



## **Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter**

**2 Quincy Street  
Nashua, NH 03060  
603.889.7770**

# **Spring Street Forward:**

## The NSKS Campaign for Shelter in Nashua

“At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by ‘I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me, I was homeless and you took me in.’ Hungry not only for bread – but hungry for love. Naked not only for clothing – but naked for human dignity and respect. Homeless not only for want of a room of bricks – but homeless because of rejection.”

**–Mother Teresa**



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# **Homelessness in Nashua**

## **When the Bottom Drops Out**

A growing number of people in the Nashua region have no place to call home. Some may not even have temporary shelter. On any given night, there are individuals and families sleeping in their car or on the ground. If you've driven through town, maybe you've seen them.

A few years ago, Adam, a single parent (whose name we've changed to respect his privacy), owned a home in Nashua and worked 60-70 hours a week to support his family. One day he collapsed and received the devastating news that he had brain cancer. With no warning, he lost his job, his health insurance, his home . . . and his hope. He and his daughter, Emma, had no one to turn to, nowhere to go.

You and many others in our community might have a network of support when you need help. You may stand ready to support a friend or family member if they get stuck—to help pay the rent or buy groceries in a tight month; to offer advice, encouragement, or even a temporary place to stay. But for people without this safety net, one big crisis—or even an accumulation of small setbacks—could leave them homeless.

The city of Nashua helped Adam and Emma secure temporary housing in a local hotel. And when space opened up, they moved to the Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter.

## **Living on the Edge**

Adam's homelessness was driven by a large, traumatic event, but many in our community are so close to the edge that just a small setback can leave them without a place to live. One Nashua family came to NSKS after a flat tire left them homeless—without transportation, the parents lost their jobs, their income and, finally, their apartment.

The homeless population in Hillsborough County increased by 16.9% from 2010 to 2018, and it continues to grow. Rental costs have risen by 20% in the last five years, while the average renter in Nashua earns only half the income needed to afford a median priced two-bedroom apartment. In our region, almost half of households are cost burdened—their housing costs account for an unsustainably high percentage of their income.

There is not enough shelter capacity in Nashua to provide every homeless individual or family with emergency and transitional housing; the City of Nashua spends up to \$80,000 a year to shelter the homeless in local hotels. In the current pandemic environment, this shortage will only continue to get worse. Growing unemployment and economic hardship will drive more people from their homes at a time when social distancing measures have reduced shelter capacity.

The tight confines of our current shelter buildings thwart our efforts to provide the people we serve with the full range of services, including educational opportunities, and the uplifting, supportive environment they need to get back on their feet. These buildings were not originally designed as shelters: The rooms are, at best, cramped, and there is little storage. Support staff and partnering agencies have no place to meet with clients or to hold educational classes. There is no room for childcare that would free parents to focus on their future, or for children to be carefree and play—for kids to be kids.

In our fiscal year 2018, NSKS successfully helped 57% of the 297 clients that we housed, including children, to move on to permanent housing. Yet too many other individuals and families in our region remain trapped in a cycle of homelessness. There is more that we, their community, must do.



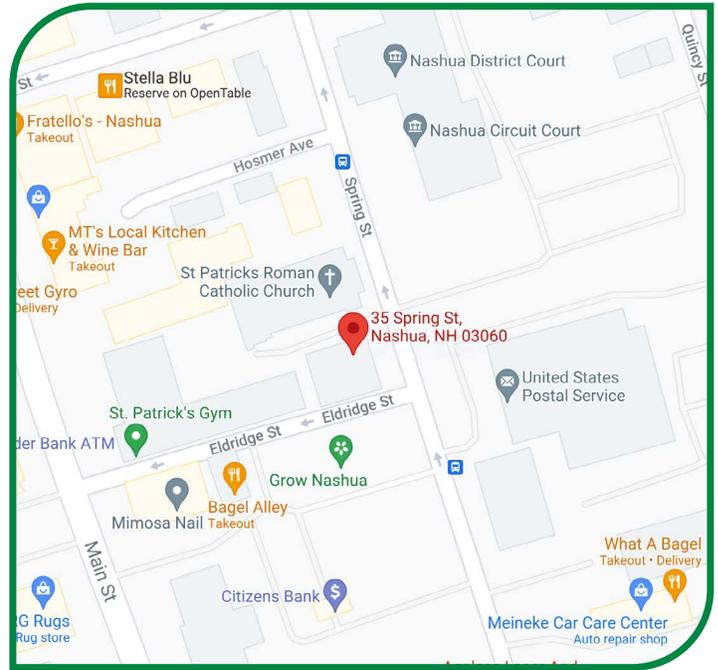
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### The NSKS Spring Street Forward Campaign

NSKS has initiated a capital campaign to renovate a historic school building, on Spring Street in Nashua, into our new, expanded shelter. With increased emergency housing capacity and the space to provide additional support and services, we can provide basic needs for more homeless individuals and families in Nashua. We can help them move toward self-sufficiency, and a permanent place to call home.

We need your help to make it happen.



The former Sacred Heart school building fronts Spring Street and is part of a 1.72 acre parcel that also includes St. Patrick Church, Rectory, and the St. Patrick Parish Center. The building is owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese and will be leased from the church. Only the school building is being renovated as part of this project.

### A Place to Land

Providing food and shelter are the vital cornerstones of our mission, but for those experiencing homelessness, they are just a beginning. The needs of individuals and families who come to NSKS span generations—half are single adults with no children, and over 75% of the families have children under the age of six. By the time they arrive here they have often been worn down by the constant struggle to survive.

But when their energy is no longer exhausted by working to secure food for the day or to find a safe place to spend the night, a different future begins to feel possible. As they rediscover the rhythm of organizing a basic daily routine, they regain the energy and space to think, learn, and plan for another day.

NSKS helped Adam to arrange and get to his cancer treatments. We helped him address his financial challenges and connected little Emma with extra support at her school. But Adam, ill and unable to support his family, fell into a devastating—if understandable—depression. At one point, he felt ready to give up. As NSKS staff and volunteers provided a steady stream of encouragement and connection to support services, Adam began to realize that he was not alone. Others were fighting with and for him. As his hope rekindled, he began to envision a new life.



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We were able to support Adam and Emma in their time of need, and eventually helped them to find permanent housing—a place they call home. Although the after-effects of Adam's illness prevent him from working as vigorously as he once did, he is happily engaged in the community through a part-time job, which NSKS helped him secure.

# **Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter**

## **More Than Just Shelter**

For nearly 40 years NSKS has provided support for our community's most vulnerable people - homeless and low-income men, women and families with children who have nowhere else to turn. We provide:

- › Meals
- › A food pantry
- › Emergency shelter
- › Education & employment assistance
- › Financial assistance to prevent homelessness
- › Support services
- › Connections with external agencies and programs

NSKS occupies a unique place within the Greater Nashua area. We are the only organization providing hot meals to people who are food insecure, and we're the largest food pantry in the area, serving 6,000 unique families every year. We are the only provider of shelter for families with two parents or with single parents, and the only dedicated shelter for single adult women. Our clients include people who lodge at the shelter, people experiencing homeless but not residing in the shelter, and those who are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Through targeted programs, emotional support, and collaboration with other organizations, NSKS provides and facilitates services that promote dignity and self-sufficiency for those we serve. Those struggling with poverty can apply to agencies for help, learn to write a resume, earn a GED, find employment, or arrange a reliable transportation strategy, and feel supported along the way. Without solid rental histories or savings to afford the high initial investment that leases require, people often need an advocate working on their behalf to secure a place to live. NSKS gives people opportunities to find the stability they need to break the cycle of hunger and poverty.

With twenty to thirty people in residence at any given time, wear and tear on our two housing facilities—first purchased by NSKS over thirty years ago—has occurred at an accelerated rate. Even with costly renovations, these facilities would still lack adequate capacity. Moreover, many areas of these buildings are inaccessible or difficult to navigate for people with mobility issues.

## **Finding More Space**

In the fall of 2017, as part of our annual program, NSKS delivered over a thousand backpacks filled with school supplies to children in need from the greater Nashua region. There were backpacks left over that would be needed later in the year, but there was no room at our facilities to store them.

Thinking about the challenge of storing the backpacks, NSKS Executive Director Michael Reinke was walking near our Soup Kitchen when he passed the old school building at 35 Spring Street, adjacent to St. Patrick's Church in downtown Nashua. The Sacred Heart Elementary School served the community for more than eighty years but has been largely vacant since the mid-1970s. He inquired about the old school, thinking that the backpacks could be stored there.

When Father Kerper described the parish's desire to turn the building into a homeless shelter, NSKS's vision for the future began to take shape, and our campaign was born.



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Clockwise from top left: One of two classrooms, where clients and community members can participate in a wide range of programs, from financial literacy and HiSET classes to AA meetings; one of two kitchens in the family shelter; the new women's shelter, and the new men's shelter.

# The Spring Street Renovation

## More Shelter Capacity

In an act of generous compassion, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Manchester has offered Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter a 40-year lease for 35 Spring Street at \$1 per year. NSKS has initiated a capital campaign to renovate the former school and relocate our shelters there. The structure holds four floors and approximately 20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of usable space—more than triple our current capacity.

Architectural planning for the renovation has been completed, and work began in September of 2020. The new NSKS Homeless Shelter is scheduled to open in January of 2022, at which time our two existing shelter buildings will be closed and sold.

## A School's Legacy

Beginning in 1892, workers and volunteers labored day and night to construct Sacred Heart Elementary School, with an urgency to help the children of Nashua, including many immigrants. The goal was to provide supports and skills the children needed to build successful lives. The school building is still full of potential.

We have a unique opportunity to continue the legacy of this school by meeting the needs of our community's homeless with a similar urgency. With your help, we can increase the number of units of shelter, retain all of our existing services, and provide more of the education, support, and connections to services that help people overcome challenges and grow into independence.

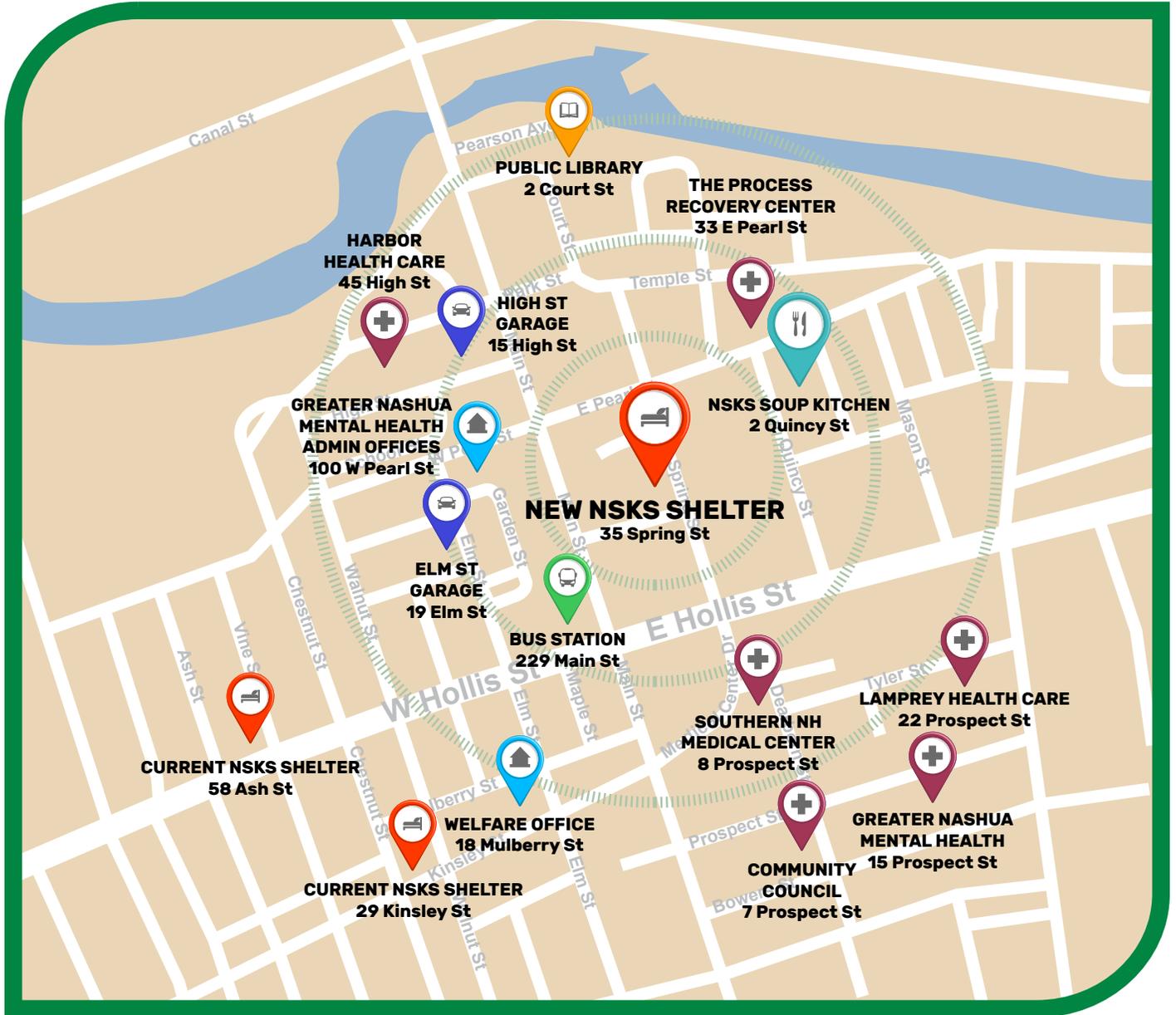


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## The Ideal Location

Our new shelter facility will be in downtown Nashua, within a five-block radius of the bus station, the welfare office, the library, two community health centers, a hospital, and mental health services. Our Soup Kitchen provides breakfast and dinner only one block away. There is adequate parking capacity at the shelter or in the nearby city's parking garage. The building has no adjacent residential neighbors.



- NEW SHELTER FACILITY:** 35 Spring St
- GR NASHUA MENTAL HEALTH OFFICE:** 100 W Pearl St
- NASHUA WELFARE OFFICE:** 18 Mulberry St
- NASHUA PUBLIC LIBRARY:** 2 Court St
- HARBOR CARE HEALTH:** 45 High St
- LAMPREY HEALTH CARE:** 22 Prospect St
- SOUTHERN NH MEDICAL CENTER:** 8 Prospect St
- GR NASHUA MENTAL HEALTH:** 15 Prospect St COMMUNITY
- COUNCIL:** 7 Prospect St
- THE PROCESS RECOVERY CENTER:** 33 E Pearl St
- NSKS SOUP KITCHEN:** 2 Quincy St
- BUS STATION:** 229 Main St
- ELM ST GARAGE:** 19 Elm St
- HIGH ST GARAGE:** 15 High St



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## Opportunities

Our new shelter will have increased capacity for single men, single women, families, and for transitional housing. The fourth-floor rooms will provide supported, long-term housing for Nashua’s chronically homeless who have been living on the street.

With additional space, we can provide more of the services that our clients need, such as a new Literary Learning Center, onsite childcare, and two rooms dedicated to providing classes and support groups. A day center will provide a much-needed respite area for individuals who might otherwise be walking the streets of downtown Nashua. They can participate in programs, take a shower, or even just sit with a warm drink on a cold day.

The chart below compares our current shelters with the opportunities provided by the new facility.

Current Shelters	Spring Street Shelter
Overnight Capacity Single Men: 10 beds Single Women: 5 beds Families: 18 Beds	 Overnight Capacity Single Men: 18 beds Single Women: 14 beds Families: 48 Beds
Handicapped Access Limited (inaccessible to most wheelchairs/walkers)	 Handicapped Access Full access on all floors
Nearby Communities of Faith (within 1/4mi) New Fellowship Baptist	 Nearby Communities of Faith (within 1/4mi) New Fellowship Baptist St. Patrick’s Church of the Good Shepherd Main St. United Methodist
Gardening Opportunities 2 garden beds	 Gardening Opportunities 18 garden beds
	 Day Center 20 people at a time can use a respite area instead of walking the streets of downtown Nashua
	 Space for Onsite Child Care (enabling parents to attend meetings & educational classes) Space for 12 children
	 Quarantine/Illness Space 2 beds
	 Classroom Space 2 spaces for AA meetings, HiSET, parenting, and financial literacy classes, and more



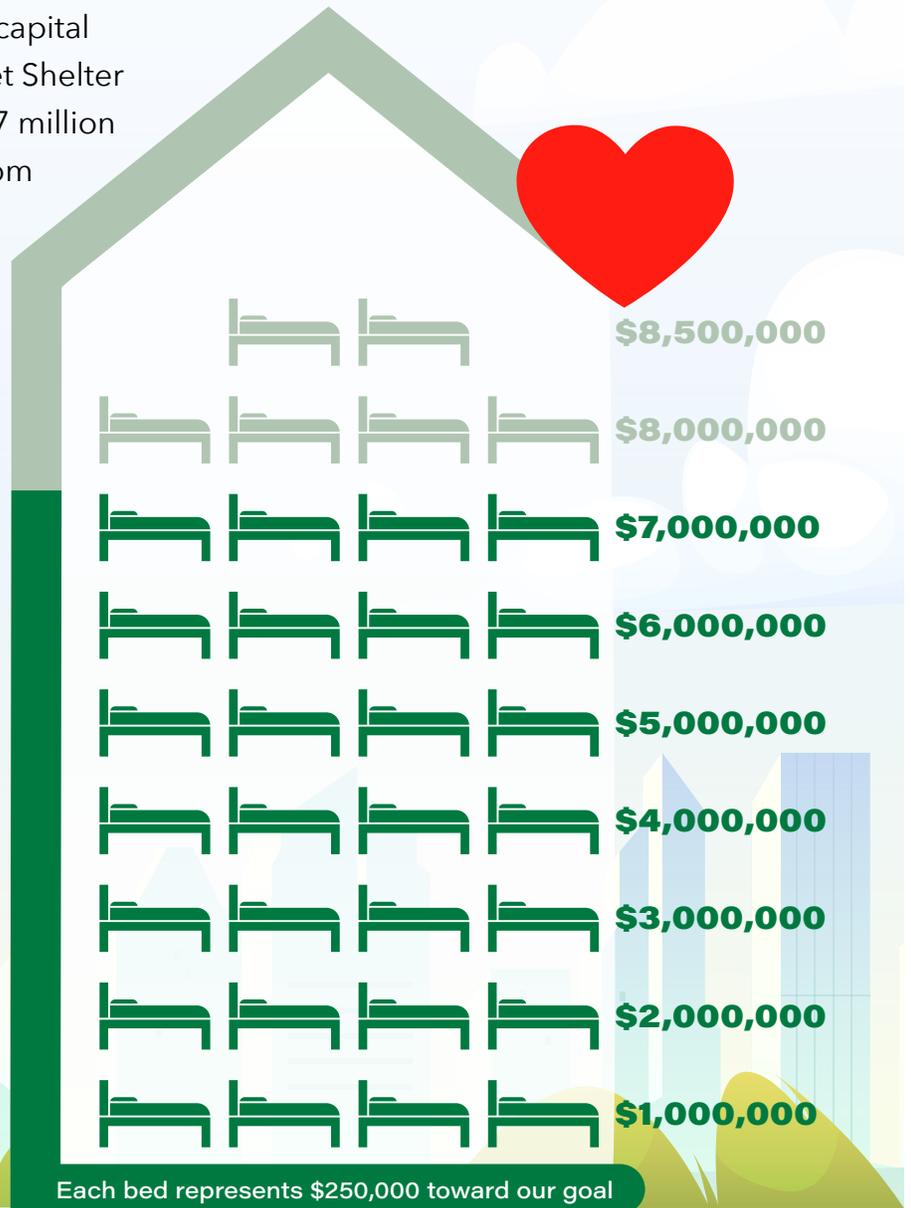
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# Help Make the Spring Street Shelter a Reality

NSKS has embarked on an \$8.5 million capital campaign to make the new Spring Street Shelter a reality. We have received more than \$7 million in funding thus far, including support from state and local government, Nashua area businesses and foundations, and many generous individuals.

Please consider a gift to help us reach the finish line! There are a variety of ways to support the project, from outright gifts to pledges, which can be fulfilled over three years, and gifts of stock. The building has a wide range of naming opportunities, and all gifts of \$5,000 and more will be recognized on a centrally located dedicatory plaque.



To learn more, please contact:

Susannah Abbott, Director of Development  
susannah@nsks.org or 603.889.7770 x120

or visit our website at <https://nsks.org/campaign>



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## Major Campaign Donors to Date

### NH CDFA tax credits:

Alpha Chem, Inc.  
Bar Harbor Savings Bank  
Brady Sullivan Properties (670, LLC)  
Eaton & Berube (Marc Berube)  
Franklin Savings Bank  
Logical Innovations LLC  
Lori Lambert  
Merrimack County Savings Bank

### Major Donations:

Anonymous (2)  
The Barker Foundation  
Travis Dunn and Camille Pattison  
Jim Doll  
Bob and Deb Goldstein Foundation  
Charitable Fund  
Steven Hagan  
Housing Action NH  
Linda Kipnes  
NeighborWorks Southern NH  
NEXtera Energy Foundation  
Marilyn Piekarski  
Albert Savage  
Sisters of Mercy

### Grants:

Federal Home Loan Bank (AHP grant)  
Fidelity Foundation  
Nashua Community Development Block Grant  
Grant  
National Historic Tax Credits  
NH Community Development Block Grant  
NH Community Development Finance Authority  
NH Housing Finance Authority

## Campaign Committee

### Joe Bates

Co-chair

### Jenn Morton

Co-chair

### Linda Bennett

Board of Directors

### Joel Burns

Board of Directors

### Marc Berube

### Lisa Christie

## Campaign Staff

### Michael Reinke

Executive Director

### Susannah Abbott

Director of Development

### Meghan Bolton

Community Outreach Coordinator

### Erika Cross MacDonald

Director of Finance & Administration

### Carol Weeks

Director of Communications, Events and Volunteers

### Melinda Willis

Financial Assistant/Donor Database Specialist

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### Krishna Mangipudi

Vice President

### Michael "Jerry" Ryan

Treasurer

### Madeleine LaRose

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### Keith Bagley

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### Derek Bruinooge

### Joel Burns

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### Shoshanna Kelly

### Janet Polaneczky

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# Campaign Timeline

A. Quiet Phase / Leadership Giving - 2020 through March 2021

B. Public Phase - April 2021 through December 2022

## Meeting the Need in our Community

The Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter helped Adam and Emma—and so many more—to survive a time of crisis. Their experience with NSKS helped them to avoid the long-term trap of hunger, homelessness, and dependency. With your support, even more homeless individuals and families in Nashua will find hope and secure a stable future.

As we reflect back on the legacy of The Sacred Heart Elementary School, we wonder what people will think 100 years from now about our efforts to help those who need us. We hope they will approve of our intentions and our actions. We see a new day for the men, women, and children experiencing homelessness in our community, where everyone has a warm, supportive place to rest their head.

