



# DoveTales

the newsletter of Dove, Inc.

June  
2025

Ryan Huff Editor

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**Dove, Inc.**

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Decatur, IL

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## 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.**

# National Caribbean American Heritage Month

The history of National Caribbean American Heritage Month (NCAHM) is detailed on the official website of Caribbean American Heritage Month. The initiative began in 1999 when the Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS), led by Dr. Claire Nelson, reached out to President Bill Clinton to recognize August as National Caribbean American Heritage Month. This led to the first White House Caribbean American Community Briefing that same year. Simultaneously, an ad-hoc group led by Doreen Thompson worked to have June declared as Caribbean Heritage Month in Washington, D.C. ICS joined this effort in June 1999, and by 2000, took on leadership, renaming the observance to National Caribbean American Heritage Month and organizing events under this banner.

In 2004, momentum increased when Congresswoman Barbara Lee introduced a bill in the U.S. Congress, with language provided by Dr. Nelson, to officially recognize June as National Caribbean American Heritage Month. The bill passed the House in June 2005 and the Senate in February 2006. President George W. Bush signed the official proclamation on June 5, 2006. Since then, the White House has issued annual proclamations recognizing June as Caribbean-American Heritage Month. Notable figures such as Sheryl Lee Ralph and Rick Fox were named official spokespersons in 2006.

[caribbeanamericanmonth.com](http://caribbeanamericanmonth.com)

# News from Dove Programs

## Domestic Violence Program

### Domestic Violence 40-Hour Training Is Coming June 23-27

Dove Domestic Violence Program will host a 40-Hour Domestic Violence Training for Volunteers, Professionals, and Staff June 23-27, from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. in the Dean Simcox Conference Room at 302 S. Union St. This training is for anyone interested in volunteering for the Domestic Violence Program and provides comprehensive information about domestic violence and how to work with survivors and their children. The training fee is \$200 and those completing will receive 40-hour training from Dove, an Illinois Certified Domestic Violence Professionals training certification site. To register for attendance, call or email Joyce Kirkland, Domestic Violence Program Director, at 217-428-6616 or [jkirkland@doveinc.org](mailto:jkirkland@doveinc.org).

### Macon County Domestic Violence Notes for May 2025

One seldom mentioned aspect of domestic violence services is funding. Dove Domestic Violence Program is supported by federal funds through the Violence Against Women Act, more commonly known as VAWA, and the Victims of Crime Act, or VOCA. Other funds come from Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Attorney General, Macon County Mental Health Board, and DeWitt County Mental Health Board. Currently, federal funds that make up almost half of the Domestic Violence Program's budget are in danger of being drastically reduced or eliminated in the future. This could mean severe reductions or elimination of some services provided for survivors. As we learn more about funding issues, the Domestic Violence Program and other Dove programs will keep you informed through DoveTales and our social media. We will provide information on funding issues as well as who you can contact to advocate for victims of domestic violence and their families. Our voices together can and do make a difference!

**Joyce Kirkland**  
**Domestic Violence Program Director**



# News from Dove Programs

## RSVP

If your church group, civic group, or organization needs a speaker, representatives from the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program would love to chat with you! Let us tell you about Dove, Inc., and RSVP and help you figure out how you can get involved in the community! If you're in Macon County, please reach out to Angie or Melissa at 217.428.6616. If you're in DeWitt County, please reach out to Silvia at 217.935.2241.

### From a DeWitt County RSVP volunteer:

I volunteered at a social ministry in the city many years ago. My mind was opened to how little things we take for granted are wonders for others. Volunteers gain more than they give. Recipients of assistance get our energy and presence that is an essential element of life. I pray the good we do for others truly helps the world. By doing good we change ourselves from within.

A word of encouragement to other volunteers/potential volunteers:

If it seems like a bit uncomfortable – DO IT! Push outside your comfort zone and go out and change your world.

Pat C.

**Angie Williams**  
RSVP Program Director



# News from Dove Programs

## DFA

Households Assisted & Funds Distributed by County:

- Macon County: 32 households assisted | \$8,006.67
- Moultrie County: 0 households assisted | \$0.00
- Shelby County: 3 households assisted | \$3,129.27
- Piatt County: 1 household assisted | \$569.00
- DeWitt County: 6 households assisted | \$3,946.30
- WNCF Region: 2 households assisted | \$884.00

Total Assistance Provided: \$16,535.24

Total Households Assisted: 44

We have exhausted all available funds for Piatt County. Sadly, this means we are currently unable to meet the needs of households seeking support in that area. I am urgently asking for additional funding to ensure we can continue helping families in crisis. Every dollar makes a difference. Please consider allocating more resources to Piatt County so we can continue this vital work.

**Cierra Howell**  
**DFA Program Coordinator**

## Community Services Program

Buttons, Bows, Myth Mary, Early Bird, Donovan, Reggie, Rhonda and I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that YOU ARE SPECIAL...VERY, VERY SPECIAL to the BABES Program.

Even though the school year is winding down the Puppets and BABES volunteers are still busy. They will finish the school year at Parson, Argenta, and Johns Hill.

If you would like to join Buttons, Bows and Cast along with dedicated BABES volunteers to be a positive role model in your community's classrooms...contact me about volunteering for the BABES Program. My email is [cdees@doveinc.org](mailto:cdees@doveinc.org) or call 428-6616

"If every American donated five hours a week, it would equal the labor of twenty million full-time volunteers."

— Whoopi Goldberg

**Char Dees**  
**Community Engagement & Education Coordinator**

# News from Dove Programs

## Homeward Bound

### **Coordinated Entry**

Staff have been working to engage and house 26 individuals who have been literally homeless (in a shelter, transitional housing, on the streets, or somewhere unfit for human occupancy, such as an abandoned building) for 90 days or more. 6 of those individuals meet the chronically homeless criteria, which means they have a diagnosable disability AND have been homeless for at least 1 year or have been homeless 4 times in the past 3 years, totaling 365 days.

There are 125 total participants currently receiving housing and/or services.

### **Macon County Continuum of Care**

Dove-Homeward Bound, on behalf of the Macon County CoC, continues to provide services and has staff available 24 hours a day to assist those in need of housing solutions. Please share the contact numbers with anyone you know who is experiencing housing instability issues: 217.362.7700 or 217.706.6614, the 24-hour line.

Dove- Homeward Bound is collecting the following items for participants:

- Diapers (all sizes) and Baby Wipes
- Personal Hygiene Items.

The Homeless Advisory Council is scheduled for the 2nd Thursday, July 10, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. EOC, 360 E. Marietta, Decatur

**Christine Anangwe**  
**Dove-Homeward Bound Program Director**

# NEWS

**From the Domestic Violence Program**  
**\* DeWitt \* Moultrie \* Piatt \* Shelby \***

## **Susie Kensil** **Shelby County Coordinator**

Summertime and the livin' is easy...or so the old song say. Life may not be so easy if you are affected by domestic violence. If you, or someone you know, is in this situation, help is near. Please call 217-774-3121. If your situation is a crisis, please call our 24-hour crisis line, 217-774-4888. We will collaborate with you to improve the safety of you and your family.

May has been busy so far with business as usual, serving old and new participants. I participated in Shelby County's annual Health Fair on May 1. 280 people visited throughout the day. It was good to see both old and new friends. I attended ICADV's Quarterly Virtual Legal Clinic's Lundh and Learn on May 8 via Zoom. The topic was Orders of Protection for Minors. I attended the monthly meeting of the ROSC Council Advisory Council on May 6.

By now, most schools are out for the summer or soon will be. On the last day of school, it seems like the summer will last forever. However, before we know it, classes will begin again. This year our Shelby County office is partnering with the Salvation Army, Joanna's House, ROSC,

and CEFS for the 2025 Back To School Bash. We accept donations of back packs, school supplies, shoes, underwear, socks, and other clothing items for kids of all ages. Pick-up day will be July 17<sup>th</sup> at Assembly of God Church. Donations will be accepted right up to the end, but we would like to have them by July 10<sup>th</sup>. Sign-ups will end on July 12. If you have questions, or would like to donate items, please reach out to us at 217-774-3121. I have a list of the most needed items; I also have sign-up sheets available in the office.

Take some time this month to enjoy the warmer temperatures and the beauty of the summer season.

### **Piatt County**

No news to update at this time.

### **Ashlyn Burrus** **DeWitt County Coordinator**

Summer is almost here! And the sun has been out more now, which is exciting!

On May 15, we were able to set up a table at the Clinton Warner Hospital Health Fair. It's always great to connect with others in the community and share more about the services that Dewitt County Dove, Inc. provides.

On May 2, all the DV Legal Advocates were able to go to Champaign at the Land of Lincoln Legal Aid office and discuss with other advocates & the Land of the Lincoln attorneys about procedures, challenges, and get advice too. It was a great training event!

The Dewitt County CADV Committee is starting to begin the planning process of the High Tea fundraiser for this year. The High Tea fundraiser for this year will be on September 6 at the Clinton Nazarene Church. A flyer and tickets will be available within the next month or two.

Thank you to all who donated to the Dewitt County Dove, Inc. office this past month! It's been so greatly appreciated!



# NEWS

**From the Domestic Violence Program**  
**\* DeWitt \* Moultrie \* Piatt \* Shelby \***

## **Becky Comstock** **Moultrie County Coordinator**

The Moultrie County CADV committee will meet on Tuesday June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5pm to discuss and plan upcoming events, discuss recent updates, and discuss ways we can better advocate for victims in our communities. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a member of the coalition against domestic violence committee or becoming a volunteer, please contact the Moultrie County Dove office at 217-728-9303.

Karina's Law went into effect May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in Honor of the Memory of Karina Gonzalez and her daughter who were tragically killed in a domestic violence incident involving a firearm while having an active order of protection against her abuser. We have seen a big change in the paperwork and remedies put into place. Including the search and seizure and removal of firearms at the time and emergency order of protection is entered. This change addresses the dangerous intersection of domestic abuse and gun violence.

In 2023 Illinois had a total of 120 domestic violence-related deaths, firearms were used in 82 out of the 120 domestic violence deaths. There were 18 domestic gun violence incidents that were attempted or completed murder-suicides. In 2023 Illinois was ranked the 9<sup>th</sup> highest in the US for total deaths and injuries related to domestic gun violence according to "Measuring Safety 2023: Domestic Gun Violence in Illinois" by The Network. Data for 2024 is still being compiled and finalized.

Filing petitions for emergency orders of protection can be extremely overwhelming and scary, it needs to be part of a much bigger safety plan, especially if the abuser has access to guns or weapons. Help is always available by calling our 24hr hotline 217-728-9334. On Thursday June 5<sup>th</sup> I will be attending a "Moving Ahead Economic Justice" conference in Kankakee. The Moultrie County Dove office will be closed June 19<sup>th</sup> in observance of Juneteenth.

Please join us at Wyman Park for an afternoon of family and community fun on June 28<sup>th</sup> from 1-4.



GAMES - TIE-DYE - FOOD

## SUMMER VIBES & COMMUNITY TIDES

AT 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

**28TH | JUNE | 2025**

Wyman Park 713 N Main St.  
Sullivan, IL 61951

**COME AND ENJOY!**



Questions? Reach out to Skylar Miller  
at [skylar@hourhouserecovery.org](mailto:skylar@hourhouserecovery.org) or  
217-549-7427.

Funded in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of  
Human Services, Division of Substance Use Prevention  
and Recovery



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Dove Domestic Violence Program's 40-Hour Domestic Violence Training

Registration for this training begins with a phone interview.

**Please call between May 1st and June 6th**

**217.428.6616**

**SITE:** Dove, Inc./ Anna B. Millikin Home, 302 S. Union Decatur

**TIME:** 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., with lunch break from 12:00-1:00 p.m.

**TRAINING DATES:** June 23-27

This training is for individuals who meet the criteria to  
volunteer at any of Dove's Domestic Violence Programs or who  
are seeking educational advancement for their employment.

Fee for this training is \$200.

### *How can you lend a hand?*

- Answering our hotlines
- Covering the shelter
- Reporting/data collection
- Assisting with orders of protection
- Assisting with/facilitating support groups



Dove is a training site certified by the Illinois Certified  
Domestic Violence Professionals Board (ICDVP).

### **Our facilitators:**

Joyce Kirkland  
Program Director

Danielle Cunningham  
Education and Awareness Supervisor

Nabila Alamin  
Client Services Supervisor

Amanda Elven  
Education & Awareness Specialist



# RESOURCES

## Dove Food Pantry



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

**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 **living** in your household.

**This is a free service to anyone in DeWitt County.**

## Children's Clothing Room

**Dove's 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!

**all in:**

**Macon County Inter-Agency Council**

**Every 4th Tuesday of each month  
at NOON  
Central Christian Church**

**For more information  
please call:**

*Angie Williams  
Dove, Inc.  
217.428.6616*

*or email  
awilliams@doveince.org*

Join us for networking and sharing information:

- program coordinators
- direct service providers
- organization representatives

*4th Tuesday of each month, NOON*

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

## A note from our CEO

Even when life feels heavy and the road ahead seems uncertain, especially in the face of potential funding cuts, looking up can be a powerful act of resilience. Even though these potential cuts threaten the vital programs that serve our communities, casting shadows of doubt over the future, we remain resilient. It's easy to feel consumed by what might be lost: the services we've built, the progress we've made, the people who depend on us. But choosing to lift our gaze, even briefly, opens the door to a new perspective. The sky remains wide and vast regardless of the storm beneath it, reminding us that there is more to see, more to hope for, and more to become.

Looking up is not about ignoring the very real consequences of these decisions. It's about allowing ourselves and our communities to imagine something beyond the crisis. It allows us to notice the strength in our partnerships, the innovation in our responses, and the determination of those who refuse to give up. Even as we face funding threats, we reconnect with the truth that advocacy, collaboration, and creativity have always been part of the fabric of Dove, Inc. We are not powerless but persistent, resourceful, and united in our mission.

In the act of looking up, we reclaim our voice. We remember that we've weathered storms through uncertainty, setbacks, and scarcity, and still found ways to serve, support, and sustain. Hope begins with a single upward glance, a shift from fear to purpose, from helplessness to action. In that shift, we find the courage to speak up, to stand together, and to take the next right step, because our communities are worth fighting for, and our work continues no matter what comes next.

**Darsonya Switzer**  
Dove, Inc CEO



# Dove, Inc.

## Executive Staff

Darsonya Switzer, **Chief Executive Officer**  
Tina Robinson, **Chief Operations Officer**  
Sheila Jackman, **Chief Financial Officer**

### Leadership Team

#### **Dove Financial Assistance (DFA)**

Cierra Howell, Program Coordinator

#### **Domestic Violence Program**

Joyce Kirkland, Program Director

#### **Community Engagement Education**

Charvelle Dees, Program Coordinator

#### **Homeward-Bound Program**

Christine Anangwe, Program Director

#### **Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)**

Angie Williams, Program Director

#### **Marketing & Communications**

Ryan Huff, Coordinator

