program. “I would like women to know that no matter where you are in life, don’t ever give up.” Amanda said. “If you have some kind of support system, take and run with it and don’t ever give up on yourself.”
Mission of Dégagé Ministries
To reflect the love of Christ to all who come through our doors by building relationships and offering programs that foster dignity and respect.

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Pauls’ Moms’ Cookies
It’s not too soon to get your holiday orders in. Choose from our seven gourmet cookies. You will not only be treating your friends but also supporting the Open Door Women’s Center.

Order at: paulsmomscookies.org

Community Vouchers
The next time someone asks you for money, simply give them a Dégagé voucher.

This can be redeemed for many of our services.

Order at: degageministries.org

Celebrate Dégagé will be held on Friday, November 22, 2019 at Frederik Meijer Gardens. The event will include a catered meal, stories from Dégagé patrons, and ministry update from our Executive Director, Marge Palmerlee.

To purchase tickets or to become a sponsor, please go to our website at degageministries.org/celebrate.
When I see Amanda with Isabella, her beautiful daughter. I am amazed at the difference a few short months have made. When I first met Amanda, she was scared and anxious, fearful of what the future held. Now she is a confident young mother with the hope of a bright future. She is quick to say she is so thankful for the staff at Dégagé who walked alongside her, loving and encouraging her.

The former Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, has said the most common illness today isn’t heart disease or cancer. It is loneliness and social isolation. Because of the relationships Amanda formed at Dégagé, she has been able to overcome the loneliness and isolation that can be so debilitating. We are cheering her on as she continues to work hard at providing a stable home for herself and Isabella.

Together with your support, we are impacting the lives of Amanda and many others who have nowhere else to turn. Thank you!

One of my favorite verses is Jeremiah 29:11. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

God has a plan for Amanda, just as He does for the many other men and women we serve. Please join me in praying that each one may know they are created in the image of God and loved beyond measure by their Heavenly Father.

Marge Palmerlee
Executive Director

If you would like to support our programs for patrons like Amanda, please go to our website and click on “DONATE NOW”
www.degageministries.org
Career advancement opportunities

As we strive to improve the lives of those in their community, we are thrilled with Mercy Health's new initiative to identify and remove barriers to career advancement. A centerpiece of these efforts is their Reach Out-Investigate-Seek Out-Elevate (R.I.S.E Up) program. This partnership between Mercy Health, the Grand Rapids-based nonprofit The Source, and West Michigan Works! aims to advance frontline workers and provide a path to family-sustaining wages that are benefiting the men and women we serve at Dégagé.

Susan is pictured above with her career coach, John Crowley, from West Michigan Works! at the Mercy Health Career Development Center at Saint Mary's Campus. She is very happy to explore the different careers that she is good at and have their support in her journey.

Susan, along with many other patrons at Dégagé, are excited to have this opportunity. When families are secure, communities are healthier and stronger. We thank the Lord for this new collaboration to help ensure families have an income that supports their basic needs. We also thank the Lord for your support as you walk alongside us and support the programs and services we offer to strengthen our community.

Why is an ID a must have?

Mark would be unable to apply for jobs, secure housing, cash a check, receive a Social Security card, or open a bank account without legal identification.

Dégagé Ministries’s ID office works alongside patrons like Mark through the process of attaining a State of Michigan ID. Once a week, our team takes our patrons to the Secretary of State Office to recieve their ID. We help nearly 500 people a year, so they can begin the process of independence.
Women supporting the women of the Open Door

The promise of a brighter future for women facing homelessness and other difficulties is the fuel behind this emerging group of women. Women 4 Dégagé is a group of women who are focused on using their passion, power, skills, and connections to support Dégagé Ministries and the women of the Open Door Women’s Center. They haven’t wasted any time in getting started on making an impact.

When a patron who had just secured her own space needed support in furnishing a nursery for her newborn, the group was called upon to take action. As you read on the cover, the group pooled together their resources. Within two days, the patron (Amanda) and her new child (Isabella) had a crib, a dresser/changing table, toy box, clothes, and many other basic needs for caring for a child.

“Everyone wants to do something,” states Linda Vos-Graham, the pioneer behind Women 4 Dégagé. “We want to provide all types of options for women to get involved, whether it is collecting items, sending a check, introducing more resources – anything.”

The group is currently made up of more than 40 women, all who are working diligently to empower the women of the Open Door, the community, and each other. The group encourages and welcomes any women who feel called to join them on their mission.

Interested in joining or know someone who would be a great fit? Visit our website for details.
http://www.degageministries.org/women4degage/

What’s in a locker...everything

Many homeless men and women that we serve carry all of their personal items with them everywhere they go, except for the 88 patrons who use our lockers.

Our patrons can rent our lockers for $2 a week and can use their job vouchers as payment. We have over 60 ten-minute tasks each day for our patrons to earn these vouchers. Together these programs instill dignity and provide a needed resource for our community.
The Heartside Community Christmas Store is December 18

Please consider supporting our annual Heartside Community Christmas Store. Our combined efforts with Mel Trotter have a great impact in our Heartside community. The store provides the men and women we serve with the opportunity to purchase gifts at a low cost and in a dignified manner.

Here are ways that you can help:

**Purchase Items**
Purchase an item from the list below. Please deliver to Dégagé, unwrapped, by December 13.

**Purchase Online**
Go to our online Amazon Christmas Store at degageministries.org/wishlist and click on Christmas Store. Your gift will be shipped directly to Dégagé Ministries. Please order by December 9.

**Donate Financially**
We will be happy to use those funds for purchasing a gift and covering expenses related to the Christmas Store. To donate online, visit our website and click “Donate Now.” Select Christmas Store.

**Volunteer**
Volunteers are needed for the setup, as a personal shopper, or gift wrapping.

**Christmas Store Wish List**

- Games and puzzle books for adults
- Hats, scarves, gloves (new)
- Flashlights and batteries
- Towels (all sizes)*
- Tool kits
- Socks, underwear, long underwear, undershirts (men & women)
- Men’s toiletries*
- Sleeping bags and blankets*
  *Favorite items

- Small appliances (coffee maker, toaster, microwave, crockpot, etc.)*
- Radios, alarm clocks, and other household items
- Sheet sets (all sizes)*
- Backpacks
- Candles and jewelry
- Wrapping paper and Christmas cards
- Headphones and electronics
- Pajama sets (all sizes)

If you have any questions about the store or volunteering, please contact Trevor at 616.454.1661, ext. 212 or trevor@degageministries.org
Those we Remember and Honor are shown in bold

Those we Remember

Joan Abbott
Heidi Davey
Dee and Tony Baculy
Ben and Denise DeGraaf
Mary DeGraaf
Ben and Denise DeGraaf
Ann DeLeeuw
Charles DeLeeuw
Myrna Frazine
Jeremy and Kim Bolker
Gordon and Lynne DeVries
Dean Frazine
Irma, Mark and Anna Frazine
Ruth and Ken Morgan
Ed and Evelyn Newton
Gregory and Laura Olee

Marcia Hansma
Thelma Freedberg
Harold Koetje
Bradford and Lavonne Lamb
Norma McClellen
Jennifer Lewis
Donna Moecker
Richard and Maryjo Baker
Annie Postmus
John Postmus
Garry Quakkelaar
Karl and Ruth DeYoung
Carla and Danny Grice
Durk Martin
Walt and Cindy Schultze

John Stroo
James Walcott
Robert and Beverly VanderHeide
Marv and Lois Van Heuvelen
Ralph O Schenk
Donald and Cheryl Bushman
Dwain Schott
Mary Lipski

Those we Honor

Craig Swanson
Michael and Sharon Poggi
Ashley Terpstra
Dale and Mary Terpstra

Join us in changing lives

Recently a women who is now in her own, home, left this note behind: “Dégagé saved my life!” When you support Dégagé Ministries you are helping to save a life!

Over the past five years, there has been an increase of chronic homelessness by 94%. In the Heartside neighborhood, 47% of residents live in poverty. At Dégagé we serve 500 men and women every single day!

And there are many ways YOU can help!

- Join Women 4 Dégagé. Your time, talent, and treasure - whatever that might be - is a blessing! We welcome you to get involved and discover how you can help impact another woman’s life.
- Organize a fundraiser! You, your friends, and your family can raise money to help underwrite important programs. From babysitting and dog walking to planning a yard sale, chili cook-off, or a talent show, there are endless ways to raise funds to help.
- Ask your company to sponsor Celebrate Dégagé, our annual dinner event, on November 22.
- Ask your church to host a special offering to support vital programs to help our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Please contact me with any questions on how you can help save lives. May God bless you.

Brooke Jevicks, Development Director 616-454-1661, ext. 213 / brooke@degageministries.org

Let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works. Hebrews 10:24
You can also donate items online using our Amazon Wish List at degageministries.org/wishlist

Dreaming Big
• Commercial washers and dryers
• Commercial vacuums
• Eight-passenger van
• Floor buffer
• Gift certificates to Office Depot, Home Depot, & Gordon Food Service

Kitchen & Dining Room
• 40-50 gallon trash bags*
• Coffee*
• Coffee stir sticks
• Cream packets
• Fresh fruits and vegetables
• Floor stripper
• Floor wax
• Hot chocolate packets
• Jelly
• Metal forks and spoons
• Food processor
• Napkins
• Ketchup packets or 10 lb cans
• Sugar packets
• Vinyl gloves

Life Enrichment Center
• Air freshener spray
• Backpacks
• Blankets (all sizes)
• Body wash / spray
• Bus tickets
• Chapstick with sunblock
• Dental floss
• Deodorant
• Dryer sheets
• Fireproof file cabinets
• Foot powder
• Isopropyl alcohol wipes
• Men’s belts*
• Men’s boxers and briefs
• Nail clippers
• Q-Tips
• Rain ponchos
• Razors
• Reading glasses
• Sleeping bags
• T-Shirts L, XL, 2XL
• Travel size tissue
• Umbrellas
• Women’s hygiene products (Large sanitary pads)

The Open Door
• African American hair products
• Breathe Right strips
• Cough drops*
• Hair brushes
• Hair styling products*
• Lotion - large
• Tissue
• Laundry soap
• New women’s underwear and bras
• Pajamas*
• Slippers
• Towels
• Undergarments all sizes*
• Vaseline
• Washcloths
• Women’s socks
• Women’s bedding - Navy Blue (pillow, sheet, blanket - Twin size)

Welcome Baskets
(A gift for patrons on move-in day)
• Bath towel sets (2 bath, 2 hand, 2 washcloths)*
• Bed sheets (full, queen, king)
• Brooms and mops
• Can openers
• Cleaning supplies
• Coffee makers
• Dishes
• Dish drainers
• Dishcloths and dish towels
• Full and queen-size blankets and comforters
• Inflatable mattresses
• Microwaves
• Pots and pans
• Serving utensils
• Shower curtains and hooks
• Silverware*
• Tissues
• Toaster ovens
• Toilet brush
• Toilet tissue
• Vacuums

★ MOST URGENT NEED

If your address label is incorrect or if you’re receiving duplicate newsletters, please email carole@degageministries.org.