

AURORA

— Giving light to the homeless —



Success Story

The idea of ‘home’ can mean something different to each one of us. For the most part, a common denominator can be found amongst the longing to “just go home” when life gets challenging. In this way, our home functions as a safe haven to many souls in the like. The question then becomes: What happens when circumstances arise that threaten a family’s home, their safe haven?



MR. & MRS. MARK & DEHNA BESWICK

Mark & Dehna Beswick, devoted couple of 35 years are now qualified to answer such a question—their safe haven had shifted to something that most of those with a robust support system will fortunately never likely have to be subjected to, the threat of experiencing *an episode of homelessness*. It can be hard to imagine having such a lack of a support system that we find ourselves faced with a homeless shelter as our only option left to seek refuge, but this was precisely what ensued in regards to this family in particular when Mark found himself unexpectedly in the midst of a battle with an eerie opponent that too many of our friends & family are all too familiar with, cancer. Mark’s courageous fight for his health led to his inability to work. Absent of options for income, given Dehna’s life-long struggle of living with a number of medical hurdles herself, along with Mark’s newly found diagnosis, the couple felt even more gratitude that they lived within a subsidized housing unit which allotted them to continue being tenants, despite their recent modification to an income of zero.

The couple’s relief was short-lived; however when they arrived home to find what for many unfortunately serves as a life-altering letter, an eviction notice. Stunned, the Beswicks’ felt their world collapsing around them—as they realized that if their health & livelihood being challenged weren’t enough to endure at once, in addition the security & stability that only a “home” could provide were now being threatened.

& it was this moment that it appeared to Mark & Dehna that hope may be lost.

Overwhelmed & having minimal direction, The Beswicks' found their way to Aurora, INC.

Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

Winston Churchill

Here at Aurora, our **focal point** is to assist & advocate for our community individuals and families who are **at risk of and/or are currently experiencing**

homelessness with overcoming the

barriers that hinder the ability to sustain stable housing via a servant-oriented staff. We are supported by an incredibly compassionate and solution-oriented local community—which enables us to take the extraordinary measures necessary for our endeavors of preventing and ending the *homeless experience* that so many are forced to endure due to unforeseen life circumstances. Aurora strives daily to guarantee the courageous hands that extend out to us in need are met with more than the expected protocol of a ‘needs assessment,’ permanent housing action-plans, & case management services; while these vital strides mentioned previously are indeed the foundation of Aurora’s mission, our agency pride can be found amongst the positive differences we make in the lives of others. We simply are offering a cornerstone of support to those without a rock to balance upon, compassion, respect, community connections, a listening ear to all that yearn to be heard, as well as providing the most crucial service of

all: ***Restoring hope.***

In this instance, for the past month & a half I have worked alongside Mark & Dehna to assist them in identifying the problem & advocating for a solution to end their struggle with the threat of homelessness. My first attempt to negotiate an eviction dismissal with their property manager via phone & e-mail failed. Fortunately, Mr. Adam Maday, an attorney for Legal Aid Society agreed to legally represent the Beswick couple, *free of charge* at my urging. For many weeks thereafter, Mark, Dehna, & I remained hopeful that Mr. Maday would stumble upon the legal grounds necessary to file “a motion to set aside” the pending eviction on our clients’ behalf.

Time inevitably kept passing, & with each end of every work day the Beswick couple, Mr. Maday, & I began to fear that despite our best efforts, the law still might fall within the pending eviction’s favor. The dreaded day

was fast approaching, that being the designated day the Beswick couple *must* vacate their property, along with all of their personal belongings.

Professionally & personally, my duty as a social service worker is not fulfilled unless every stone present is overturned in order to secure the best possible outcome for the situation at hand. With this belief in heart, it wasn’t time to contact local shelters on behalf of the Beswicks’ just yet.

Preparing for the worst, but **hoping for the best**--after conferring with legal counsel (Mr. Maday), together we deemed it ethically necessary to extend attempts to the final resort: as an advocate on behalf of the Beswicks, I would go to their property manager personally & face-to-face, in the hopes of swaying the ultimate verdict.

Due to the litigation present in the case, the property manager was legally bound not to discuss the matter with any third party, but permitted me to state the reason for my presence. After doing so, on the journey back the office, the feeling of relief came upon me--not because it was known the decision would be overturned as a result of my words, (as the property management was legally unable to give any kind of definitive response to the plight I had laid before them)--but rather, it was the knowing I had done everything in my possible power to keep Mark & Dehna from having to flee their home.

Upon returning to the office, it was time to begin preparing to proceed with new action plans, plans that included shelter, blankets, food, storage, & anything of the like that could possibly be of aid for the Beswicks,’ whom now had no more than forty-eight hours to seek refuge elsewhere, forced to abandon what they had called “home” for more than a decade. To my astonishment, a voicemail had been left by the property manager, whom had just witnessed a vigorous attempt in persuasion in order to permit Mark & Dehna to remain. The voicemail left had simply stated for me to return the call as soon as possible. Once the call was made, the voice on the other side exclaimed the impossible! It was iterated that after my departure from the leasing office; feeling moved by the recent plea, the property manager called their regional owners & made their *own* plight as to why the Beswicks’ should remain in their home. An accord was met. **IT WAS SETTLED!!!**

“The Beswicks’ may remain.”



***“WE JUST WANT TO THANK
AURORA IN OUR TIME OF
NEED. THEY WERE A
BLESSING FROM ABOVE
AND THEY WILL BE
FOREVER IN OUR HEART.”***

--MARK & DEHNA BESWICK

It is with a blessed sense as a community service worker that I have the privilege of greeting an extended hand in need with support, understanding, & a voice. Graciously, I was given the opportunity to extend my voice upon our local community on behalf of this family in need, knowing that I alone could not overcome their barrier to stable housing, putting faith in the belief that there is always a solution & a light in even the bleakest of situations. Together, it is our task to re-frame & find the light. “Help” is often defined in various different ways—within this story, help was not defined with a monetary value, but with a voice; a voice of understanding, empathy, & compassion that successfully prevailed in the end by assisting to prevent an unnecessary experience of homelessness.

My humble request is that you consider being a **community partner** of Aurora’s. The support contributed will help guarantee that we can continue our mission to prevent & end homelessness in our local community. Should your current life circumstance justifiably deny such an ability to do so at this time, I ask that you would consider sending positive thoughts & smiles in our direction while we continue the process here at Aurora to help **our community members in need find their way home.**

With gratitude,

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