



# DoveTales the newsletter of Dove, Inc.

March  
2025

Ryan Huff Editor

Issue 3 • 2025  
Published Monthly

**Dove, Inc.**

302 S. Union  
Decatur, IL

62522  
217.428.6616  
dove@doveinc.org



## Dove's Mission

**Dove is an organization that engages religious institutions, volunteers, and advocates seeking to coordinate efforts to address unmet needs and social injustices. These needs are met through coordinated programs focusing on domestic violence, homelessness, education, volunteer and community empowerment, and individual emergency need fulfillment.**

**Dove works for justice, equality, and understanding among all people.**

# The Importance of Women's History Month

Women's History Month, observed annually in March, is a time to recognize and celebrate the vital contributions of women throughout history. It serves as an opportunity to honor the achievements of women in various fields, acknowledge their struggles, and inspire future generations to continue advocating for gender equality.

For centuries, the contributions of women have been overlooked or minimized in historical narratives. Women's History Month seeks to correct this oversight by shining a spotlight on the roles women have played in shaping societies, cultures, and economies. From pioneers in science like Marie Curie and Rosalind Franklin to social reformers such as Susan B. Anthony and Malala Yousafzai, women have left an indelible mark on the world. Their contributions in politics, education, medicine, and the arts continue to shape our daily lives.

One of the most important aspects of Women's History Month is its role in inspiring young girls and women to pursue their dreams without limitations. By highlighting the achievements of trailblazing women, this month serves as a reminder that gender should never be a barrier to success. Representation matters, and showcasing strong female role models encourages future generations to break barriers in male-dominated fields such as STEM, politics, and business.

Women's History Month is a crucial time to honor the past, recognize the present, and work toward a more equitable future. By acknowledging the achievements and struggles of women, we not only celebrate their contributions but also reaffirm our commitment to building a world where everyone, regardless of gender, has the opportunity to succeed. As we reflect on the history of women's rights and achievements, we must also continue to push for progress that ensures future generations of women can achieve even greater heights.

**Ryan Huff**  
**Marketing and Communications Coordinator**

# News from Dove Programs

## Community Services Program



In January the BABES program has been going hard in 11 classrooms. The lessons have included friendships knowing good from the not so good and Stop-Think-Decide engaging students in conversation about their future and how the decisions they make now might affect their future goals.

The BABES program may have a slow start...but we are on our way to tip top tier. Our next volunteer training and recruitment will be sometime at the end of February or Mid-March. So, if you are interested in the opportunity to make a difference in a child's life, call or email me for more information about becoming a BABES Volunteer. My email is [Cdees@doveinc.org](mailto:Cdees@doveinc.org) or call 217.428.6616 ext. 126.

***"Our children are the rock on which our future will be built, our greatest asset as a nation. They will be the leaders of our country, the creators of our national wealth, those who care for and protect our people."***  
***- Nelson Mandela -***

**Char Dees  
Community Services Program Director**

# News from Dove Programs

## Domestic Violence Program

It is Valentine's Day – February 14, 2025 – and the whirlwind of activity in the domestic violence shelter has been dizzying today. Fighting writer's block, I have been interrupted so many times today by shelter issues that I was left struggling for words – and then I realized that was my topic – life in a domestic violence program.

Staff in a domestic violence shelter are the ultimate multitaskers - they juggle multiple responsibilities and demands every day. There are the mundane but vital shelter tasks – groceries, ordering evening meals, stocking the supply room, cleaning and setting up shelter rooms, maintaining the shelter, doing laundry, and handling maintenance issues. There are scheduled appointments and events - Orders of Protection, court, counseling appointments, intakes, support and education groups, advocacy with agencies and case workers, and outreach presentations. There are the administrative tasks – budgets, grant reports, community collaborations, and supervision of staff and shelter routines. There are the crisis responses – hotline calls, contacts from police on behalf of survivors, participants needing to talk, and walk-ins in immediate crisis. And then there is the DANGEROUS work for domestic violence programs – abusers who confront and threaten staff and clients, intruders who try to gain entry to the shelter building, walk-in clients and shelter residents who become aggressive, as well as clients who need staff help when suffering mental health or substance use crises. Dove's domestic violence staff handle these situations with cool heads, an outstanding ability to assess and prioritize situations, flexibility, collaboration, compassion, and kindness. Survivors – adults and children fleeing domestic violence and healing from their trauma – always come first.

Here's to Dove's domestic violence team - amazing crisis managers, collaborators, and advocates with the biggest hearts around. This belated Valentine is dedicated to them in gratitude and thanks.



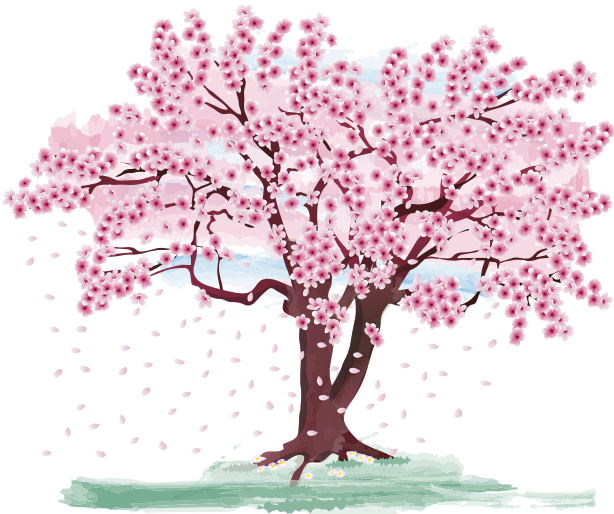
# News from Dove Programs

## Domestic Violence Program Cont.

Dove Domestic Violence Program welcomed Angel Butler back to staff in February. Angel, formerly a Legal Advocate, is stepping into the Victim Advocate role. She will be working in the Macon County Courthouse on behalf of survivors, with a focus on criminal domestic violence cases as well as legal advocacy.

The Domestic Violence Program reviewed building security during January and February, completed installation of a new entry camera and door lock system, and provided training for staff on safety protocols for Dove's Anna B. Millikin Building. The Committee Against Domestic Violence (CADV) and DV Program Staff provided Valentine treats and heart-shaped pizzas for Valentine's Day. DV Staff Support Group sponsored a Valentine's Party for all shelter and group participants during Domestic Violence Support Group on February 11.

The domestic violence shelter has been busy, with high demands for shelter throughout January and February. Dove's educators are busy in schools with teen dating violence and BABES presentations. They are also presenting to local community groups and agencies, in addition to weekly DV 101 classes at Decatur and Logan Correctional Centers.



**Joyce Kirkland**  
**Domestic Violence Program Director**

# News from Dove Programs

## Dove Financial Assistance

In challenging times, a little help can go a long way. Thanks to DFA (Dove Financial Assistance ), families and individuals in our community are finding relief, hope, and the ability to move forward with confidence.

Recently, DFA provided vital rental, power, and water assistance to several families facing financial hardships. With this support, parents could focus on their children, employees could continue working without fear of losing their homes, and families could rest easy knowing their essential utilities would stay on.

Seniors, often managing tight budgets, found comfort in DFA's assistance with power and water bills. This support meant they could stay safe and comfortable in their homes without the stress of choosing between utilities and other necessities.

Even those who don't qualify for government assistance still face financial struggles. DFA recognized this gap and stepped in, connecting individuals to Warm Neighbors Cool Friends Ameren Assistance, ensuring more households could keep their lights on and homes warm.

One especially heartwarming story is that of a single mother who, while overcoming a domestic violence situation, was at risk of eviction. DFA stepped in just in time, providing rental assistance so she and her children could remain in a stable and safe home, giving them the fresh start they deserved.

Another single mother, caring for a child with disabilities, was facing the possibility of having their gas shut off. Thanks to DFA's help, their home remained warm, and she could continue caring for her child without additional worry.

These stories reflect the heart of DFA—a program dedicated to lifting people up during tough times. By providing financial relief, DFA is not just covering bills; they're offering peace of mind, security, and the opportunity for families to thrive. With every helping hand, DFA is making our community stronger, one family at a time.

**Cierra Howell**  
**Dove Financial Assistance Program Director**

# News from Dove Programs

## Homeward Bound

### **Coordinated Entry**

Staff have been working to engage and house 61 individuals who have been literally homeless (in a shelter, transitional housing, on the streets, or somewhere unfit for human occupancy, such as an abandoned building) for 90 days or more. 21 of those individuals meet the chronically homeless criteria, which means they have a diagnosable disability AND have been homeless for at least 1 year or have been homeless 4 times in the past 3 years, totaling 365 days.

There are 127 total participants currently receiving housing and/or services.

### **Macon County Continuum of Care**

Please join us on March 28, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. for the Macon County Continuum of Care Community Breakfast. The data from the count and the recipient of the Macon County Continuum of Care Advocate of the Year will be announced at that time.

Dove-Homeward Bound, on behalf of the Macon County CoC, continues to provide services and has staff available 24 hours a day to assist those in need of housing solutions. Please share the contact numbers with anyone you know who is experiencing housing instability issues: 217.362.7700 or 217.706.6614, the 24-hour line.

Dove- Homeward Bound is collecting the following items for participants:

- Diapers (all sizes) and Baby Wipes
- Personal Hygiene Items.

Macon County Continuum of Care Homeless Advisory Council (HAC) Meeting Next meeting is scheduled for the 2nd Thursday, March 13, 1:30 p.m. EOC, 360 E. Marietta, Decatur.

**Christine Anangwe**  
**Dove-Homeward Bound Program Director**

# News from Dove Programs

## RSVP

### Mark Your Calendars: Exciting RSVP Events Ahead!

Spring is around the corner, and so are some fantastic RSVP events you won't want to miss! Whether you're new to the program or a seasoned volunteer, we've got something for everyone.

#### 🌟 Welcome, New Volunteers! 🌟

DeWitt RSVP is rolling out the red carpet for our newest volunteers with a special welcome event at Vespasian Warner Library on April 24, 2025, from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. It's the perfect chance to get to know the program, meet fellow volunteers, and learn why your role is so important. Keep an eye on your mailbox—official invites will be heading your way in mid to late March!

#### 🎉 Bingo is Back! 🎉

Get ready to shout "Bingo!" because we're bringing the fun back to the Friendship Center on Wednesday, May 7. Stay tuned for more details—prizes, laughter, and friendly competition are guaranteed!

#### 🍴 Annual Appreciation Dinner – Save the Date! 🍴

Macon County RSVP is gearing up for our biggest celebration of the year—our annual appreciation dinner! Join us at St. Paul's on August 14 from 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. as we celebrate our incredible volunteers. We'll start taking reservations in July, so stay tuned for more delicious details.

We can't wait to see you at these fantastic events! 💙

**Angie Williams**  
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Director



# NEWS

**From the Domestic Violence Program**  
**\* DeWitt \* Moultrie \* Piatt \* Shelby \***

## **Susie Kensil** **Shelby County Coordinator**

February is ending on a warmer note than the rest of the month. The extreme cold, ice, and snow slowed down foot traffic to our office, but increased telephone services.

We are happy this month to welcome our former State's Attorney, Gina Vonderheide, to the position of Assistant State's Attorney. This returns our State's Attorney's office to full staff and will increase the ability of victims to receive justice. Both attorneys in the office are strong advocates for victims. I have been working again this month with the new Victim's Advocate in the office to familiarize her with domestic violence issues and protective orders.

February brought several training courses. ICADV presented three ICE training courses on our legal responsibilities and service to victims due to the proposed immigration raids. I also attended an ICADV meeting on the Pretrial Fairness Act. I will end February with training on Empowering Rural Victims to Overcome Barriers.

## **Ashlyn Burrus** **DeWitt County Coordinator**

Isn't it crazy how it's almost Springtime?! I am ready for the warmer weather, flowers, and upcoming outdoor events too. With things starting to slow down some, I have been able to do some housekeeping and reorganizing of files. And, I have been reaching out to different groups and churches to present and introduce myself more out into the community.

I have been able to attend several training sessions such as Best Practices On Safety Planning For Immigrant Survivors, a Lunch & Learn to discuss the Pretrial Fairness Act, Selfcare and Wellbeing, Understanding Depression, lastly a webinar on The Science Behind Mental Illness. By attending these training sessions, I can be more educated, be given more resources, and be able to provide support to individuals with more understanding.

The Dewitt County CADV Committee will

be planning and coming up with an upcoming date soon for the Dewitt County Dove High Tea in 2025 here in Clinton. Be on the lookout for flyers coming out!

The Dewitt County Coordinator is still looking for people that may be interested in completing the DV 40-hour training to become a DV 40-hour trained direct service volunteer. I would love to start a support group for individuals one evening a week, but I would need a couple trained volunteers to be able to help and provide childcare to anyone wanting to attend the support group that would possibly be needing help with childcare for their children during the support group.

If you or someone you know would ever by chance be interested in completing the DV Training and becoming a DV 40 Hour trained volunteer and have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the Dewitt County Dove Inc. Office at 217.935.6619.

Donations currently needed for the food pantry are baby wipes, diapers sizes 4-7, and pull ups.

# NEWS

**From the Domestic Violence Program**  
**\* DeWitt \* Moultrie \* Piatt \* Shelby \***

## **Becky Comstock** **Moultrie County Coordinator**

Moultrie County Dove has been busy with Community & Institutional Services, accompanying Moultrie/Shelby County ROSC to free laundry day, Attending Moultrie County Inter Agency Meetings, and Meeting and speaking with the local representative of Safe Families for Children.

Winter months seem to slow direct client services down. Due to victims being even more isolated by their abuser and the cold winter weather they are unable to reach out for services or get in for services.

March is the month of new beginnings. The weather is getting warmer, and things are starting to pick back up. The need for assistance in filing for emergency orders of protection, safety planning, and the number of participants in need of domestic violence counseling is on the rise.

Group services are still being offered on Thursday evenings from 5-7. Walk-ins are welcome or you can call 217-728-9303 to schedule an appointment. All our services are free and confidential.

I will be attending 2 training courses this month which will focus on White Allyship and firearm restraining orders.

## **Piatt County**

No news to update at this time.



# Upcoming Events

**QDOBA IS  
BRINGING  
FLAVOR  
TO OUR COMMUNITY**



FUNDRAISER FOR

**DOVE INC**

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 4PM-8PM

3012 WATER STREET  
DECATUR, IL 62526

**25% of sales donated**

Order online with the digital coupon on this flyer, or show this flyer in restaurant. Also valid on Catering orders.

SCAN THIS QR CODE  
IN RESTAURANT



OR ENTER THIS  
COUPON CODE ONLINE  
**QDOBAGIVES**



QDOBA commits to donating 25% of product sales (excluding any tax, delivery, gift card purchases and alcohol purchases) made lawfully and in accordance with this agreement to your organization. In order to receive a donation, your organization must reach the minimum sales amount of \$150. If this amount is not reached, your organization will not receive a check for the fundraiser. QDOBA reserves the right to withhold donations if QDOBA's fundraiser guidelines are violated or if your fundraiser website is abused and/or used in a manner not in accordance with this agreement. QDOBA Mexican Eats is a registered trademark of QDOBA Restaurant Corporation. ©QDOBA Restaurant Corporation 2025.

WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT  
**THE MACON COUNTY  
CONTINUUM OF CARE**  
**COMMUNITY BREAKFAST**

FRIDAY MARCH 28TH, 2025  
STARTS AT 8 A.M.

**THE SALVATION ARMY**  
229 W. MAIN, DECATUR, IL 62523

THIS EVENT WILL FEATURE:

- 2025 POINT-IN-TIME RESULTS, PRESENTATION BY MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY'S R.J. PODESCHI AND STUDENTS
- ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2025 MACON COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR
- REMARKS FROM DARSONYA SWITZER, COC CHAIR AND CEO OF DOVE, INC.
- HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED

This Community Breakfast is free and open to the public. Reservations are required.

Please RSVP to  
lgarnersmith@doveinc.org or 217.362.7700,  
by noon on March 21, 2025



**Continuum of Care**  
A coalition of agencies serving the homeless population in the Macon County Area

**MILLIKIN**  
UNIVERSITY



# RESOURCES

## Dove Food Pantry



Tuesdays & Thursdays  
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
803 W. Leander, Clinton

**You can utilize the pantry once a month.**

When you arrive, you will need to show your ID.

We also have diapers if you have a little one **living** in your household.

**This is a free service to anyone in DeWitt County.**

## Children's Clothing Room

**Dove's Children's Clothing Room Central Christian Church**  
**650 West William Street,**  
**Decatur Mondays & Wednesdays**  
**1:00 to 3:30 p.m.**  
**Free clothing, yes really free, for infants through teens**

Thanks to the members of RSVP who serve at the clothing room!

**all in:**

**Macon County Inter-Agency Council**

**Every 4th Tuesday of each month  
at NOON  
Central Christian Church**

**For more information  
please call:**

*Angie Williams*  
Dove, Inc.  
217.428.6616

or email  
[awilliams@doveince.org](mailto:awilliams@doveince.org)

Join us for networking and sharing information:

- program coordinators
- direct service providers
- organization representatives

*4th Tuesday of each month, NOON*

- We will keep the gathering to an hour.
- Feel free to bring your lunch.
- No membership fees.

## A note from our CEO

Compassion is more than a feeling, it's an action. Every day, individuals in our community face unimaginable challenges, from homelessness and domestic violence to food insecurity and lack of essential resources. While their stories may differ, they all share a common need: a supportive community that sees their struggles and responds with care.

At Dove, Inc., we believe that compassion is the foundation of real change. It drives us to provide safe shelter for those fleeing domestic violence, job training and housing support for individuals experiencing homelessness, volunteer opportunities for those wanting to serve our community, empowerment for those whose voices are far too often silenced, educational opportunities, and critical resources for those facing hardship. But we cannot do this alone.

Each of us has the power to make a difference. A kind word, a donation, or volunteering your time can offer hope to someone feeling forgotten. Advocacy for policies that protect the vulnerable strengthens the safety nets so many rely on. When we choose to see the humanity in others, we build a stronger, more compassionate community for all.

As we continue our mission, we invite you to be part of this movement. Whether through education, outreach, or direct support, your involvement matters. Together, we can ensure that no one in our community has to face their challenges alone.

**Darsonya Switzer**  
Dove, Inc CEO

# Dove, Inc.

## Executive Staff

Darsonya Switzer, **Chief Executive Officer**  
Tina Owens, **Chief Operations Officer**  
Sheila Jackman, **Chief Financial Officer**



## Leadership Team

**Dove Financial Assistance (DFA)**  
Cierra Howell, Program Coordinator



**Domestic Violence Program**  
Joyce Kirkland, Program Director

**Community Engagement Education**  
Charvelle Dees, Coordinator

**Homeward-Bound Program Director**  
Christine Anangwe



**Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)**

Angie Williams, Program Director

**Marketing & Communications**  
Ryan Huff, Coordinator