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Independence House Family Success Story

Updated: Dec 21, 2021

This story was shared with us from our community partners at Independence House - no names or identities are revealed.

In January 2021 we listed a room available which could accommodate up to 6 people in a family. We received an out-of-state phone call by a police department asking us to take a referral for an adult female and her three young girls. They were fleeing immediate danger, in an extremely high risk situation and were all victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

The trilingual shelter advocates were able to intake the client in Portuguese, and welcomed them to our shelter shortly thereafter. All four residents instantly felt at home within our shelter and were overjoyed with the large family room they were staying in. Having fled from another state after moving from another Country, all things were very new to our residents and it took some time for the mother to feel comfortable and safe enough to have all three of her girls registered within the school systems.

Shortly after coming to the shelter, the youngest child got to experience her 5th birthday party celebration which their mother stated, was a first. We decorated the communal dining area and kitchen with balloons and banners, we wrapped gifts, made a cake, we had some party music and food. The family and shelter residents all joined in on the celebration and our client said this is when she truly felt a sense of security after the struggles she had faced in escaping abuse. This moment seemed to be a turning point for the family.

The mother and children had no recourse to public funds in the U.S. due to their immigration status, so the mother was not able to work freely. She continued to work cleaning jobs privately and managed to save up enough money to purchase a vehicle. With the freedom to commute, work became much steadier. Towards the summer months, we were able to utilize funding streams to help with camp costs so the children had 8 weeks worth of summer activities through the YMCA. The children excelled greatly! From having fun activities to look forward to everyday, to much needed counseling sessions offered by Independence House counselors and one-to-one advocacy by shelter staff, the children thrived.



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After 10 months of staying in our shelter, an housing opportunity became available. The children were doing well in school and the close move to another housing site meant they did not need to change schools.

Since October 3rd, the family has been living in new housing and they have been receiving legal assistance to help with their immigration status. Our Housing advocates will be able to find them a three bedroom, low-income housing opportunity in Barnstable County. The mother is very grateful for the opportunities she received since being a part of Independence House.

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