

This season has proven to be exceptionally busy for Restoration Advocates. Since January 1st, we have provided shelter and support to sixteen women and twenty-four children, with our shelters consistently at full capacity. We also planned and executed our annual fundraiser, which turned out to be a remarkable success. However, I will save that story for another time. The purpose of this newsletter is to share our recent activity with the shelters, particularly the heartening story of "Andrea" and her three children.

Andrea's journey with RA began in September when Mission Granbury shelter contacted us about her situation. Enduring abuse from her husband in Ohio, Andrea realized her, and her children's safety required immediate action. Despite numerous attempts to leave, her husband consistently found her, leading Andrea to understand that her life was in danger unless she left the state. Courageously, she relocated to Texas with her children, seeking temporary refuge outside a YMCA in Fort Worth where she and her children slept in her van while using the facilities inside.

Upon learning of Andrea's plight, a compassionate woman provided her with the contact information for Mission Granbury, leading her to seek refuge there. Andrea wasted no time enrolling her children in school and securing employment. However, by the end of the 30 days the shelter provided, despite her efforts, she found herself unable to afford the deposit and first month's rent for an apartment. This is when her case worker reached out to us for assistance.

We had an available room, and Andrea and her children soon relocated to Restoration Place. With our support, Andrea resettled her children in Stephenville schools and quickly secured employment. Joanna Mills, one of our dedicated volunteers, became a mentor to Andrea, forming a close bond with her and her children. Joanna offered encouragement and practical guidance as Andrea navigated the challenges of finding a job and dealing with her past trauma. Our goal has always been for every woman in our shelter to have an individual advocate—a compassionate listener and encourager to walk alongside her on her journey. We have witnessed the tangible impact that such relationships have on the progress of our residents. We do not have volunteers to do this for every woman, but in Andrea's case, Joanna stepped in to support her and her children, with assistance from other volunteers.

Despite facing challenges, Andrea eventually found a home she felt she could afford that suited her needs. We provided furniture, household essentials, and volunteer movers to help her get settled into her new residence. Andrea was excited and grateful, but her children were beside themselves at the prospect of having a home of their own.





We continued to stand by her side as she navigated the challenges of paying rent, utilities, and other essential expenses. Joanna has sustained her close connection with Andrea and her children, offering encouragement and assistance, often picking the children up from school and arranging activities while Andrea worked. Joanna actively motivates the children to excel in school and has been a reliable source of support for them throughout this transition period.

Andrea's journey serves as a powerful testament to the strength and perseverance of the individuals we are privileged to assist. Her experience also highlights the vital role of Restoration Place in providing a supportive environment for residents for the months they need as they strive towards self-sufficiency. Furthermore, Andrea's story underscores the profound impact of the personal connections we cultivate with each woman and her children. These relationships provide invaluable emotional support and encouragement, empowering our residents to overcome challenges and thrive on their journey towards a brighter future.

Andrea shared the following with us shortly after coming to Restoration Place:

"You have no idea the emotions and gratitude and sense of freedom I feel being away from my home state. I truly believe I am finally safe and no longer have to fight for my life! I still have nightmares, but I know I'm going to make it through this. Today, I read in Matthew about the disciples on a boat when the storm came, and Peter called to Jesus. Jesus had him come to him off the boat through the water. Peter had courage, but then looked at the stormy waters and became afraid, starting to sink. Jesus reached out and saved him, saying, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' I have to remind myself daily, sometimes multiple times, that I will make it through these stormy waters as long as I stay focused on my Creator and Lord, Christ Jesus! Thank you very much. Seriously, I cannot believe I'm finally getting stable for my kids here in Texas. It has been a tough road, but we are doing it."

I actually visited with Andrea today, and after our visit, she sent this text.

"We had a conversation once and I told you since I left the situation in Ohio, in my mind I've heard 'high hopes.' I know that was God strengthening me and reassuring me that if I just grab onto him, he will guide me and show me the life I deserve. I've made mistakes along the way but ultimately, he will never leave me and as long as I put him first, he will surely provide and fulfill my 'oh so high hopes' I truly am so appreciative for Restoration Advocates and all the organization has done for me and my kids. I cannot say thank you enough!"

Andrea's resilience and faith serve as an inspiration to us all. On behalf of our Board of Directors, our volunteers, and particularly "Andrea" and all our residents, I extend a sincere thank you for your support. It is your generosity that makes everything we do possible, and together, we rejoice in celebrating her story.

Jeannette Maxwell
Executive Director