



Introducing Our New Branding: A Fresh Start for Dakota Woodlands

As part of our commitment to growth and our mission of empowering families, we are thrilled to unveil Dakota Woodlands' refreshed branding! This exciting update includes a new logo, a redesigned website, and a modernized color scheme—all carefully crafted to reflect the heart of our organization and our vision for the future.

This transformation goes beyond aesthetics. Our updated branding symbolizes a renewed dedication to our mission and highlights our plans for continued growth. It reflects who we are today: an organization rooted in its history yet forward-thinking and adaptive to the evolving needs of our clients and community.

The new logo embodies our focus on empowerment and stability. The redesigned website creates a more user-friendly experience, making it easier for clients,

donors, and partners to connect with us and access information. The refreshed color scheme brings a sense of warmth and optimism, mirroring the hope and support we provide to families every day.

This rebranding effort is an essential step in our journey to expand our reach and impact. It will ensure that Dakota Woodlands continues to be a trusted resource for families in need. The effort also serves as a reminder of our unwavering commitment to helping families achieve stability and self-sufficiency.

We are excited to share this new chapter with you and invite you to explore our updated look. Together, we will continue to build a stronger, more impactful Dakota Woodlands that stays true to its mission while embracing the future.

Thank you for your continued support as we grow and serve our community with renewed purpose and vision!



A Note from the Executive Director

When families come to Dakota Woodlands, they are often at a crossroads, searching for stability and a path forward. They are seeking more than a roof over their heads—they are seeking hope, support, and a chance to rebuild their lives. In these moments, we have the incredible privilege of saying, **“We are here to help, and we will walk alongside you.”**

2025 marks a year of transformation for Dakota Woodlands. With leadership changes and rebranding underway, we are poised to strengthen our impact and broaden how we serve families in our community. Every step we take is grounded in our mission to empower clients—men, women, and children—as they journey toward self-sufficiency.

Our programs are designed to address both immediate needs and long-term success. These include:

| **Housing Support and Resources:**

Helping clients secure stable housing and navigate the challenges of long-term housing solutions.

| **Life Skills Education:**

Teaching practical skills to manage daily life and prepare for independence.

| **Counseling Services:**

Offering emotional and mental health support to help clients overcome challenges and build resilience.

| **Career and Professional Development:**

Providing resources and training for employment opportunities and career advancement.

| **Financial Literacy Education:**

Empowering clients with knowledge to manage their finances and achieve financial independence.

| **Parenting Education and Support:**

Strengthening families through workshops and individualized guidance.

| **Childcare Services:**

Supporting parents by caring for children as they work, attend school, or participate in programs.

| **Case Management:**

Personalized assistance to set goals, create plans, and connect with vital resources.

| **Community Resource Connections:**

Partnering with local organizations to provide our clients with a broad network of services.

These services are designed to address our clients' immediate needs and the long-term skills necessary for a stable and successful future.

As we look ahead, we are inspired by our clients' resilience and our community's unwavering support. Together, we have created a space where lives are transformed, and hope is restored. Dakota Woodlands thrives because of people like you—our donors, volunteers, and partners. Your generosity fuels our mission and makes this work possible.

Thank you for standing with us as we navigate this new chapter. Your support ensures we can continue providing the care, resources, and opportunities our clients need to thrive. **Together, we are building brighter futures.**

With gratitude,

Colleena Carlisle

Executive Director, Dakota Woodlands



Supporter Recognition

One day, Rod, an experienced electrician, heard about Dakota Woodlands' need to upgrade its lighting system. Rod had always sought ways to give back to his community, and he felt a calling to help. He reached out and offered to update the organization's outdated lighting to energy-efficient LED fixtures.



Rod didn't just offer his expertise; he provided the service free of charge, understanding that every dollar saved could go toward empowering displaced families on their journey to independence. Over the course of several weeks, Rod worked diligently, often putting in long hours to ensure the project was completed seamlessly.

The impact of Rod's work has been extraordinary. With the new LED lighting system in place, Dakota Woodlands has saved thousands of dollars in electrical costs—funds that can now be redirected to support vital programs and services for its clients. This is not the first contribution Rod has made to the organization. For the past 10 years, Rod has been a faithful and supportive volunteer at Dakota Woodlands. He has saved the organization thousands in special projects, salary, and maintenance costs.

Rod's generosity goes beyond cost savings. His work has improved the living conditions for families staying at Dakota Woodlands, making the environment brighter, safer, and more welcoming.

"I'm just glad I could contribute meaningfully," Rod said when reflecting on the project. **"Knowing that something as simple as a lighting upgrade can make such a big difference reminds me of the power of community."**

Dakota Woodlands is deeply grateful for Rod's incredible contribution. His acts of kindness are a testament to the strength of our community and its commitment to our mission.

To Rod, we say thank you. Your work not only brightened our space but also our spirits. Your selflessness inspires us all and reinforces the importance of coming together to support one another.

Dakota Woodlands thrives because of generous individuals like Rod and the community that uplifts us. Together, we empower displaced families and help them find their path to independence.

Thank You to Our Supporters



At Dakota Woodlands, we would not be able to do what we do without the unwavering generosity and dedication of our donors, community partners, volunteers, and supporters. You are the backbone of our mission, helping us provide the resources, care, and opportunities that empower families on their journey to stability and self-sufficiency.

Your contributions—whether through time, financial support, or collaboration—make a lasting impact in the lives of the families we serve. From all of us at Dakota Woodlands, thank you for being an essential part of our community. Together, we are transforming lives and building brighter futures.





Our Impact 2024: Dakota Woodlands, Inc.

219 
Number of Donors

214
Total Individuals Served



79
Adults
Served
(18+)

135
Children
Served
(Age 0-17)

136 
Days
Average Length
of Stay

21,911 
Total Nights We Provided
Clients with a Safe Place
to Sleep

166 
Individuals Exited to
Permanent Housing

2,598 
Total Volunteer hours
in 2024

6,600 
Layettes
Self-Care & Hygiene
Products Given Out

16,320 
Diapers

372
Packs of Wipes
Given Out

97 
Emergency
Transportation Rides


2100+ 
Sessions
Program Sessions


71,387 
Total Meals & Snacks

Over
771,480 
people experience
homelessness on any
given night.

37% 
of individuals
experiencing
homelessness in
Minnesota are
unsheltered.

259,473 
people
in families with children
experience homelessness
on any given night.

39% 
more people
in families with
children experienced
homelessness from 2023
to 2024.

24% 
of people
experiencing
homelessness reside in
suburban areas.



Wondering How Your Donations Help?

Breakdown of How Dollars Support

Impact of Your Gift:

- **\$50** provides meals for a family for one week.
- **\$100** covers a night of safe shelter and support services for a family.
- **\$250** funds case management and resources to help families regain stability.
- **\$500+** directly supports housing assistance, job training, and long-term solutions.



A Walk-Through of a Client Intake

A Small Snapshot Example of Entering Shelter as a Client

A Journey from Fear to Hope: A Family's First Day at Dakota Woodlands

I never imagined I'd be here. Homeless. With my kids. As we pulled into the parking lot of Dakota Woodlands, my heart pounded. My children, too young to understand the full weight of our situation, clung to me. I held my breath as I walked through the doors, feeling ashamed, afraid, and completely lost.

We had nowhere else to go. The past weeks had been filled with uncertainty—sleeping in our car, relying on fast-food bathrooms to wash up, stretching what little money we had to keep my kids fed. I was exhausted. I was desperate. And I was terrified of what came next.

But then, something unexpected happened.

The staff greeted me with kindness—not pity, but genuine warmth and understanding. They looked me in the eye, treated me with dignity, and reassured me that I wasn't alone. That first conversation made all the difference.

We went through the intake process, where I shared my story and my fears. I was met with compassion at every step. No judgment, just support. The case manager sat down with me, asking about my needs, my children's well-being, and my long-term goals. For the first time in a long time, someone was there to help me find a way forward.

They gave us a room—clean, warm, and safe. My children finally had a bed of their own, a place to lay their heads without fear of being forced to move again. I could see the relief wash over their faces. That night, for the first time in weeks, I could breathe.

Over the next few days, I met with staff who helped me create a goal plan—a roadmap to get back on my feet. They connected me with resources for job training, financial assistance, and childcare support. They reminded me that my situation was temporary, that this wasn't the end of my story.

This is why Dakota Woodlands matters.

Behind every family who walks through our doors is a story—a parent doing everything they can to rebuild, a child in need of stability, a family searching for more than just shelter. They need hope, safety, and a path forward.

At Dakota Woodlands, we see beyond the crisis. We see resilience, strength, and the potential for a fresh start. When families arrive, they are met with compassionate staff who listen, support, and guide them through the next steps. Through safe shelter, resources, and personalized care, we help them move from uncertainty to stability.

It takes more than a roof to rebuild a life. It takes a community. And because of the support behind us, we can continue to be a place where families find safety, dignity, and the opportunity to move forward with hope!

Messaging: A shelter today. A home tomorrow. A future forever.

Dear Donors,

Imagine being a parent with nowhere to go. You've done everything you can to keep your children safe, but tonight, you have nowhere to sleep. The fear in your child's eyes is heartbreaking, and the weight of uncertainty is crushing. Where will you go? What will you do?

For families in Dakota County, Dakota Woodlands is often their only hope. We are the only shelter in the county providing families experiencing homelessness with a safe place to land and a path to stability.

When people walk through our doors, they aren't just looking for shelter—they're searching for hope, dignity, and the chance to rebuild their lives. Because of your generosity, we can provide them with that chance.

But today, our ability to continue this mission is at risk. Funding cuts threaten the very lifeline that keeps families safe and together. Our building, which serves as a shelter for families, needs big repairs. A well-maintained and functional building is a requirement for us and not a bonus. Our building is the core foundation of our program. It is what keeps our families safe and secure. If the building crumbles, our families have nowhere to go in their time of need. We need your support to fix it. Currently, no other organization in Dakota County keeps unhoused parents and children together while providing them with the tools they need to break the cycle of homelessness.

That's why we are launching our annual campaign, One Roof, Many Futures, to ensure that we can continue to serve families in Dakota County and provide them with safety and security.

Families depend on us. And we depend on you.

Why Your Support Matters Now More Than Ever

Every day, our staff works tirelessly on the front lines—providing warm meals, clean beds, case management, and the resources families need to transition from crisis to stability. But behind every family we serve, there is someone like you who made it possible.

Your support isn't just about keeping the lights on or fixing a roof. It's about:

- **Providing safety** – A warm bed, a safe place to sleep, and the dignity of knowing they are not alone.
- **Restoring hope** – Counseling, job training, and life skills to help families regain independence.
- **Breaking cycles** – Support that extends beyond shelter, creating long-term stability for families.

How You Can Make a Difference

Right now, we need your help to ensure that families have what they need and support our capital needs:

- **Become a Monthly Sustainer:** A recurring gift ensures we can continue to serve families in crisis.
- **Spread the Word:** Share our mission and encourage others to support Dakota Woodlands.

This is more than a shelter. It's a second chance. A new beginning. A future filled with hope. And it starts with you.

Please, give today. Stand with Dakota Woodlands. Stand with families who need us.



Thank You, Eagan Rotary!

Together Transforming Spaces, Supporting Families

Dakota Woodlands extends our deepest gratitude to the Eagan Rotary and their incredible lunch team for selecting us as a recipient of this year's District Matching Grant. With these generous funds and volunteer support, Eagan Rotary brought to life a much-needed capital improvement project: the full remodel of our client snack bar.

The goal of this project was to replace an aging counter and cabinets in the area where residents prepare a cold breakfast and grab snacks for themselves or their children. The project was brought to life by the dedication and teamwork of Eagan Rotary members, who rolled up their sleeves and led a full remodel of the shelter's client snack bar. A special thank you to Tami Phillippi and Quinn Hutson, whose leadership and support were instrumental in the project's success.

This revitalized space is more than just a room, it's a symbol of care and community. The feedback from clients and staff has been overwhelmingly positive. The snack bar now offers a welcoming and functional area that supports nourishment, dignity, and daily connection for the families we serve.

In addition to the remodel, leftover proceeds from the project were used to stock the pantry with essential food items, further extending the impact of Rotary's generosity.

We are deeply grateful for the continued partnership of Eagan Rotary and proud to recognize their commitment to service and community. Their investment in Dakota Woodlands directly supports our mission of empowering families on their journey to independence.

Thank you, Eagan Rotary! We are honored to highlight your extraordinary generosity and celebrate the impact you've made.



Dakota Woodlands
3430 Wescott Woodlands
Eagan, MN 55123

Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES MN
PERMIT NO. 1024

Join Us - Huddle For Hope: A Night of Inspiration, Community, and Impact

RSVP NOW!

October 29, 2025

5:30–7:30 PM

Vikings Museum



Dakota Woodlands is thrilled to announce our Annual Fundraising Event: Huddle for Hope! Join us for an evening of inspiration as we come together to support Dakota County's only shelter exclusively serving families experiencing homelessness.

Together, we're tackling homelessness – one family at a time.

Every dollar raised helps ensure Dakota Woodlands can continue providing safe shelter, supportive services, and a pathway to permanent housing for families in crisis.

This is more than a fundraiser — it's a celebration of community and hope.



📍 Dakota Woodlands, 3430 Wescott Woodlands, Eagan, MN 55123

Website: www.dakotawoodlands.org | Email: info@dakotawoodlands.org | Phone: 651-456-9110

Public Hours: 8 AM – 5 PM | Shelter Hours: 24/7