



Home is everything.

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Dear Friend of Anawim Housing,

We owe a debt of gratitude to the hundreds of donors and volunteers who made Nine Homes in Nine Days a wonderful reality for nine deserving families in September. The project, which was conceived and orchestrated by Hubbell Homes, was actually completed in only seven days – two days ahead of schedule!

Words cannot express the joy of sharing these new homes with the families who entered them for the first time after the ribbon cutting ceremony. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors and contributors, each home was furnished, stocked with food and linens, and ready to be lived in (in every sense of the word)! Pictures from the event can be found at [www.anawimhousing.org](http://www.anawimhousing.org). But if you have the opportunity, I invite you to drive by these homes on 21<sup>st</sup> Street south of Forest, so you can experience this exciting new Anawim Housing neighborhood for yourself.

The nine new homes bring our total housing inventory to 220. In the next few weeks, we will begin the construction of an additional six apartments and our new Anawim Housing office at the 21<sup>st</sup> and Forest site. Partial funding for this new construction was provided by generous donors to our recent Capital Campaign. By the end of 2010, we will have grown from zero to 226 housing units over the course of our 20+ year history, which is a remarkable story. Yet the need for safe, stable, affordable housing continues to grow. In fact, Polk County is in the midst of one of its worst housing crises ever.

***Right now in Central Iowa...***

- Hundreds of families are homeless – many more are “doubling up” with other families.
- The average monthly income for a single mother in Iowa who receives public assistance is less than \$631. “Affordable housing” is defined as less than 30% of income, therefore, this family can afford to pay \$189 per month in rent, leaving a deficit of \$429 from the amount needed to rent a two-bedroom apartment at the state’s average Fair Market Rent.

- The average hourly wage for renters in Iowa is \$10.51. The hourly wage needed to afford a 2 bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent is \$11.88.
- Within the entire state of Iowa, there are only a few hundred emergency shelter and transitional housing units for homeless families. Beyond that, families must be *separated* to qualify for any other form of shelter.
- Because these units are spread over the entire state, many families cannot find shelter of any kind in the Des Moines metro area – so in addition to home, they also risk losing employment and their children’s continuity at school.

For growing numbers of hard-working families in Central Iowa, home is an impossible dream. Even in today’s soft housing market, total housing costs far outpace incomes at the low end of the wage scale, where hundreds of Des Moines-area families with full-time workers earn less than \$17,000 per year.

Studies show that families are at risk when they pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing. So imagine how you’d provide for your family with less than \$500 per month for rent and utilities. The sad fact is no one can – without the help of Anawim Housing and the friends who support our mission.

### ***Rapid Re-housing – getting families in homes fast!***

At Anawim, we believe that Home Is Everything! It’s the place where holidays are celebrated, where dreams are nurtured and where values pass from generation to generation. When homes are lost, families often become separated, children are pulled out of schools, important relationships are weakened and broken and stress – for everyone – rules the day.

But if housing solutions can be provided *quickly*, families will be able to stay together and have the opportunity to succeed. That’s why Anawim Housing has agreed to sponsor the new Rapid Re-housing program under a contract with the City of Des Moines. The program is expected to serve as many as 60 individuals and families over the next three years.

Anawim Housing will implement the grant using a “wraparound” concept in collaboration with Children and Families of Iowa, Hawthorn Hill, Home, Inc., House of Mercy and Primary Health Care. Clients will receive supportive services through these area partners, while also benefiting from Anawim Housing’s delivery of safe, stable housing and family services.

On the bottom line, Rapid Re-housing will get families in homes *faster*, so they can stay together, keep their jobs, stay in school and succeed. Best of all, when families achieve stability once again, they can stay in their new homes and continue growing, And our entire community wins!

*Meet one of our newest Anawim Housing families...*

When we sat down with Jassim Kandah and Shukria Nashmi we were immediately touched by the passion of two parents who risked everything (including their own careers and country) to provide their children the opportunity for a solid education and safe home. Aided by Lutheran Social Services, they immigrated with their children to Des Moines from Iraq last January.

Through their first few months in Des Moines, it was difficult to find affordable rent, as well as adequate space and privacy for their multi-age, multi-gender family. Now they're among the first residents in our Nine Homes townhomes at 21<sup>st</sup> and Forest. Their sons and daughters sleep in separate bedrooms. Their rent is much more affordable and sustainable. Their children will be in the same schools through graduation.

In Iraq, Shukria was a journalist and Jassim was a high school drama teacher, but since they do not speak English, similar employment is not yet possible here. While they miss Iraq very much, they appreciate the opportunities Des Moines and Anawim Housing have created for their family. According to Jassim, "As a former teacher, it is very important that our children can go to a good college here in the United States. We want them to have the freedom to make dreams. And here in our new home, everything seems possible."

*Annual Campaign Notes...*

We are well on track to achieve our 2009 Annual Campaign goal of \$260,000, but there is still much work to be done. We are grateful to those who have made our mission their own through generous contributions of volunteerism and financial gifts. The Annual Campaign funds management of our homes and associated services for the more than 500 households of men, women and children who reside in Anawim Housing homes.

On behalf of our dedicated Staff and Board of Directors, I would like to thank you for your continued interest in and support of Anawim Housing. Each day brings another chance for me to renew my commitment to "provide safe, affordable housing which assists in the stabilization of low-income families and the revitalization of the Des Moines Metropolitan Neighborhoods." And I know that through reading some our efforts in 2009, you will feel the same.

Sincerely,



Sister Stella Neill, RSM  
Executive Director  
Anawim Housing

P.S. Be sure to visit our new website at [www.anawimhousing.org](http://www.anawimhousing.org). At last, you can discover everything you need to know about Anawim Housing in one convenient place. Plus, it's easier than ever to donate online!