

JOHN GRAHAM SHELTER



LOCAL HEROES PROVIDE SAFETY, FOOD AND A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Meet Jubilee McGill, John Graham's Covid 19 Coordinator.

Jubilee is on the front lines delivering 3 meals a day and personal items to as many as 73 people in four motels. And every day she coordinates with a small cadre of community partners to ensure that every homeless person in Addison County is safe, fed and in a position to move to permanent housing as soon as possible.

"People felt a lot of fear at the beginning," Jubilee said.

“How are we going to eat? How will our children get what they need? Food is so essential to survival. Once people knew they were safe, that they had a place to stay and 3 meals a day, they felt a lot of peace,” she said.

Jubilee is not alone. Wendy Tung is a John Graham service coordinator with a Master’s in Clinical Psychology. She too is on the front lines helping people cope with the anxiety and trauma and guiding them to permanent housing, even in the middle of a pandemic.

“Last week we were so grateful that a family of 4 moved to a 3 bedroom apartment owned by the Addison County Community Trust,” Wendy said. “What a relief for the mother and her children to have a place of their own! We feel optimistic that - together with our partners - we will be able to house many more people and help them get settled in the coming weeks,” she said.

John Graham’s small staff has kept its 5 buildings open continuously during the crisis, but with fewer people in the congregate settings and with strict safety protocols. John Graham service coordinators fulfill shifts around the clock to provide food, shelter, and care and to constantly sanitize the common areas. Most important are the



outreach and housing services. At least 5 households have moved to permanent housing at the height of the pandemic, and more will soon follow.

Back at the motels Jubilee stresses that caring for so many people is a major community effort. Each day she works with Dora from the Charter House, Vanessa from Economic Services and Foresta from Womensafe to care for families living in motel rooms. Moira from the Department of Health is on speed dial. Partnerships with other key players like the Parent Child Center, CSAC, ACCT, CVOEO and HOPE are essential.

“The people of Addison County have come together in magnificent ways to support each other,” she said

For example, there’s the meals. Middlebury College chefs offer cereals, bagels and pastries in the morning; with sandwiches, chips and dessert at lunch. But it’s the full course dinners - lasagna, surf and turf, oriental chicken, each served with sides in compostable, recyclable containers - that get the rave reviews!

“Its humbling to be part of this team,” Jubilee said. “People are grateful. You feel amazingly connected. Yes, there is risk, but it’s so necessary that I just don’t give it a second thought,” she said.

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