



*Stories of Mercy*

Volume 1



# The Mercy Mission House Emergency Shelter

The Mercy Mission House Emergency Shelter (MMH) was created to fill a gap in services in the Shelby County, Ohio community. Sometimes it is difficult to imagine a life that is unlike your lived experience. It is easy to make assumptions. Mercy Mission House residents had the courage to share their stories in gratitude to the donors and in hopes it can provide understanding and clarity as to whom needs the services of an emergency shelter. MMH staff has the difficult job of helping people move from a place of trauma to trust. MMH founder, Emily Neu, often says, "Every day is a new adventure, every morning is a new beginning, and every person is deserving of mercy and love."



**Please Donate TODAY!**

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## Will, 23

*It is amazing that Will is still smiling.*

Born in VA. He was only 12 years old when his mother was holding him watching a movie and shot herself. He has damaged hearing in his right ear from the gunshot sound. He was in foster care. He went to live with his Dad and witnessed two of his older brothers die from gang violence. At just 16, he was at the community pool with his younger siblings who were in the stroller. Will went to buy them all ice cream and a group of boys that were tossing a football around knocked the stroller into the pool. Both siblings drowned and died. Will still blames himself. He is the only one in his family that has graduated from High School. Will is working hard in our program so he can take care of his 9 month old daughter.

- **Strength:** Communication
- **Struggles with:** Anger
- **Striving to:** "Take care of my daughter and provide an opportunity so she can have a childhood unlike me."

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## Jack, 32

*He really is a Jack of all Trades.*

Born in FL. He moved to Ohio at 14. He was in foster care. At one of his foster homes, they were locked in rooms and not allowed to do anything else. He became suicidal and tried to light his mattress on fire just to escape his life in the room. Jack struggles with mental health issues and has been in and out of treatment facilities; and also prison. Jack says the system has shuffled him around and he started using the system because it was all he knew. He was homeless throughout the pandemic which he shared was an extremely difficult time. He began using meth. He is trying to stay clean. He is not in our shelter at this time due to breaking rules. Please pray for Jack. Jack is very creative, he picks up trash and makes art.

- **Strength:** Sees the good in everything
- **Struggles with:** Focuses on others and loses the priority for himself
- **Striving to:** "Pursue and maintain sobriety and a STABLE life."

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## April, 39

*She is one sassy survivor with sarcasm unparalleled.*

Born in Dallas, TX to a mother who was addicted to speed. April grew up in the country with a military stepdad. She challenged his authority and everyone else's. She was abused at her small town school and was constantly made fun of and bullied. Her grandmother was her savior. She got kicked out at 18 years old and moved in with her alcoholic father. He "hardcore physically abused" her, but also let her do whatever she wanted. She dated a man for 10 years who left her 2 months before their wedding. Her world fell apart. She met someone who helped her pick herself back up, but he also scared her. She lived with him in an RV and one day, driving home from work April had a massive stroke. She woke up in the hospital and was told she would never walk again. Not April. She walked slowly out of that hospital 3 months later. Her family sold her RV when she was unconscious after the stroke. She walked out of the hospital and found herself homeless. She moved in with her boyfriend and his cousin. She entered into rehab to stop the meth she started to self-medicate with. She completed rehab. She fell at home and her boyfriend beat her badly. The ambulance took her to a nursing home, and she completed PT. She was once again homeless when she was discharged and came to MMH. MMH was helping her get her disability benefits and back home to Texas.

- **Strength:** Survivor and holistic healer
- **Struggles with:** Homelessness
- **Striving to:** "Get disability benefits and a home."

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## Melvin, 50

*Hard working, single dad*

Born in Bellefontaine, Ohio. Melvin grew up with his 6 sisters and 2 brothers in a blended family. He grew up poor but happy! He graduated high school and went to one year of tech school for law enforcement. He has been working ever since.

He had 2 boys and a girl. He and his partner let the kids decide who to live with when they split up. His son Mike lives with him. Mike is autistic. Melvin's greatest joy was when Mike graduated from the MR program at Sidney High School. Melvin had surgery in March and had to be off work for two months. His friend promised to move in and help with the bills during his recovery but he didn't. Melvin and Mike got evicted for not being able to pay their bills. They came to MMH temporarily. Melvin works almost 7 days a week. MMH connected them with wrap around services and helped them find a new place.

They were in shelter for less than 4 weeks.

- **Strongest Strength:** Never give up. Fighter.
- **Struggles with:** Single dad and making sure son gets what he needs
- **Striving to:** "Get back into my own place."

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## Ryan, 20

*A childlike joy and laughter that will make you smile.*

Born and raised in Sidney, Ohio. Ryan's mom gave him up when he was just four years old. His dad has been in and out of prison throughout Ryan's life. When out of prison, his dad consistently tries to ruin Ryan's life. His dad called the shelter and said his son was worthless and he wanted him kicked out. Ryan is developmentally delayed and lived in a group home at one time. Unfortunately, his father called the police repeatedly to the house and scared the other residents. Ryan is very loving and helpful. Ryan loves being at the shelter with his two "moms" and his friends. He feels safe with the staff. We have worked to get him a payee. We ask for your prayers as Ryan recently decided to move into a home in Piqua with his girlfriend. We will miss him and hope he is safe and happy.

- **Strongest Strength:** Caring
- **Struggles with:** Too trusting
- **Striving to:** "I want to get my own place and be a dad someday. Be a GOOD DAD."

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## Stephany, 44

*Searching for answers and the right path forward*

Stephany was born in Ohio. She has ever only seen one baby photo. She lived with her dad until she was 12. Stephany and her younger sister were not allowed to leave their rooms, not even to go to the bathroom. Her grandparents moved her in. She loved her grandmother, she was strict but loving and taught Stephany a lot. She graduated high school and moved out right away. Her grandfather had been molesting her since age 12 until she moved out. Stephany never had a chance to get to know her mom, her mother died very young from kidney failure. Stephany did a DNA test and found out that her grandfather is her biological father. She assumes he must have molested her mother too.

Stephany has been through a lot. Two failed marriages, nine kids, two miscarriages, many interactions with the law from driving without a license to other misdemeanors. She saw a lot of things growing up and feels her life is a mystery and that she is still searching for truth.

- **Strongest Strength:** Empathetic and perceptive
- **Struggles with:** "My man, I can't tell him no."
- **Striving to:** "Stay clean, have stability and do things the right way."

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## Herb, 40

*Making success happen*

Born and raised in Ohio, Herb has overcome many obstacles. He worked successfully as a machine mechanic. Herb was earning over \$65,000 per year based on his tax returns. His bank account got locked and he tried to use a cash application on his phone temporarily. One thing led to another and he found himself unable to pay his bills. He lost his motorcycle, his residence, and found himself homeless. When he got to MMH, he needed help getting a new ID as his had expired. MMH was able to help him get all documents needed to get his identification. Herb suffers from extreme anxiety and self-doubt. He was happy to help anytime he was needed. Herb kept to himself. He recently landed his dream job and moved out of the shelter.

We wish him the best and will miss him!

- **Strongest Strength:** Handyman knowledge
- **Struggles with:** Fighting anxiety
- **Striving to:** "Get back on my feet."

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## Kristy, 53

*The joyful jokester*

Kristy is joyful and kind. She always offers to help. Kristy was born in Sidney, Ohio and grew up in a family of alcoholics. She left home at the young age of 18. She met her first husband when she was 20. They had two boys together when he went to prison. She found herself struggling as a single mom. She found support in what she thought was a kind man. He ended up abusing her and broke her wrist. She still has the scar from the surgery needed to repair it. She has the physical and mental scars that abuse leaves. She became an alcoholic and moved around a lot. She has struggled and has had many ups and downs. She came to shelter and feels she is one step closer to better days. She is sober and started working at Walmart while in the shelter. She continues to help and be a source of joy and laughter to those around her. She fills the shelter with joy with her humor and fun spirit.

- **Strongest Strength:** Outgoing and friendly
- **Struggles with:** Self-doubt
- **Striving to:** "Put my ducks in a row: job, car, house and sobriety."

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## Mason, 26

### *Mischievous Mason*

Born in Columbus, Ohio. Mason's file states he was moved through 150 foster homes before age 4. He and his two siblings were adopted into a family in Sidney. He was beaten and molested by his older brother and his adopted mother. No one believed him. Mason felt like it was his fault somehow and began cutting himself. He was initially kicked out at age 14. He went to jail at 18 for theft. He went back to jail again for assault. He has been homeless most of his adult life and would do small crimes in the winter to get arrested to get out of the cold. Mason has struggled his whole life with blacking out and multiple personalities. MMH was able to help him get assessed at FRC, mental health support, medication and job placement. He said he feels he owes a lot to MMH.

- **Strongest Strength:** Charismatic
- **Struggles with:** Motivating himself
- **Striving to:** "Have a normal family life."

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## Raphael, 23

*Motivated father making a change*

Born in Sidney, Ohio. Raphael grew up sheltered. His mom wouldn't let him see some of his family. He wanted to live with his dad so he moved to Florida. His dad was physically abusive. Raphael came back to Sidney. He kept acting out and ended up in the juvenile detention center and was transferred straight to prison. He got his GED while in prison. Raphael has struggled with homelessness ever since. His ADHD has made a lot of things in life difficult due to his inability to control his impulses. He and his girlfriend were in sober living but she got kicked out and he followed her. They have a 5-month-old daughter. While he knows his daughter's mom and he are not good together, he hopes to be in his daughter's life one day. Raphael said after finding Mercy Mission House, he finally feels like he is in a place where he can succeed.

- **Strength:** Wisdom, intelligence and creativity
- **Struggles with:** Impulsiveness and self-doubt
- **Striving to:** "Get a job, work on overall health, see my daughter and get an apartment. Get my ducks in a row."

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## Todd, 27

*Creating his own story*

Born in Sidney, Ohio. Todd grew up with his mom. He graduated high school early with a 3.4 GPA. When Todd was just 17, he had a major brain surgery. He has experienced seizures and bouts of dizziness ever since. After graduation from high school, Todd went to the International College of Broadcasting and studied Audio Engineering. His desire for learning was not satisfied, so he went to school for Digital Cinematography. When Todd was 20, his roommate at the time stole an ambulance. Needless to say, Todd moved out that day. He has worked at several area industrial factories as a forklift driver. Unfortunately, Todd has been let go from 8 different places due to having a seizure at work and safety concerns. He doesn't want to go on disability, he feels like he is too young, and he wants to work to make a living. Todd recently got pulled over without insurance. The fines, court fees and cost of insurance wiped out his bank account.

He came to MMH to get back on his feet.

- **Strength:** Intelligence
- **Struggles with:** Patience
- **Striving to:** "Find my own place."

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## Angel, 42

*Taking a moment to heal*

Born in Bellefontaine, Ohio. Angel's childhood was very tough. She was molested by multiple family members from age 2 through 9 years. Angel and her older sister are very close. The same thing happened to her sister. Angel fights anxiety, depression and other mental health challenges. She shared how the pain never leaves and she is still afraid of men. She couldn't walk at her high school graduation because she was pregnant with her son. She was married but her husband abused her in every way imaginable - physical, emotional, verbal. One day she finally left and went to New Choices shelter after he had beaten her. She felt shame because she couldn't be there for her children. She wanted to leave and find a place to stay but didn't trust anyone. Her sister told her about Mercy Mission House, and she wanted to see if it was a place she could feel safe and stay for a while.

MMH is giving her a steppingstone toward her healing journey.

- **Strength:** My children - motivation to keep fighting
- **Struggles with:** Painful, scary memories and being a single mom
- **Striving to:** "A place of my own and a part-time job. I want to get custody of my son and take care of my family."

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## Rico, 35

*Successful second chances*

Born in Boston, MA. He grew up with 11 brothers and 3 sisters all from the same mom and dad. When he was 17, he moved out of the house with an older woman. He felt like he needed to provide for himself, her family and his family.

Rico began selling drugs. He was arrested and spent 3 and a half years in prison. When Rico was released from prison, he entered a welding apprenticeship. He moved to a military base for his job and got married. They had two children. After four years he got divorced. He works for a contractor and moves around a lot. He loves to weld and can't decide where he wants to call home.

- **Strength:** Hard working
- **Struggles with:** Settling down
- **Striving to:** "Continue to learn and grow my welding skills."

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## Sam, 33

*Yearning for healing and peace*

Born in Texas, Sam grew up with her 2 sisters. She remembers playing at her grandmother's house when she was young. Her parents were alcoholics. Sam dropped out of school at 15 and got her GED. She had her first child at 18. She has 5 kids; 3 boys and 2 girls. Her aunt and sister co-parent with her. She wanted her kids to have consistency and stability and knew she couldn't provide that right now. Sam moved to Ohio with her grandparents. She recently lost her grandmother. She decided to move out because she didn't want to burden her grandfather because he was on a fixed income. She went to a wellness center to get back on track with her mental health needs. Sam has been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder and struggles to control her emotions. Sam feels called to be a servant and feels her story can help others.

- **Strongest Strength:** Compassionate & Caring
- **Struggles with:** Stabilizing my moods
- **Striving to:** "Stay consistent, be on a schedule, self-sufficient and finish my associate's degree ."

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## Tyler, 24 & Marissa, 23

*Finding security and success together*

Tyler entered foster care when he was 13 years old. At 18, he found himself on his own and alone. Marissa struggled throughout her childhood and simply wanted some stability. While they didn't know each other, they both started misusing various substances and became addicted. As fate would have it, they both knew they needed help and entered rehab around the same time. They met at the rehab center and found the stability and support they needed in each other. They successfully completed the rehab program but had no place to call home. After several calls, they found MMH.

Tyler and Marissa entered shelter employed full-time. MMH was able to connect them with needed services while they were in our resident program. We are so excited to share after 41 days in shelter, they moved into permanent housing. We are so proud of their progress and success! We hope they will come visit us.

- **Strength:** Hardworking and independent
- **Struggles with:** Taking it one day at a time
- **Striving to:** "Keep working hard so good things will happen."

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## Victor, 28

*The intellectual, faithful soul*

Born in Sidney, Ohio. Victor grew up in a violent home. His dad abused his mom and the kids. Victor graduated high school on time. He got a job and on the 2nd day, he fainted - straight back. He had to be transported to the ER. Victor thought he was going to die. He had a near death experience. He began reading the Bible and found his genuine belief in God. He has a thirst to learn more about God and his faith. He tries to be very thoughtful with his words and actions to make sure they are from God. He lost his faith for a while and became rude and started using drugs. He ended up in jail for 3 months. While in jail, Victor found God again and read the Bible front to back. Now Victor's soul chooses to show God how much he loves him. MMH is helping connect him with needed services to continue on his faith and life journey.

- **Strength:** God, faith and intellect
- **Struggles with:** Sarcasm
- **Striving to:** "To follow God's will and do His work."

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## Shawn, 24

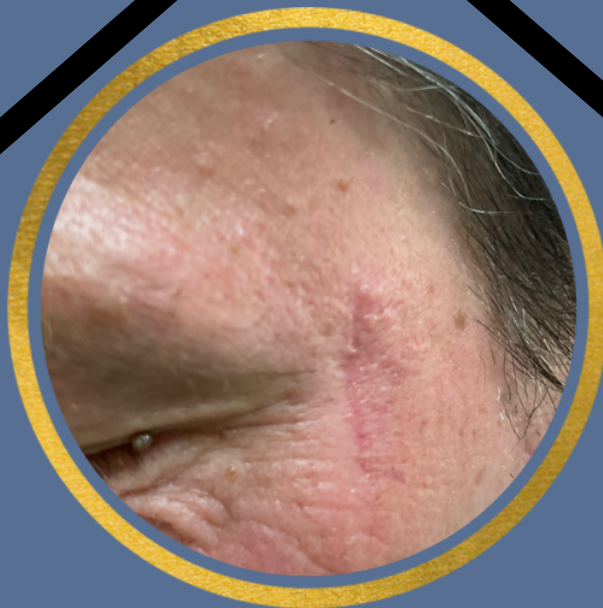
*He is our outgoing people person*

Born in Indiana. Shawn grew up with his mom and stepdad. His stepdad was a drinker. They moved around a lot in Indiana and Kentucky. Shawn hasn't graduated from high school and would like to get his GED. He was just 13 when his sister's boyfriend asked him to deliver drugs. He started making a lot of money. He bought his first Cadillac at 19. At 19, he stopped delivering drugs and laundering money for people. He worked at Wendy's. He got in a fight with his roommate and was evicted. He became homeless. He slept under apartment stairs and in graveyards for 4 years. He moved to Ohio for a girl. They lived in an apartment, he worked at Hydro for a year and then Norcold. He couldn't pay rent and became homeless again and came to the Mercy Mission House.

- **Strength:** Music empowers and motivates him
- **Struggles with:** Distrusting people and drama
- **Striving to:** "A quiet place to live on a lake."

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## Gregory, 52

*The scrabble master*

Born in Versailles, Ohio. Gregory had a wonderful childhood with his parents and 3 siblings. He graduated high school and went on to get his technical theater degree at Wright State University. Gregory waited tables and moved around as a prop manager for summer theaters. He ended up getting his master's degree at the University of Delaware. He continued to work as a property manager and then a sculptor. While in Philadelphia, he met a lovely woman. They began dating. Both of them struggled with alcohol misuse. Their relationship was intense, and she became abusive. The scar on his eye is from a broken bottle she hit him with before she burnt down their apartment. He found himself homeless and moved back to Ohio. He eventually found a job working at a theater in TX, but the lovely woman began writing him when she was in jail. He eventually moved to be closer to her again. They had a child, but the relationship was still unstable. They separated. His alcohol misuse got worse. He got a DUI and couldn't pick up his daughter. He moved back to Ohio.

MMH was able to help him find employment and resources for his own apartment.  
We will miss him!

- **Strongest Strength:** Tenacity
- **Struggles with:** His broken relationship with his daughter
- **Striving to:** "Mend my relationship with my daughter, I miss her"

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## Jason, 47

*Waiting to be back on his own two feet*

Jason was born and raised in Sidney, Ohio. Jason graduated and went straight into the workforce. He had two kids and moved to Tennessee and then back to Ohio. He was working in a metal stamping factory when a disc fell and crushed his foot and ripped it away at the ankle. He has struggled with work and love and life ever since. He can't stand for long periods of time. He finds work but then his injury will create issues with duties and he either has to quit or gets fired. He says he sometimes feels hopeless but remembers being on the operating table and hearing a voice say, "it's not your time." He believes that voice was God and Jason is still here because God has a purpose for his life.

Jason fell into substance misuse and has been working hard at recovery and tries to stay clean. He falters sometimes but admits it and wants to be clean. MMH is working with Jason to get his disability benefits and consistent sobriety.

- **Strongest Strength:** Communicating with others
- **Struggles with:** Anxiety and staying sober
- **Striving to:** "Get disability, stay clean and be back on my own two feet."

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## Damon, 26

*Hard-working Ohio farm boy*

Born and raised on a farm in Ohio. He moved down to Alabama to live with his dad for a while. When he was 13, he moved back to Ohio. He worked on the farm until he was 17. Graduated high school and went to AL to see his dad again. He came back to Ohio at 19 and fell into the wrong crowd. Damon made a mistake and went to prison. Twice. Damon came to the Mercy Mission House to start a better life. Damon is polite, hardworking and willing to help with any chores. He is respectful, kind and stays out of trouble. Damon works full-time and has been working hard. MMH is connecting him with resources to find him an apartment.

- **Strength:** Hard-working and loyal
- **Struggles with:** Misplaced loyalty
- **Striving to:** "Be successful, have a family and be happy."

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## Doyle, 63

### *Finding his place*

Doyle was born in Sidney, Ohio. He was hospitalized for the first three years of his life with pneumonia and chickenpox. At four years old, his dad signed him over to foster care. He stayed in foster care until he was six years old and then spent thirteen years in the orphanage on Children's Home Rd. He got his GED and moved to Florida where he worked as a brick layer for Disney. He came home from work one day and found someone raping his wife. He killed them. He went to prison for 7 years. He came back to Ohio after prison, got remarried and supported his family by working at Wagner Manufacturing for 14 years. When he lost his job, he got divorced, his mother died and he felt completely alone. He was homeless until the shelter opened and he found himself once again living on Childrens Home Road. MMH helped him get his social security payments and found him permanent housing. We are proud of the progress Doyle made while in our program.

- **Strength:** Survivor
- **Struggles with:** Consistency
- **Striving to:** "Have my own place."

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## Chelsea, 36

*Yearning for healing and peace*

Born in Troy, Ohio. Chelsea grew up with her parents, one brother and one sister. Her father was schizophrenic and abusive. It was hard as a child for her to manage his moods and personalities. He was very abusive and would lock her and her brother in a closet. Chelsea felt like she needed to protect her brother. She graduated from Piqua HS. After high school, she began working 2 jobs. She met the father of her first son at 21. While she was pregnant, she lived with her uncle who was an alcoholic. Chelsea woke up as he was trying to come after her with an army knife to cut out the baby. She lived with her mom off and on who choked her and told her she was "a disease" that would ruin her kids and family. She got into an altercation with her son and was arrested. She is working hard to heal from the many struggles in her life. She has nightmares and flashbacks. She said she likes MMH and feels very safe here. MMH is working with FRC and her payee to help her on her journey.

- **Strength:** Compassionate
- **Struggles with:** Overcoming nightmares/flashbacks and patience
- **Striving to:** "Get a permanent place to live and get my kids back."

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## Mike, 55

### *Finding courage to start over again*

Born in Sidney, Ohio. Mike grew up with his mom, dad, 3 brothers and 5 sisters. His dad was 52 when he was born. Because his parents were older, they didn't know what he was doing. He got charged with breaking and entering when he was just 9 years old. He fell into the wrong crowd. Mike never got his GED or HS diploma, but he would like to. Mike ended up in prison. He lived in a half-way house after he got out for a while. He did good and when he got back home to Sidney, he was around a lot of drug use. Mike started doing meth and he just couldn't stop. He ended up back in prison until recently. His son brought him to MMH. Mike said "so far I really like it here. I am working on following the rules and staying out of trouble."

- **Strength:** Being able to say no to drugs with God's help
- **Struggles with:** Feeling like everyone who was important to me, abandoned me
- **Striving to:** "Get Social Security and find a rental that can be my own place."

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## Rhonda, 55

*Sweet southern belle*

Born in NC. Rhonda grew up with her mom, sister and brother. They had their ups and downs. Rhonda said her "mama was mean". Rhonda's mother would say hateful things to her. When she was just 15, Rhonda got pregnant. She had to drop out of school. She started waiting tables. She got married when she was 17. She was only married for 3 months because her daddy came to get her and her son. Her husband was mistreating them both. She moved back in with her mom. Rhonda lived with her mom until her mama passed away at 83 years old. Rhonda's son was living in Ohio. He came to get her and bring her back with him to Sidney. She found MMH. MMH connected her with case management services at FRC. She is on a fixed income and MMH is helping her connect with other services in hopes of getting permanent housing.

- **Strength:** Kindness and respectful
- **Struggles with:** "My son and worrying about him."
- **Striving to:** "Finally have my own place."

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## Bryan, 38

*Sometimes you just have to laugh and Bryan will help with that*

Bryan was born in Ohio. He grew up with his mom and younger sister. They were often worried about when and if they would get to eat. They moved around a lot.

Bryan graduated high school and got married at 19. He was married for 9 years with a steady job. His wife cheated on him with his brother-in-law. That made the cheating even more hurtful. Somehow, his wife got the house and he found himself homeless.

He moved to California for a year but returned to Sidney. He met his next wife when he was 32. They had a daughter who passed away at 8 days old. They lost their house during the Pandemic. They started using meth. It seemed fun at first and would take away the pain. Bryan is proud to say he has been clean for over a year. MMH was able to help Bryan get his identification, benefits and set him up with mental health assistance. Bryan found a job and permanent housing and is doing well.

- **Strongest Strength:** Humor
- **Struggles with:** Falling in love too fast
- **Striving to:** "I just want to be self-sufficient and self-sustaining again."

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## Cathy, 55

*Her kind heart is evident to all who meet her.*

Born in Sidney, Ohio. Cathy moved a lot when she was younger. Her mother was married 8 times. At age 3, her grandfather started sexually molesting her. When she was just 16, her grandfather asked her to do sexual favors with his friends for money and he would pay her. She said no and left home at 16. She got married and pregnant right away and had to quit high school. She moved around to various states with her husband for over 6 years looking for work. By age 21, she and her husband had 3 children. At 22, she got divorced. Her husband took her kids. She saved enough money for a bus ticket to move closer to her kids. She was caught in Hurricane Hugo but survived. She believes her grandmother's prayers saved her. She met her next husband and they lived in 5 different states. She has been back in Sidney for 5 years, living with her sister. Her sister has a controlling boyfriend and Cathy wasn't allowed to have friends over, no pets even though she paid rent monthly. She worked at Honda and then Norcold. She met a man at her work and he lied to her and used her. He started dating another co-worker and it was too much for her and she quit. She is working to get a job. She does not want to be in another controlling situation and plans to live on her own.

- **Strength:** Empathetic and Kind
- **Struggles with:** Motivation
- **Striving to:** "Have my own place with a pet and let people visit me."

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This book is the work of MMH residents, staff, and our founder. Thank you for taking the time to read the stories of mercy.



All proceeds of this book will be used to support the Mercy Mission House Emergency Shelter providing needed general operating funds.