



DoveTales

the newsletter of Dove, Inc.

August
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Ryan Huff Editor

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Dove, Inc.

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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.

Celebrating World Senior Citizens Day: Honoring Wisdom and Legacy



Each year on August 21, we observe World Senior Citizens Day to honor the contributions, wisdom, and experiences of older adults in our communities. Seniors have helped shape our world through their hard work, perseverance, and care, and this day is a chance to show our gratitude.

It's also a time to raise awareness about the challenges many seniors face, such as health concerns, isolation, and age-related discrimination. By advocating for better support, healthcare, and inclusion, we help ensure seniors age with dignity and respect.

We are also reminded of the importance of intergenerational connection. Seniors have so much to share—from life lessons to historical insight—and younger generations benefit greatly from their knowledge. Taking time to listen and engage builds stronger, more compassionate communities.

You can make a difference by spending time with a senior, sharing their stories, or supporting senior-focused programs. Let's celebrate the lives and legacies of those who came before us—and commit to building a future where all seniors are valued every day.

Ryan Huff
Marketing and Communications Coordinator

A BIT OF HISTORY AND A LEGACY

It may only be August, but here in Decatur, we're already looking ahead and preparing for the return of Coats for Kids—a beloved tradition that enters its 34th year this fall. While the temperatures are still high, the dedicated team behind this long-standing program knows that cold weather isn't far off, and the need for warm coats will be great once again.

Since its beginning, Coats for Kids has provided more than 90,000 coats to children across our community. What started as a simple idea has grown into a powerful, community-wide effort—uniting churches, businesses, civic groups, and individuals with a shared mission: to make sure every child has a warm coat for winter.

This program continues in honor of Barb Blakey, one of its founding leaders. Barb's heart for service and belief in the power of kindness helped lay the foundation for a tradition that still brings people together year after year. Her legacy lives on in every donation and every act of compassion inspired by this effort.

As we plan for the months ahead, Coats for Kids serves as a reminder of what makes Decatur special—neighbors helping neighbors, all working together to make sure no child is left out in the cold.

Ryan Huff
Marketing and Communications Coordinator



News from Dove Programs

Domestic Violence Program

Summer is a period of transition for the Domestic Violence Program. The 2025 fiscal funding year is complete and FY26 began on July 1. The program is immersed in final reporting for FY25 and staff members are adjusting to new requirements for FY26 from our funders. A time-consuming and vital component of all social service work is weekly documentation of services and quarterly reporting of all services to the program's major funders. Advocates document their services in 15-minute increments; those services are entered into the InfoNet database, and the Program Director and Dove Finance Team use those data in reporting to funders. The Domestic Violence Program's funders are: Federal - Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA); State/Federal – Illinois Department of Human Services and Illinois Attorney General; Local – Macon County Mental Health Board and DeWitt County Mental Health Board. The program also receives supportive donations from local agencies, foundations, and private donors. All of these donors and funding fit into an intricate network that supports the services of the Domestic Violence Program.

Amid the behind-the-scenes work of program support, the real work of the Domestic Violence Program goes on daily. The shelter remains at capacity – as soon as one family moves out into their new housing, their room is occupied by a new survivor seeking services. Legal advocates are in court daily, supporting individuals seeking Orders of Protection. Advocates are providing individualized services, emergency shelter, counseling, advocacy, referrals for housing and other services, support groups, transportation, and emotional support. Our county coordinators provide comprehensive assistance for local needs, such as Orders of Protection, counseling, advocacy, referrals, food and housing assistance, and transportation. The program's outreach team provides presentations at community events, to local agencies, and to students on domestic violence and how to access Dove's services. Currently, our outreach and children's staff are helping families prepare for the upcoming school year, while they begin scheduling educational presentations for the new semester.

The focus of all the Domestic Violence Program's efforts – the visible services and the behind-the-scenes work – is to provide a haven of safety, healing, solutions, and growth for survivors and their families who are fleeing domestic violence.

Joyce Kirkland
Domestic Violence Program Director

Domestic Violence Wish List

- Magicare 75% Large Alcohol Wipes
- Clorox Disinfecting Wipes (with Bleach)
- Baby / Toddler Diaper Rash Cream
- Baby Bottle Brushes
- Liquid Body Wash
- Body Lotion
- Vaseline
- Q-tips
- Bedsheet Sets - Twin Size (New Only)
- Pillows (New Only)
- Comforters (New Only)
- Hair Gel / Mousse and Hair Spray
- Shampoo / Conditioner
- African American Hair Care Products (Shampoo / Conditioner / Etc.)
- Hairbrushes - Nylon Bristles
- Cold and Flu Medication All Ages (Newborn to Adult)
- Antibiotic Ointment
- Orajel
- Motrin and Tylenol (for Children)
- Adult: Aleve or Naproxen
- Benadryl
- Non-Drowsy Allergy Meds (Zyrtec / Claritin / Etc.)
- Hydrocortisone Cream
- Pregnancy Tests
- Hands & Nails
- Nail Polish / Remover
- Nail Clippers
- Perfume
- Makeup
- Makeup Removing Wipes
- Cell Phone Chargers
- Walmart Gift Cards
- Aldi Gift Cards for Shelter Food
- Blank Journals / Notebooks
- Purses / Wallets

URGENT NEED

- 2 Small Dog Kennels
- 2 Medium Dog Kennels
- 2 Large Dog Kennels

News from Dove Programs

RSVP

Friends -

There's a word we use a lot when talking about heroes: service. It means standing up, even when it's hard. It means choosing to help others, even when no one's watching. And sometimes... it means asking for help, too. I've been privileged to serve with Dove, Inc. for 21 years, since August of 2004. I've worked in the domestic violence shelter, in the neighborhood services program, helped organize holiday drives, comforted survivors, and coordinated volunteers across counties. I've seen firsthand the way this organization changes lives.

Dove has been a cornerstone of Central Illinois since the 1970s—quietly, consistently doing the hard work that holds a community together. You may not always see it, but it's there:

- Helping a mom and her kids escape domestic violence through our domestic violence shelter and the Homeward Bound program
- Keeping heat on in the winter and groceries on the table through Dove Financial Assistance and DeWitt County's food pantry.
- Providing warm coats to kids who need them, outfits for families through the Children's Clothing Room, and gifts and meals through Christmas Care and Share.
- Guiding children through BABES so they learn empathy and healthy choices.
- Placing senior volunteers through RSVP, connecting wisdom and experience with purpose and impact.

All of this happens because people like you care. But right now, we're facing hard questions. Program funding is shrinking. Federal grants are in jeopardy. And while Dove is not on the brink of closing, we are at risk of significant cuts in coming months. That means fewer services. Fewer people helped.

News from Dove Programs

RSVP-Continued

That's why I'm writing you today—not as a program director, but as a person who cares, and who is concerned about what's coming. As someone who has given their heart to this work. I'm asking you to stand with us, to keep the mission strong.

If you've ever seen Dove's impact...

If you've ever needed a hand and someone reached out...

If you believe in compassion, in dignity, in second chances...

Please consider donating today. Every dollar helps protect and sustain these programs. Every share spreads the message. And every voice that joins us makes the load a little lighter.

Together, we can do more than weather the storm. We can keep hope alive—for everyone who walks through our doors looking for a better tomorrow.

Angie Williams
RSVP Program Director



News from Dove Programs



DFA

Households Assisted & Funds Distributed by County:

- Macon County: 25 households with | \$6,291.21
- Moultrie County: 0 households assisted | \$0.00
- Shelby County: 1 household assisted | \$1,569.00
- Piatt County: 0 households assisted | \$0.00
- DeWitt County: 6 households assisted | \$2,071.32

Total Assistance Provided: \$9,931.53

Total Households Assisted: 32

We are currently out of funds for Piatt and Moultrie Counties. As a result, WNCF has suspended its Summer 2025 assistance program. Applications for assistance will reopen on October 1, 2025.

In DeWitt County, ALICE funds have been exhausted. However, we do have Women to Women Grant funds still available for eligible individuals in DeWitt County.

Cierra Howell
DFA Program Coordinator

News from Dove Programs

Community Services Program

We are getting close to the end of the Summer. I am excited to be working with National Night out in August. This year it will be held at John Hill School. We will have our Teen Youth volunteers out there with us in their Dove T-shirts. This should be a very good time.

I will also start preparing for BABES for the upcoming school year. We are still looking for volunteers. If you know of anyone who has free time. This is once or twice a week for an hour. We would like to help our Youth. Please send them to us at Dove, Inc. and ask for Char.

YHSIG (Youth Homelessness System Grant) has had our first meeting on July 8th. We had two youth participation and are excited to meet and gain more Youth in the next meeting time.

Char Dees
Community Engagement & Education Coordinator

Shoutout to awesome BABES volunteer Rayne from Warrensburg-Latham for making a difference in classrooms and representing Dove at events like the Community Baby Shower!



News from Dove Programs

Homeward Bound

Coordinated Entry

Staff have been working to engage and house 33 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. 4 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 146 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 next meeting of the Macon County Continuum of Care Homeless Advisory Council (HAC) is scheduled for the 2nd Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 1:30 p.m., Homeward Bound, 788 E Clay St, Decatur, IL.

Christine Anangwe
Dove-Homeward Bound Program Director

NEWS

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

Susie Kensil **Shelby County Coordinator**

It is hard to believe that July is over and August and back to school time is upon us. August is one of my favorite months, almost like a second New Year's Day. The excitement of new back-to-school clothes and shoes, the collection of new notebooks, pens and paper, and the idea of a year ahead to reconnect with friends and to learn new things has always been special to me. My kids, as they were growing up, did not always share my enthusiasm for August, and still tease me about it to this day.

For several years our local Salvation Army in cooperation with First Assembly of God Church and their free store, Joanna's House, have conducted a Back to School Bash to help equip children for the new school year. This year for the first time they were joined by other community agencies to grow the project and serve more families. Dove was pleased to join in their effort. Other agencies involved were Shelby/Moultrie ROSC, Family Life Center, and CEFS. We were blessed to receive donations from other organizations such as SSI, Inc. and Mattoon Wal Mart. July 17 was distribution day. It was a good day as parents and their children picked up

backpacks full of supplies, and chose shoes, socks, underwear, and outfits for each child. We also had coats and other items from which they could choose. We served seventy-four registered children and seventy-seven walk-ins throughout the day. Plans are already underway to make next year's event bigger and better.

I completed the annual required DCFS Mandated Reporter training earlier in the month and continued to serve participants with Dove services daily.

Take some time to enjoy the last hazy, crazy days of summer before the busyness of a new school year starts.

Piatt County

No news to update at this time.

Ashlyn Burrus **DeWitt County Coordinator**

July has been a busy month!! Several past participants are receiving legal advocacy and wanting DV 101 classes. This makes me very excited! Because starting next month on Wednesdays from 5-6:30pm at the Dewitt County Dove, Inc. office there will be a new DV Support group starting! I am so excited to get the support rolling!

It's very needed in the Dewitt County community! One of the needs for this support group is to find individuals or groups that would like to donate meals for dinner for the attendees of the support group before the group would begin. Another need is to find individuals that would want to be DV 40-hour trained so that we could provide childcare during the support group for the attendees of the support group that have children.

Dewitt County Dove, Inc.'s High Tea with Friends Fundraiser event will be here soon! It's in less than 2 months! Tickets

NEWS

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

are on sale now which are \$20 which includes a light lunch. You can purchase tickets at the Clinton Dove office. The High Tea is on Saturday, September 6 from 12-1:30pm. The event will include a singing performance from the Daniels Sisters, a live floral arrangement demonstration, and Trivia with Giveaways! I hope we can get a good crowd for this event! It's always great to get together as a community to raise funds for the needs of people that need help in our community.

The Dewitt County Dove, Inc. Food Pantry has been so busy!! Some of the needs we have currently are pullups and size 4-7 diapers & baby wipes. If you would ever like to volunteer at the Clinton Dove office, please call 217-935-6619. If you or someone you know is in a Domestic Violence situation and needs assistance please call the Dewitt County Dove, Inc. 24-hr Hotline at 217-935-6072.

Rebecca Comstock **Moultrie County Coordinator**

Moultrie County Dove has been extremely busy assisting victims of domestic violence with emergency shelter, emergency orders of protection, safety planning and advocacy.

Advocacy helps reduce isolation, helps the survivor see their own power, and helps build strength and support. There are many barriers that keep victims of domestic violence in abusive relationships, we believe everyone deserves a life free from abuse. If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse, please call the 24hr hotline at 217-728-9334.

The Moultrie County CADV committee will be meeting Tuesday August 5th at 5pm to continue planning this year's Candlelight Ceremony that will be held Thursday October 23rd at the First Christian Church at 7pm. Please save the date.

Wednesday August 6th I will be out of the office attending Mental Health First Aid Training.

Thursday Night group has been on hold due to lack of participants. If you or someone you know is interested or would benefit from support group services, please call 217-728-9303.



YOU'RE INVITED!

RSVP APPRECIATION DINNER

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14

5:00-6:30 PM

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
1 BACHRACH COURT, DECATUR, IL

CATERED DINNER BY GRIFFINS' CATERING
PULLED PORK OR BEEF BRISKET, GREEN
BEANS, HASHBROWN CASSEROLE, AND PIE

ENTERTAINMENT BY THAT TRIO
DRESS: CASUAL

RSVP BY JULY 30 TO ANGIE OR MELISSA
217.428.6616

✉ AWILLIAMS@DOVEINC.ORG OR
MGIRARDI@DOVEINC.ORG

RSVP VOLUNTEERS ATTEND FREE
GUESTS ARE WELCOME FOR \$12 EACH
(PAYABLE IN ADVANCE OR AT THE DOOR)
CHECKS CAN BE MAILED TO:
DOVE, INC. - RSVP
302 S. UNION ST., DECATUR, IL 62522

WE CAN'T WAIT TO CELEBRATE YOU! 🎉

DOVE IN DEWITT COUNTY PRESENTS



High Tea with Friends

Sept. 6, 2025

12-1:30 PM

First Church of the Nazarene in Clinton
1220 Kleeman Drive

LUNCH
INCLUDED!

Featuring:

- Daniel Sisters singing performance
- A live demonstration of a floral arrangement
- Trivia and Giveaways!

TICKETS ARE \$20 AND CAN BE PURCHASED AT THE DOVE OFFICE
AT 803 W. LEANDER ST. IN CLINTON BEHIND BAUM DEALERSHIP
OR FROM A CADV MEMBER.
TICKET SALES END AUGUST 29TH!

UPCOMING
EVENTS



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

Dear Friends and Partners,

At Dove, Inc., our mission is deeply rooted in service, to provide safety, support, and stability for those in crisis. But beyond programs and policies, our most powerful tool is our humanity. Practicing humanity means choosing to see the person before the problem, the potential before the pain. It is the foundation of every meaningful connection we make, whether it's with a client seeking shelter, a colleague navigating a tough day, or a community partner striving toward shared goals.

Humanity shows up in small, everyday ways: a warm greeting, a willingness to listen, a decision to lead with kindness even when it's difficult. In our line of work, we often encounter trauma, injustice, and systems that dehumanize. It is easy to become desensitized or overwhelmed. That's why we must be intentional about keeping compassion at the core of what we do. Practicing humanity reminds us that we are not just service providers; we are people helping people.

So, I invite you, Dove's supporters, to join me in carrying this mindset into every conversation, every decision, and every challenge. In doing so, we not only strengthen our impact, we create an organizational culture that uplifts, honors, and respects every person we encounter. Practicing humanity is not a weakness; it's our greatest strength. It reminds us why we do this work and who we are doing it for.

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

