



spring 2024

# Brother Francis Shelter

## Finding Healthcare Connections: Andrew's Path to Stability at Brother Francis Shelter

*With healthcare transportation and benefits assistance, you're helping Andrew find his way toward permanent stability.*

People from all over the world find themselves at Brother Francis Shelter, including Andrew, a former New Jersey farmer. When Hurricane Sandy wiped out his 14-acre farm in 2012, Andrew decided to make a fresh start in Alaska where he could be nearer to his sister and her kids.

Sadly, Andrew fell on hard times in Alaska, too. A group of men on the street robbed and beat him so badly that he

was hospitalized at Providence Alaska Medical Center with serious injuries. Andrew eventually recovered enough to be discharged, but had nowhere to safely live while he healed. After meeting with a social worker, Andrew was admitted to the Medical Respite facility at Brother Francis Shelter, where he would have the safety and privacy he needed to recover from his injuries.

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**ABOVE:** Guests at Brother Francis Shelter continue to participate in wellness activities like art classes. Art doesn't always have to be on a canvas.



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“Medical Respite staff helped me a lot,” Andrew says. “For 3 months, they got me a cab every week to go to Providence for wound care.”

While he recovers at Brother Francis Shelter, Andrew makes uses of the advanced services available at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Resource & Navigation Center, located on the same campus. “Everybody over there has been super to me...They’ve worked wonders for me.”

Staff helped Andrew obtain

senior assistance, providing the first source of income he’s had in months. After they sent the applications, his case manager told him, “You’re all set, keep an eye on your mail.” Three weeks later I got five checks in the mail.” Andrew says that when he saw those checks, he was so relieved to finally have money to support himself. The very first thing he bought was denture cleaning solution so he could keep his gums healthy.

Andrew looks forward to the future, and with the help of his

case managers and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Resource & Navigation Center, he’s building his road to permanent stability one piece at a time. **Community supporters like you help Andrew** navigate healthcare and income hurdles, and we’re all rooting for him to achieve his dream: moving out to Talkeetna and living close to nature again, like he did in his farming days.

A message from our CEO



Robin Dempsey  
Chief Executive Officer

Hello everyone,

Thank you for your ongoing support for our neighbors experiencing homelessness. I want to take a moment to highlight **the crucial role emergency shelters play** in our homeless response network’s Housing First approach to homelessness.

Emergency shelters are often the first point of contact for people experiencing homelessness, offering immediate refuge and safety. However, they’re not just temporary solutions; they represent the **first step towards stable housing** and holistic support. The stories in this newsletter reflect some of the wide variety of ways shelter connects people to services which increase their chance of obtaining and maintaining housing.

By including emergency shelters in our Housing First framework, we make it easier for our neighbors in crisis to obtain permanent housing. Shelters serve as vital entry points to our service network, connecting individuals with the resources they need to secure stable housing and rebuild their lives.

With this comprehensive approach and your support, **we will truly make a meaningful impact on homelessness in Anchorage.**

Thank you for your **unwavering dedication** to creating a more inclusive and supportive community for all.

Warm regards,  
*Robin Dempsey*

Meet Brother Francis Shelter’s new Client Advocates!

When a guest arrives at Brother Francis Shelter, they are almost always emerging from a state of crisis. They’ve been through a lot, and they don’t always know where to start getting back on their feet, whether that’s by finding employment, applying for housing support,

or obtaining a new ID. Client Advocates like Wendy and Dominic meet with new guests and help them find their bearings and connect with resources. Thanks to our Client Advocates, guests know how to access the resources that will help them the most—whether

that’s substance misuse treatment, housing voucher applications, document recovery, employment training, or behavioral health services—to make sure everyone has the tools they need to rebuild and thrive.



Wendy

“The relationships I build with clients and **seeing their success makes me happy.** Clients I’ve helped tell me they have a job interview, and later come back and tell me ‘I got it!’ and I **get to tell them, ‘Congratulations!’**”



Dominic

“Some of these clients have done amazing things. I can be having a bad day, and then a client says, ‘I got my ID today and applied for a job,’ and I realize, ‘You know what, my day really ain’t that bad.’ **It makes my day to hear that.**”

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Community supporters are at the heart of our services, providing clients with dignity, care, and uplifting interactions. Thank you so much to all our supporters for the care that you give to our community!



1.

- 1. Middle School students from Holy Cross Middle School lent a helping hand to our neighbors staying at Brother Francis Shelter by packing sack meals, making nutrition available and accessible.
- 2. Student volunteers visited Brother Francis Shelter and played games with guests, including chess, Uno, and Sorry. The guests both taught and won many matches of chess, and Uno brought competition full of laughter and fun.
- 3. St. Patrick’s Parish generously built and donated hygiene kits for the guests, helping to meet a difficult and essential need for our neighbors in crisis.



2.



3.

# Bringing low-barrier counseling to Brother Francis Shelter

*With Behavioral Health Services, you help meet clients where they're at and break down barriers for treatment.*

For neighbors in need, access to behavioral health services can make the difference between chronic homelessness and permanent stability.

Through your support, Catholic Social Services created the Behavioral Health Services program in 2022 to meet the need for counseling services specifically geared to address homelessness. Program staff provide counseling services to clients onsite at Brother Francis Shelter, making it **one of the**

**few low-barrier behavioral health resources** offered in Anchorage.

Ashley Martin, our Clinical Director of Behavioral Health Services, shared that both counselors and clients are seeing the positive outcomes: “We have many clients that **still access counseling services even after they find housing**, because they're seeing the value of working with a behavioral health professional.”

Your support helps fill gaps like these in our community safety net. With every month of continued support, **you give our neighbors more and more opportunities to succeed and thrive** as valued members of our community.

*RIGHT: Barbara brings the “Color Mobile” to programs as an activity to help build relationships with clients and start conversations around Behavioral Health Services.*



## Hope endures. So can your giving.

Your donation to the Brother Francis Shelter Endowment Fund is a gift that keeps on giving and growing, providing a permanent resource to sustain the mission of Brother Francis Shelter. You can contribute to the endowment by donating online at [cssalaska.org](https://cssalaska.org) or mailing a check to:  
**Catholic Social Services**  
4600 Debarr Road, Suite 201  
Anchorage, AK 99508

Please specify that your gift is for the BFS Endowment Fund. To learn more, contact Amalie Couvillion at 907-222-7355.