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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Youth Impact Day

Saturday, April 30, 2022  
At capacity, registration is now closed.



### Annual Breakfast

Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 8 a.m.  
Register now at:

[access-shelter.org/annual-breakfast](https://access-shelter.org/annual-breakfast)



## CONTACT

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**If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, please contact:**

### Jesse Nodo

Donation & Volunteer Coordinator  
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## Focus on The Future

Each year, more than half of the people we serve at ACCESS are under the age of 18. Our Focus on the Future Program is aimed at combating the negative impact homelessness can have on our youngest emergency shelter residents. As part of this program, we strive to motivate and assist children in understanding the importance of their education. [Read below](#) to learn more about what ACCESS is doing to emphasize the importance of education in our shelter.

### Royal Reader's Volunteer Reading Program



Jodie, volunteer reader, reads with child during the kick-off session of the new Volunteer Reading Program.

ACCESS is excited to announce the beginning of our Royal Readers Volunteer Reading Program! In September 2021, we debuted the Royal Reading Castle with a week-long celebration. Since then, ACCESS has partnered with Akron-Summit County Public Library to develop a volunteer reading program in an effort to promote early literacy amongst children in our shelter.

### Helping Kids Rise Above Homelessness

In partnership with Akron Public Schools, the community and local shelters, Project RISE provides advocacy, community resources and education & enrichment to parents and students experiencing homelessness.

Since its inception, Project Rise has partnered with ACCESS to provide after-school tutoring, transportation assistance, school enrollment assistance and uniform referrals to the kids in our shelter, ensuring that every child is set up for educational success.

"We at Project Rise are very thankful to the staff at ACCESS for being so supportive of Project Rise events and programming. The staff are communicative and helpful, and we have a great partnership," said Rachel Breece, Special Programs Coordinator.

## What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

### A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since the beginning of 2022, ACCESS has served 42 children. Every single one is protected by Federal Law. Through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This law ensures that kids living at our shelter have special protections and are guaranteed education rights, including the right to a preschool education. Some of rights extended include being able to remain in the same school, the right to enroll in a new school immediately, even without records or if they have missed a deadline. Transportation to and from the original school is even included in these rights. Another important piece of the puzzle is that all school districts must have a "homeless liaison". Our Child Advocate frequently interacts with school liaisons to successfully coordinate enrollments and transportation.



## Meet Elaine Mead

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

After retiring as a Hospital Administrator last April, Elaine was searching for an opportunity to get involved and give back to her community through a cause that was meaningful to her. After signing up for Vantage Aging's RSVP program, the largest volunteer network for people 55 and older, Elaine was matched with ACCESS in July 2021.

"ACCESS fit what I wanted to do which was support the underserved in a way that was behind the scenes. I was drawn to the focus on women and children and people in a time of need. The other part of it was really the education and commitment of the staff at ACCESS to assist people and enable them to move on with their lives. It's the support being given to people. It's the accountability," said Elaine.

"Donations are a crucial part of providing high-quality care to our residents both during and after their stay at ACCESS. Elaine's assistance is critical to getting those items into the hands of our residents when they need them most," said Jesse Nodo, Donation & Volunteer Coordinator.

Elaine spends most of her time at ACCESS sorting, cataloging and storing donations that are critical to the operation of our shelter and well-being of our residents.

"It feels as though I accomplish certain things while I'm here. I love to organize and put things in a better place than I found them, and it's to the benefit of the people we're serving," said Elaine.



Elaine processing and sorting donations in the donation room at ACCESS.

## Removing the Word "Therapy"

### ARTFUL IMPACT PROVIDES ESCAPE FOR WOMEN IN SHELTER



There is a reason that countless generations love Bob Ross. The gentle cadence of his voice and his "happy little trees" come to mind immediately, but it is more than the person. It's the art. Painting is a release.

To some, the word THERAPY sounds scary and daunting, even when coupled with the word ART. Which is why, at Access, the program title was changed to "Artful Impact". And it is the, hands-down, favorite class offered to the residents.

Viewing it through this different lens seems to enhance the impact. A piece that was deemed too hard, becomes manageable when taken step by step.

"It's boosting to their self-esteem," said Kat Rivera, Housing and Programming Case manager at the shelter. "They keep their art. You can find it hanging in the rooms at the shelter, and, once they've achieved housing, it's hanging up in their new home."

Classes, offered through our partnership with Art Therapy Studio, are held on Tuesday and Thursday each month. Volunteers are needed to watch attendees' children during the Thursday timeslot (pending a background check).

Partner Spotlight



## HISTORIAN WANTED

In 2024, Access will celebrate 40 years of empowering women and children who are experiencing homelessness. And we couldn't be more excited! To that end, we have a very special VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY available.

If you love history or indulging in a sleuthing session, we are looking for you! To help celebrate our 40th anniversary, we need someone to help us organize 40 years' worth of files, binders, news clippings, and photos. Additionally, we have an opportunity to capture the stories of those who made this organization a reality.

