



DoveTales

the newsletter of Dove, Inc.

January
2024

Barbara Blakey
Editor

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Thanks to our Board of Directors
for serving Dove in these vital roles.

To our Dove Member Congregations

As we begin this new calendar year, please make sure
our contact information is up to date!

Please email us with your staff members and
Delegate contact information to:
dove@doveinc.org

2024 Point in Time Survey

Many individuals and families in our area are homeless and many more are at risk to become homeless. HUD requires all funding recipients to conduct a biennial, 24-hour period survey of homeless persons in area served. Macon County conducts this survey annually.

Our 2024 Survey will be held on January 25.

Volunteers for this project are desperately needed! Please contact Ashley Garner at 217.362.7700 or agarner@doveinc.org if you would like to volunteer.

The needed volunteer training will be held the morning of January 22, 9:00 a.m.

Dove's Mission

Dove is an organization that engages religious institutions, volunteers, and advocates seeking to coordinate efforts to address unmet needs and social injustices. These needs are met through coordinated programs focusing on domestic violence, homelessness, education, volunteer and community empowerment, and individual emergency need fulfillment.

Dove works for justice, equality, and understanding among all people.

Executive Staff

Darsonya Switzer, Chief Executive Officer
Barbara Blakey, Chief Communications Officer

Program Leadership

BABES Program
Sandy Laesch, Interim Coordinator

Children's Clothing Room
Kathy Walters, Coordinator

Dove Financial Assistance
Molly Tenuto, Program Director

Dove Food Pantry
Ashlyn Burrus, Coordinator

Domestic Violence Program
Joyce Kirkland, Program Director
Ashlyn Burrus, DeWitt County Coordinator
Becky Comstock, Moultrie County Coordinator
Susie Kensil, Shelby County Coordinator

Homeward Bound
Christopher DeJaynes, Program Director

Neighborhood Services Program
LeAnn Ellis, Coordinator

RSVP • Retired & Senior Volunteer Program
Angie Williams, Program Director
Kathy Walters, Macon County Coordinator
Silvia Comfort, DeWitt County Coordinator



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Resolutions! Yes, it is that time of year that we all fall into that tradition of resolving to do something, stop doing something, be better people, etc. We reflect on who we are and focus on the changes that we need to make to be the best version of ourselves possible. We vow to eat healthier, to lose weight, to be more giving, to organize that kitchen drawer, and so much more. We set these goals and some of us even accomplish all of them, which is great. Some of us don't accomplish any of them and that is great also. The expectations that we put on ourselves and others around us often produce unnecessary stress and pressure. So, this year, I resolve to do the very best that I can and to allow room for grace for myself and others throughout the year!

One of Dove's Shared Values that I pray we all carry close to our hearts for all of 2024 and beyond:

"We strive to follow the highest standards of ethics and morality in all our dealings—with each other, with clients, with volunteers, with other agencies, with religious organizations, and the community. An abiding sense of integrity and justice must underlie all we do."

Darsonya Switzer, CEO



To learn more about becoming a Dove Member Congregation, please contact Barb Blakey or Molly Tenuto at 217.428.6616 or dove@doveinc.org



32nd Annual Coats for Kids!

Thanks to all!

2,569 coats collected!

WAND NEWS

THE CENTRAL SOURCE

Dove, Inc.

*Thanks to our
co-sponsor
for 32 years,
WAND.*

Thanks to everyone who donated a coat to this year's drive.

We shared 2,569 coats with the community!

Thanks to the organizations and businesses who open their doors to be collection sites. It's a messy undertaking, but we so appreciate their support!

Decatur Family YMCA
Decatur Public Library
Decatur Township
GT Church
HSHS St. Mary's, Hospital
Illiopolis Christian Church
Jerger Pediatric Dentistry
Kroger at Brettwood Plaza & Airport Plaza
Land of Lincoln Credit Union
Longcreek Township
Regions Bank
Richland Community College
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
St. Teresa High School
WAND Station

Sites Sharing the Coats!

Dove's Clothing Room
Northeast Community Fund
New Life Pregnancy Center
New Vision at their Food Pantry
Salvation Army at their Food Pantry
Christmas Care & Share

Our Participating Cleaners make sure the coats are carefully cleaned and ready for the families. They also serve as a drop off site.

Peerless Cleaners

Pride Cleaners and Launderers

Waite's Dry Cleaners and Launderers

RSVP Members and staff who take a part:

Jerry and Charlotte Aldridge
Bruce Frey
Tim and Sandy Laesch
Molly Tenuto
Nick Lauer
Doyle Wilson
Kathy Walters
Angie Williams
Barb Blakey

**And a shout out to the
Knights of Columbus
who donated 144 new coats!**



Christmas is a challenging time for many and when compounded with things such as health concerns, domestic violence, mental health, unemployment, housing insecurity, food insecurity and other factors, it is extra trying. We had more people signed up for Christmas assistance this year than ever before. Partnering with Northeast Community Fund, Salvation Army, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, and Toys for Tots enabled us to serve 1,231 families with toys for their children in 2023, which equaled 3,337 children receiving toys and gifts.

None of us could have pulled that off without the generosity of every single person who donated toys, wrapping paper and tape, hygiene items, money, stockings, hats and gloves, and the gift of your time for those who volunteered. We had 230 people who volunteered their time to help with Christmas Care & Share, who spent nearly 1,300 hours of time in the two weeks we were there. There are not enough words to express my sincere

gratitude to every single one of you, as well as every single person from Toys for Tots, the staff at Dove, Salvation Army, Northeast Community Fund and St. Paul's Lutheran Church who came and helped.

The counting and sorting of toys and items is time-consuming and sometimes tedious, but you answered the call. Helping man the toy stations and helping the families shop is another big job – and you answered that, too. Thank you.

Thank you to those who donated lunch for our staff and volunteers during distribution: Brandy Robinson (who served Namken Nutrition to us), Casey's, Olive Garden, El Corral and La Gondola.

A HUGE thank you goes out to everyone at St. Paul's Lutheran Church for being gracious and thoughtful hosts who went well above and beyond answering the call when it came to helping, preparing and passing out snacks and drinks for staff, volunteers, and people receiving gifts for their children throughout distribution week, and greeting and guiding people around the church to help them find their way. An extra big thanks to Mick who is always our point of contact from St. Paul's and who helps us get set up and organized, many times going as far as to help unload and haul donations around to get them where they needed to go.

I would be remiss not to mention Pawprint Ministries for bringing several of their comfort dogs through to mingle with staff and individuals who were there during distribution week. It was a huge success. Thank you to all of you for your kind spirit and generosity!

I wish I could mention every single person who helped and donated but there are so many people, and I don't want to forget anyone so please know we appreciate you!

I also want to thank our Care & Share Committee for all their hard work going all the way back to March of 2023 when we began planning and organizing things. You are all amazing and we could not have pulled things off without you. I thank God for you all every day.

Always thanks to our partners: Northeast Community Fund, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Salvation Army, and Toys for Tots.

My heart is full the way it is every year when the community turns out and goes beyond themselves to serve those who are most in need in Central Illinois at Christmas time. Bless you all.

Thank you for making the holidays better and brighter for so many people.

For those who are not currently or haven't been involved in Christmas Care & Share in the past but might be interested, please reach out to me at any time. We are always looking for groups of volunteers for December, and our planning team is always open to expanding to incorporate fresh ideas and energy.

--Angie Williams, awilliams@doveinc.org

(Please scroll through our [facebook](#) page for some pictures of the event!)



Our *Sincere Thanks* to the HSHS St. Mary's Family who collected items for Christmas for the participants in the Domestic Violence and Homeward Bound Program

(L to R) Kristina • Danielle • Karla Thornton, Representing HSHS in this photo but also serves on the Board of Directors • Jack • Austin • Dennishia

Thank You

As we close out 2023, I want to express sincere thanks for your support on behalf of everyone in Dove's Domestic Violence Program. Whether you volunteered in the program, made a donation of toiletries or shelter supplies, provided holiday gifts, served on an advisory committee, or referred someone for assistance, you made a difference for hundreds of domestic violence survivors and their children.

Your ongoing support will enable Dove to continue providing safety, counseling, legal and emotional support, advocacy, and supportive services throughout 2024.

You make a difference! Thank you!

Joyce Kirkland

Domestic Violence Program Director

Your gift will ensure that services
can continue.
Please give generously.

Dove, Inc.
302 S. Union Street
Decatur, IL 62522

or donate online at doveinc.org



Children's Clothing Room



**Central Christian Church
650 West William Street, Decatur**

**Mondays & Wednesdays
1:00 to 3:30 p.m.**

**Free clothing, yes really free,
for infants through teens**

**Thanks to the members of RSVP
who serve at the clothing room!**

NEWS

from the Domestic Violence Program

DeWitt County Ashlyn Burrus, Coordinator

The holiday season is a very busy time of the year and can bring joy to people. But for some people the holiday season brings challenges and stressors. Domestic violence during the holidays is a serious problem, and the holiday season should be a joyful time for most, the domestic violence rates increase and surge during this time of the year.

One of the most significant contributors to the rise in domestic violence during the holidays is financial stress. The pressure to buy gifts, host gatherings, and meet societal expectations can strain household budgets. This financial burden often exacerbates existing tensions within relationships, making it a trigger for violent behavior. The holidays can also be emotionally taxing. The expectation to maintain a cheerful demeanor, coupled with the stress of family interactions, can lead to heightened emotions. For those already in volatile relationships, these emotional triggers can escalate conflicts into physical violence. The holiday season is often accompanied by increased alcohol consumption, which is a well-known risk factor for domestic violence. Alcohol can impair judgment and lower inhibitions, making it easier for underlying tensions to erupt into physical confrontations. Family

gatherings can sometimes act as a catalyst for domestic violence. The presence of extended family can either inhibit or provoke violent behavior. In some cases, family members may even normalize or trivialize the abuse, making it difficult for victims to speak out. The societal emphasis on family and togetherness during the holidays can also be a contributing factor. Victims may be more reluctant to leave or report their abusers during this time, fearing they'll ruin the holidays for their children and others with whom they normally observe the holidays.

My question is, how can you help as an individual?

You can help survivors of domestic violence by connecting them with resources or supporting a local nonprofit that provides related services.

You can do this by:

- Making a donation
- Volunteering your time
- Donating "Wish List" items
- Joining a committee

Lastly, starting off in the year 2024, I would like to thank all that have donated their time, food to the food pantry, or a financial donation to Dove Inc. in DeWitt County. It's greatly appreciated!

Heartfelt thanks to Southside Country Club for their generous holiday gift to the Domestic Violence Program of toys, dolls, toiletries, and cleaning supplies. These gifts provided a wonderful Christmas for families in the domestic violence shelter. We are so grateful for Southside Country Club's support of our program through the years.

Joyce Kirkland, Program Director

Moultrie County Becky Comstock, Coordinator

We would like to thank everyone who participated in our Santa's Little Helper Workshop event. A special thank you to Sullivan Rotary Club, the First Christian Church of Sullivan, New Life Center, Cheryl Thomas & the Methodist Church, Zach Horn, Moultrie County CADV and all the volunteers for helping make this event possible.

Group Services are offered at the Moultrie County Dove office on Thursday evenings at 5:00 p.m. If you or someone you know is interested in group services, please call 217.728.9303.



B A B E S

*The beginning of a New Year!
The BABES program is ready for 2024.*

We will start programming at Parsons Elementary this month. LeAnn Ellis and Marcia Juriga will present the BABES Primary Programming to 1st grade students.

Other schools have requested programming for the second semester, and I will be busy getting them worked into our schedule.

Did you make any resolutions? If you haven't it is not too late. How about becoming a BABES volunteer!

For more information about becoming a BABES Volunteer contact, slaesch@doveinc.org or Barb at bblakey@doveinc.org.

Sandy Laesch, BABES Interim Program Coordinator

NEWS

from the Domestic Violence Program



In the summer of 2023, members of the Shelbyville Crochet Club began making stocking caps and scarves for the Christmas Care & Share project. The finished products...102 hats, 57 scarves and 1 adorable pink cape.... were delivered to the Shelby County Dove office in early December. Shown left, making the delivery are, left to right: Cathy Krueger, Peggy Killam, Doris Fair and Marie

Robinson. Others involved in this project were: Sharon Petty, Shirley Godbee, Pam Fairbanks, Lou Thompson, Leslie Lewis, and Bev Stenger.

All of us at Dove are very grateful for this contribution to our project and are even more grateful that they are already starting to make more for next Christmas. Thank you, ladies, and may you all have a healthy and happy new year.

As we enter the new year with 365 bright and shiny days ahead of us, we give thanks to all who donated to our Shelby County program or supported us in some way. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

We wish all of you a healthy, happy, and successful new year. May 2024 be good for all of us.

Susie Kensil, Shelby County Coordinator

Come and make a difference at the next
Resident Council Meeting!



The Resident Council meeting is an opportunity for residents to freely discuss topics to improve the quality of life within their development.

Please join us:

- Let your voice be heard
- We want to discuss your concerns and suggestions within your community
- Come share your ideas of improvements for your community, surroundings and housing needs
- Ensure your views are acknowledged and addressed
- Let's talk safety

Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024

Location: Homeward Bound
788 E. Clay, Decatur

Time: 12:30 p.m.



all in:

Macon County Inter-Agency Council

Please join us at the **all in** gathering!

4th Tuesday of the month • NOON to 1:00 p.m.

Upcoming Dates: **January 23**, February 27, March 26

Central Christian Church, 650 W. William, Decatur

Corner of Monroe and William Street, near downtown Decatur.

Please park in main lot, come in main entrance and proceed to lower level fellowship hall

**For more information,
please call:**

Molly Tenuto or Angie Williams
Dove, Inc.
217.428.6616

or email
mtenuto@doveinc.org
awilliams@doveinc.org

Join us for networking and sharing information:

- program coordinators
- direct service providers
- information sharers

These meetings produced many collaborations and shared vital agency information in 2023. We are excited to get started again in 2024!

4th Tuesday of each month, NOON

- We will keep the gathering to an hour.
- Feel free to bring your lunch.
- No membership fees.

Dove Financial Assistance

*Donation are needed
to keep this
emergency financial assistance
program thriving,
and supporting
families in need!*

*Please use mailing address:
302 S. Union, Decatur, IL 62522
or on Dove's website
doveinc.org*

*Please put DFA on
check memo line
or in the comment box.*

Happy New Year, I can't believe it is 2024! I'm not quite sure where 2023 went, as it went very fast and now it's time to reach for the stars in the new year! I feel that in order to help renew goals and objectives it's helpful to reflect on the past, so I did just that, and WOW we were able to help many households over the past year! In 2023, DFA was able to assist 516 households throughout Macon, DeWitt, Piatt, Moultrie, and Shelby Counties. These 516 households were only able to be assisted because of donations given by individuals and churches! What we do for these communities isn't possible without each and every one of you, whether it's through your financial giving, sharing of information to those in need, or your prayers! We were also awarded a grant to assist seniors in Macon County that was able to help 65 households. Through the Warm Neighbors Cool Friends Program we were able to assist 107 households, which wouldn't have been possible without the Energy Assistance Foundation.

For 2024, I would love to see the number of households that we are able to assist increase. This goal isn't because I want to see more people struggling, it's because I know the hardships that are in the community, and I want more people to know of our services and for us to be able to approve more applications. This goal can't be attained without all of you though!

What I would ask of each of you reading this is to:

- Share the information about DFA with others so they can either seek help or donate
- Share the information about Warm Neighbors Cool Friends with others so they can apply
- Donate to DFA as you are able
- Pray for the work DFA is doing and for those that are seeking assistance
- Share this information with your small group, or better yet, schedule a time for me to come speak to your group
- Reach out with interest to join an Advisory Committee for DFA or share this opportunity with someone you think would be a good fit

If everyone could do some or all of the above, then 2024 will be the best year yet for DFA and we will have our biggest outreach to those experiencing hardships! I have a sign hanging in my office that I want to be my reminder for 2024. It says, "To the world you may be just one person, but to one person you may be the world." When people come and ask for assistance, which isn't always easy, it can totally change their lives when we can stop the downward financial spiral and help them get back on their feet. Will you help me with the goal of DFA reaching more people this year? I hope you will!

Molly Tenuto
Program Director

Dove Financial Assistance

Helping with emergency financial assistance

DFA Winter Hours • January 2, 2024 – March 22, 2024

Please note:

- DFA will be closed on all Holidays recognized by Dove, Inc.
- If there is inclement weather, please check social media to ensure that DFA will still be open that day.

Macon County Sites:

Decatur Public Library, 120 N. Franklin, Decatur
 Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
 Mondays, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
 All other times will be by appointment only.
DFA@doveinc.org or 217.619.9108

Contact Info for sites below: DFA@doveinc.org or 217.433.7435

Shelby County Site:

Salvation Army Building, 133 E. Main St., Shelbyville
 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Moultrie County Site:

First United Methodist Church, 216 W. Jefferson St., Sullivan
 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Piatt County Site:

First Presbyterian Church, 214 S. Charter, Monticello
 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

DeWitt County Site:

Dove, 803 W. Leander, Clinton
 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



2023/24 Warm Neighbors Cool Friends Income Requirements &
 Energy Bill Payment Assistance Guidelines

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO APPLY:

- Driver's license or other Photo ID
- Copy of current Ameren Illinois energy bill
- Proof of income



PROGRAM RULES:

- Applicant(s) must reside at address on bill and have active service in their name
- Applicant can only receive assistance ONCE per heating season (January 1 – May 31) and ONCE in the cooling season (June 1 – August 30)
- Account balance must be lower than \$1,500
- WNCF pledges up to \$500 during heating season matching customer payments within the last 45 days
- Cooling season maximums are \$200 and are intended for seniors, disabled, or those with medical conditions exacerbated by heat (with a doctor's letter)
- 30 Day (GROSS) Income Range by Family Size

Family Size	WNCF Income Range
1	\$2,431 - \$4,513
2	\$3,288 - \$5,158
3	\$4,144 - \$5,804
4	\$5,001 - \$6,446
5	\$5,858 - \$6,963
6	\$6,714 - \$7,479
7	\$7,571 - \$7,996
8	\$7,776 - \$8,513

PROGRAM DISTRIBUTOR FOR MACON, DEWITT, AND PIATT COUNTIES:

- Dove, Inc. will assist with applications. Contact 217.619.9108 for questions. Documents can be emailed to DFA@doveinc.org
- Please visit www.doveinc.org for a list of our walk-in hours and locations or see left.

News from Homeward Bound

Move-In Starter Kits

Please consider donating items for move-in starter kits for individuals and families moving from homelessness to housing. Join the Macon County Continuum of Care in supporting this effort.

Donations will be accepted at Homeward Bound and distributed in "starter kits" to agencies serving those moving into housing.

- New Queen-Size Sheets
- Kitchen Utensils
- New Sheets, Blankets, Pillows
- Pots and Pans
- Disposable Plates and Cutlery
- Laundry Detergent
- Bath Towels
- Personal Hygiene Items
- Tissue and Paper Towels
- Dishwashing Liquids
- Plates, Glasses & Silverware
- Cleaning Supplies

These donated items can be delivered to:

Dove Inc., Homeward Bound
788 E. Clay, Decatur
Tuesday – Friday
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.



Homeless Advisory Council Meeting
Thursday, January 11, 2024
1:30 p.m. at the
EOC, 360 E. Marietta, Decatur

Dove, Inc. Homeward Bound
 788 E. Clay
 Decatur, IL 62521
 217.362.7700 dove@doveinc.org
doveinc.org



"You have not lived today
 until you have done something
 for someone
 who can never repay you."
 ~John Bunyan



It's January?! How another year has come and gone is only proof that contrary to my thoughts when younger, a year just isn't much time at all! There still so much to accomplish as we stay the course.

Christmas Care & Share collaboration with so many wonderful organizations and people did not disappoint in keeping us busy, focused and serving the community. As one of many on the CC&S committee, a great big thank you to each one including all the amazing volunteers!! You truly are the best!

The City is making great strides with the Great Streets Great Neighborhoods initiative. In our December meeting we heard the break down of what the folks of Decatur have chosen from the offerings and where we are headed. It's looking promising for safer roads, new lighting in needed areas, murals and much more as this vision continues to unfold.

We currently have 8 neighborhoods who are meeting regularly (that I am aware of) and a ninth one hoping to restart soon. Connection is key in keeping our community safe and progressive, so if you are interested in starting or restarting a neighborhood please contact me at lellis@doveinc.org. I'll be happy to come alongside your vision for your neighborhood and help however possible!

Our first BABES presentation of 2024 begins on January 12, and I am looking forward to being back in the schools to share this impactful, important program and hearing from the children, their points of view!

January's calendar is full of meetings, contacts and opportunity to share Dove, Inc. and more resources to the Decatur Area as we continue to reach out, collaborate and glean along the way.

LeAnn Ellis
NSP Coordinator

Coalition Of
Neighborhood Organizations

CONO Meeting

January 16

(3rd Tuesday of each month)

5:30 p.m.

Decatur Public Library
130 N. Franklin
Decatur

Volunteer Opportunities

Macon County Master Naturalists are looking for assistance in maintaining the native tier garden in the front of Rock Springs Nature Center. The tier gardens feature prairie and woodland species that attract a variety of insect life for all to enjoy. This opportunity is for ages 13 and up.

When we have 4 or more inches of snow on the ground, the public can rent cross country skis from Rock Springs Nature Center. We are looking for volunteers that would like to be placed on our volunteer call list to assist staff with ski rental. We can train you the day you volunteer. This opportunity is for ages 18 and up.

For more information or to sign up
 contact Jenny Garver
 217.542.5536 or
JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org

In Memoriam

Have you ever met someone whose entire presence made the energy in a room shift? Or whose walk in their faith was unshakable? Both are beautiful things to witness if you are blessed enough to know someone. We at Dove, Inc., were lucky enough to have someone like that for many, many years. Linda Staff had been a steadfast presence at Dove since before I started working here in 2004. She was one of the most incredible people I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. She always had a kind word for everyone she met. She would bring us flowers from her garden every spring, and little bags of candy and homemade bookmarks and cards for our birthdays and holidays. She also did Bible studies with the domestic violence participants who wanted to attend, volunteered with Christmas Care & Share, and was a Retired and Senior Volunteer. She was loved by all, and her kind spirit always lit up the room. Linda went home to meet Jesus on December 22nd, and I have no doubt she's watching over us from a far better place now.



Linda at our
 2017 Candlelighting Ceremony

Fly high, Linda. Thank you for everything. You will be dearly missed.

WISH LIST FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

- latex-free vinyl gloves (size large and xl)
- Clorox wipes
- full size bath towels (new only)
- nightshirts- women, all sizes (new only)
- sweat suits- unisex, all sizes (new only)
- gas gift cards
- Walmart gift cards
- Kroger cards for gas and food
- Aldi gift cards for shelter food
- Aleve or naproxen
- Benadryl (or generic)
- non-drowsy allergy meds (Zyrtec/Claritin/etc)
- cold and flu medicine
- Tylenol (or generic acetaminaphen) for infants and/or children
- Orajel
- cold and flu medicine for infants and children
- baby wipes
- Vaseline
- cotton swabs
- cotton balls
- shampoo
- conditioner
- African American hair care products (shampoo/conditioner/etc)
- hair grease
- hairbrushes – natural and nylon bristles
- hair gel and spray
- board games
- card games
- planners
- journals
- pens



You can support Dove by participating with the Kroger Community Rewards Program!

To use the Kroger Community Rewards Program, simply visit <http://www.kroger.com>

Once logged into your Kroger account you can search for DOVE INC either by name or DK772 and then click enroll.

Dove Food Pantry Additional Day Added!



**Tuesdays
& Thursdays**
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
803 W. Leander, Clinton

- This is a free service to anyone in DeWitt County.
- You can utilize the pantry once a month.
- When you arrive, you will need to show your ID.
- We also have diapers if you have a little one in your household - child must be living in the household.