

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT GIVES BACK

For many of us, we make a personal resolution to give back and assist our community by helping those in need, but life always manages to give us an excuse. We are always too busy with work, life at home is too hectic, and there are a plethora of other excuses. However, much like going to the gym, sometimes giving back requires carving out some time, or it takes following in someone else's example, in this case, a high school student's example.

Gwen, a junior at Our Lady of the Elms School in Akron, is a shining example that regardless of age, we can all make a difference in the lives of women and children experiencing homelessness. Her journey as a dedicated volunteer began when she saw a flyer at school that ACCESS was looking for jewelry sorters to assist with the Jewelry Box fundraising event. Following her time as a jewelry sorter and getting to know some of the staff, this sparked a curiosity to learn more about ACCESS. After reaching out about new opportunities, Gwen was invited to take a tour of the shelter as part of her onboarding.

"Unlike the perception and stereotypes of homeless shelters that you see in movies or on TV, I was really surprised by how nice the shelter actually was," said Gwen. "It was very welcoming from the first moment I stepped inside."

Following the tour, a passion for the mission of ACCESS sparked. "When it came to volunteering, I always wanted to do something purposeful, and I found that at ACCESS," exclaimed Gwen.

Along with volunteering during her time off from school, such as holidays and summer vacations, Gwen has also taken the initiative to organize donation drives at Our Lady of the Elms, helping to donate items of need for the residents of ACCESS.

In addition to volunteering her time and leading donation drives, despite being a student with a limited source of income, Gwen makes a point to donate what she can to ACCESS to help support the programs being offered at the shelter to help the residents on their journey to attaining permanent housing. "I don't donate a lot of money, just what I can from time to time, but I know it makes a difference," she added.

When asked why she continues to volunteer and give back to ACCESS, Gwen stated, "It makes you feel better knowing you are making a difference in someone's life. It only takes a few hours or any amount you can donate, but it means the world to someone."

If you want to be like Gwen and make a difference in the lives of women and children experiencing homelessness, visit access-shelter.org to find an opportunity that is right for you.



Gwen, a junior at Our Lady of the Elms, gives back by helping to support and empower women and children experiencing homelessness by volunteering and donating to ACCESS.

**"IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER
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- GWEN, ACCESS VOLUNTEER**



**Holiday Program
GIVING**

Ways to participate:

-  Adopt A Shelter
-  Adopt A Family
-  Host A Donation Drive
-  Holiday Elf
-  Wishlist Donation

Jackie's Corner



As October ends and stores are reminding us of the fast-approaching holidays, ACCESS is preparing for its own holiday season!

Along with gifts, parties and good food, there is one more important thing that happens every December, the ACCESS Annual Campaign. This fundraising campaign is responsible for making sure ACCESS ends the year financially positively. Each year, from December 1-31, the organization raises almost 20% of its annual income!

You can contribute to this year's campaign by visiting access-shelter.org/giving-circle.



ACCESS 1984-2024

Celebrating 40 years of service
in Summit County



\$78

supports

one resident for
one night in the
shelter

This Giving Tuesday (November 28), help support 100 nights at our shelter and an anonymous donor will match up to 100 nights!

access-shelter.org/givingtuesday



ACCESS  GIVINGTUESDAY

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ACCESS ADULT SPELLING BEE THE BUZZ OF THE TOWN

ACCESS hosted the inaugural Adult Spelling Bee on October 14 at the newly renovated House Three Thirty. The event raised more than \$61,000 for the women and children at ACCESS. Hosted by Sarah Kay of the WQMX 94.9 morning show, Scott and Sarah in the morning, the event was well attended.



The Akron Honey Bees- Barb Greene, Tara Regan, and Lindsay Barba- were named the first-ever Adult Spelling Bee champions

Overseeing this year's game were three volunteer judges: Akron's presumptive mayor Shammias Malik, the marketing communications director for the Akron-Summit County Public Library Carla Davis, and retired Akron Beacon Journal editor Bruce Winges.

In the months leading up to the event, 18 teams participated in crowdfunding, which raised over \$10,000 before they stepped onto the stage. The funding provided each team a "bank" to use to purchase mulligans, or do-overs, such as "Pay It Forward," which allowed a team to pass their word on to their opponents, and "Buy Back In," which gave a team the chance to change the outcome of a round by permitting them the opportunity to continue playing. A third mulligan, the Akron Honey Buzz Line, sponsored by Akron Honey, gave teams the opportunity to ask a member of the audience for the spelling of a word.

"The event presented the perfect opportunity to showcase a chance to explore the idea of a do-over, similar to the do-overs that ACCESS provides our residents as they stabilize their lives, obtain more tools in their mental toolboxes, and continue their journey into permanent housing," stated Jackie Hemsworth, executive director.

The event ended with a surprise twist, courtesy of a "Buy Back In" mulligan, with the Akron Honey Bees- Barb Greene, Tara Regan, and Lindsay Barba- winning the gold medals, and bragging rights for the year. The Honey Bees- Judge Joy Malek Oldfield, Amy Corrigan, and Jaime Blair- were awarded second place and silver medals.



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