



THE WELL of Saginaw Men's Shelter

OPENING IN 2023

FACT SHEET ... Spring 2023

The Well of Saginaw is a brand-new shelter that provides a home-like environment for adult men experiencing homelessness who are ready to build a new life as contributing members of the community.

The Well is patterned after two successful women's shelters in Saginaw: Mustard Seed Shelter and Emmaus House. Both of these organizations provide their guests with private or semiprivate rooms – rather than the more traditional dormitory setting of a shelter – and function as a home where guests, staff and volunteers form a family. The Well intends to operate in much the same way, with each guest developing a customized plan for success that meets them where they are.

Mustard Seed Shelter is providing some startup funding and advisory support. Emmaus House has donated a house that is being rehabbed for the new shelter in addition to providing advisory support. We are deeply grateful for their support, encouragement and partnership.

In 2022, we formed a board of directors, hired an executive director, received our 501(c)(3) nonprofit status from the IRS, adopted bylaws and renovated a home. **We are targeting 2023 to welcome our first guests.**

STARTUP PARTNERS

We are grateful to the following organizations, as well as a host of volunteers, who are helping our vision become reality. Find a full list of donors on our website.

- Akbar Waqf Foundation*
- Emmaus House*
- Garber Automotive Foundation*
- Hopevale Church – Can Do Crew*
- Leadership Saginaw County Class of 2022*
- Mustard Seed Shelter*
- Saginaw-Shiawassee Habitat for Humanity*
- SOLŪTIŌ | Web Solutions By AMPM*
- Skills for Tomorrow*
- Wolohan Family Foundation*

The Well will have capacity to welcome up to 10 men (age 18+) at a time.



★ OUR MISSION:

With the mercy and grace of God, we provide living water for men experiencing homelessness so that they find safety and structure, healing and hope.

Why The Well?

Our name and logo were inspired by numerous references to wells in the Bible.

Water and wells have great significance in many faith traditions – connected to creation as well as cleaning, healing and renewal.

We envision our home and organization as a source of living water – providing help, hope and love.

The starburst at the top of the well in our logo signifies light, specifically coming out of darkness into the light. Our logo has been adapted from an original design by founding executive director Bert Herrera.



THE NEED

According to Saginaw's 2023 Point in Time count, there are approximately 350 individuals experiencing homelessness in Saginaw at any given time. Nationally and locally, men make up the largest portion of individuals experiencing homelessness – 70 percent – and also are the largest percentage of those who remain unsheltered.

While Saginaw does have other excellent programs that serve men, none offer a homelike environment.

The Well answers the call for an entirely different type of shelter to serve the particular needs of men experiencing homelessness.

OUR APPROACH

We believe that by meeting each person where they are, helping them one on one and developing a plan for success that is right for their circumstances, we can help our guests find purpose, meaning and a place in the community.

The Well is rooted in the faith of our founders and inspired by scripture, but we are not connected directly to a specific church or institution. Guests will not be proselytized, nor will faith of any kind be a requirement for entering or remaining in our shelter. All are welcome at The Well.

*With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.*

Isaiah 12:3 (NRSV)

OUR SERVICES

The Well will provide our guests with warm beds, hot showers, nutritious meals, laundry facilities, hygiene supplies, transportation to appointments, case management and other services.

We will provide guests with physical, emotional and spiritual support and help them develop a personal recovery plan. We'll connect them with a variety of resources, including classes to develop skills for workforce readiness, financial literacy, help finding employment, and completing a GED. We will also offer/connect our guests with community service opportunities.

When they are ready, we will assist guests in their search for permanent housing solutions and work with Saginaw's Partnership Center, which operates the NEST (Neighbors Enabling Success Together) program, to provide them with all items needed to set up a new home for themselves.

ABOUT OUR HOME

The Well is located at 2709 Julius Street on the southeast side of Saginaw in a vibrant, friendly neighborhood. Our neighbors have been very welcoming! Emmaus House generously donated the two-story, two-unit duplex that was previously used for their transitional housing program. Renovations have been completed entirely by volunteers with donated materials and our home now includes:

- 5 semiprivate bedrooms
- Kitchen/dining area
- 10 beds
- 2 common rooms
- 2-1/2 bathrooms
- Laundry room
- Private intake office

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Financial donations of any size are welcome and appreciated.

Donate on our website at thewellofsaginaw.org.

Checks may also be made out to The Well of Saginaw

and mailed to:

The Well of Saginaw
2709 Julius Street
Saginaw, MI 48601

Contact us to ask about volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups as well as other ways to help. Call (989) 355-1427 or email BertHerrera@thewellofsaginaw.org.

WORDS FROM SOME FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS

AN UNCOMMON APPROACH TO HELPING MEN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

"I know firsthand what it's like to be homeless. To struggle with addiction. To go to prison ... and have nowhere to go. To feel lost, lonely and hopeless. With The Well, we're bringing an uncommon approach to helping men experiencing homelessness. So many of them have never known a loving home. They've never had a job or learned a skill. They've never 'done it right.'

At The Well, we will provide opportunities for our guests to gain new skills, give them a solid footing, boost their self-esteem ... and make them feel connected and engaged in the community."

- Bert Herrera, executive director

LIFE-SAVING WORK THAT FILLS A GAP

"It breaks my heart when I think of people who are homeless on the coldest days of our winter, while we are comfortable living in our homes. Often because of no fault - or small mistakes - of theirs, they are homeless. We who are living a life of privilege should be out there trying to do the best we can for people in our community who do not have roofs over their heads and do not know where their next meal is coming from. I have always believed that a chain - or society - is as strong as its weakest link or weakest member. Helping the underprivileged helps our whole society and improves the community we live in.

I believe wholeheartedly that The Well of Saginaw will fill these gaps through the life-saving and life-changing work that is at the core of our mission."

- Waheed Akbar

HOME ... FAMILY ... A BETTER CHANCE FOR SUCCESS

"Society says a man should be the leader or a manager and in control of his life and when he's not, there's very little understanding or help for him. So many of the men I've worked with have never known home or family ... or love or forgiveness. And when they find themselves homeless, they find a lot of muddy water on the way to get to where they want to go.

At The Well, we will provide a home and be their family and help them build self-esteem and feel valued. We'll give them a better chance for success."

- Oscar Mendoza

CARING, CONFIDENCE AND A SENSE OF PURPOSE

"When I first learned about The Well and saw the team involved, I worked with our board to donate a house - struggling men need help in this community, too. Because of the success we've seen with our women in a small, structured and loving home environment, I believe The Well can achieve the same thing - knocking out homelessness but also substance abuse.

You need people who genuinely care and understand what you're going through and people who believe in you. And you have to give people a purpose. Give them confidence. Give them hope. Help them find happiness. Emmaus House, Mustard Seed and The Well - we're all in the business of saving lives and I see so much potential to partner with each other."

- Donna Clarke

A COMMUNITY ... DRIVEN BY THE SPIRIT

"The way this organization has come together ... it's clearly driven by the Spirit. In my work at Mustard Seed - and truly, just being out in the community - I see daily the need for a place for men coming from homelessness and lives of brokenness.

We know what has worked for us for 27 years, and our hope is that guests of The Well will also do well in a homelike environment, within a community of staff, volunteers and other guests who genuinely care for one another. We are honored to walk alongside Emmaus House in support of this work and pass along some of what we have learned."

- Amy Bartels Roe



Founding board of The Well
(left to right): Joe Hernandez, Jason Kenney, Donna Clarke, Bert Herrera, Oscar Mendoza, Amy Bartels Roe, Christopher Brown, Waheed Akbar, Toby Long

OUR FOUNDING BOARD

We have assembled a powerful and compassionate team of community leaders to guide the development of The Well at this critical juncture in our history. They collectively bring a wealth of experience and expertise working with vulnerable populations and developing strong partnerships in the community. **One hundred percent of our board members have financially invested in the success of The Well.**

Executive Director: Hilbert ("Bert") Herrera

Bert brings extensive experience as an inner-city shelter supervisor working directly with men experiencing homelessness. He also has firsthand experience of homelessness, addiction and recovery, and reentering society after prison. Bert is a certified substance use disorder recovery coach.

Chair: Christopher Brown

Chris is a certified peer recovery coach at TRI-CAP, a probation residential center that offers an alternative placement option to jail or prison for male or female offenders within the state of Michigan. He also serves on the board of directors for Restoration Community Outreach (RCO), Saginaw's only other shelter exclusively for men.

Vice Chair: Amy Bartels Roe

Amy is executive director of Mustard Seed Shelter, which serves single women and women with children experiencing homelessness. Amy's passion for welcoming any person experiencing homelessness with the utmost dignity and respect is a driving force behind this project. As part of its tithing and community goodwill initiative, Mustard Seed is providing both financial support and mentoring to The Well.

The Well of Saginaw is a 501(c)(3) organization as described in the IRS tax code and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Treasurer: Jason Kenney

Jason is an Enrolled Agent (EA), a federally authorized tax practitioner who has owned and operated his own tax/accounting firm since 2006. He has a deep passion for living the message of the Gospel and lends his significant financial acumen to putting our startup organization on sound footing.

Waheed Akbar, M.D.

Waheed is an orthopedic surgeon and community volunteer who has been a part of the Saginaw community for more than 40 years. He strives to improve social justice, create equality, and help vulnerable and marginalized people on different levels. His main focus has been to bring the underprivileged back into society as productive citizens.

Donna Clarke

Donna is the director of Emmaus House, which operates five homes for women coming from jail, prison or rehab. Emmaus House generously donated the home currently being remodeled to welcome The Well's first guests. Donna is a certified substance abuse disorder recovery coach.

Joe Hernandez

Joe is a math professor at Delta College. He has been active in various community outreach programs, including jail ministry. Joe uses his past life experiences as both testimony and education in order to encourage and ensure a sense of belonging for his students and members of the community. He was named 2023 recipient of Delta College's Spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. award.

Toby Long, M.D.

Toby serves as Director of Medical Education for Great Lakes Bay Health Centers and family physician at Roosevelt Ruffin Health Center, where The Well's guests will receive physical and mental health services as well as substance use disorder treatment when needed.

Oscar Mendoza

Oscar has nearly 30 years of jail ministry experience, including 8 years as chaplain of the Saginaw County Jail. He continues to help men reestablish themselves in the community, inspiring them to become positive examples for others. Oscar was also a recipient of the 2015 Bishop Murphy award.