

HOME Program Tenant Based Rental Assistance Resident Awarded the 2011 MN National Association of Housing Redevelopment Authority Officials (NAHRO) Education Scholarship

Deborah initially contacted The Salvation Army Housing office in November 2010. She called looking for help, explaining that she had been homeless for several weeks and needed to find housing for herself and her three year old daughter. Previously, Deborah and her child had lived in an apartment with a roommate to share expenses. Unfortunately, the roommate attempted suicide and was hospitalized for some time, thus leaving Deborah to deal with the aftermath of the crisis and all of the financial responsibilities for the apartment. Deborah had just started college in September; she was a full-time student and her only income was MFIP. Deborah was no longer able to afford the apartment and in order to avoid accruing back rent or being evicted; she made the decision to leave.



While homeless, Deborah continued to go to school full-time, and to look for employment. She was able to borrow a friend's vehicle for a short time to help her look for employment and this is where Deborah and her child slept. As temperatures dropped, Deborah was able to leave her daughter with her grandfather. He lived in subsidized housing and was not allowed to let other adults stay with him. Deborah did not want to jeopardize his housing, so she continued to sleep in the vehicle.

During this period of homelessness, it was discovered that Deborah's daughter was in need of a hernia operation. However, doctors postponed the procedure until Deborah could provide a healthy recovery environment for her daughter. Deborah kept up with her school work and maintained a high enough grade point average to earn a place on the Dean's list.

With the help of the Salvation Army's Housing Specialist, Deborah was encouraged to apply to the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) for a Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) voucher, funded through the HOME program. The Housing Specialist also assisted Deborah in finding an apartment for her and her daughter and coordinated with St. Louis County to help her obtain financial assistance to pay for the rent deposit on the apartment.

In January 2011, Deborah and her daughter were able to move into an apartment. Shortly after, having obtained the stable housing needed for her daughter to recover, Deborah was able to take her child to the hospital to have the operation she needed.

In April 2011, Deborah was nominated by the Duluth HRA for a Minnesota National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) Education Scholarship. She was awarded the scholarship and it was presented to her by the HRA at its Board of Commissions meeting on May 31, 2011.