

New Life Mission's Community Care & Share set April 9–10 at Hilton Melbourne, fundraiser titled 'A Million Dreams' — open to public, host a table, be a sponsor

By Ken Datzman

MELBOURNE — For the past 17 years, New Life Mission has been at the forefront of breaking the cycle of homelessness in the community by providing shelter, support, and life-skills training to homeless women with children.

The private nonprofit organization has a history of successes. It teaches families how to become self-sufficient and live independently without government assistance. Ninety-percent of the families who graduate from New Life Mission's program do not return to homelessness.

Homelessness is expensive for a community. Studies show that a chronically homeless person can cost a community from \$35,000 to more than \$85,000 annually in emergency services, health care, and other services, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

New Life Mission plays a role turning families from public service users into taxpayers and consumers, boosting the local economy.

"Breaking the cycle of homelessness transforms lives by reducing trauma, improving health, and breaking generational patterns," said Joshua "Josh" Adams, who was a New Life Mission board member for six years and continues his involvement with the organization today.

"It creates a positive ripple effect throughout a community. And New Life Mission is having a positive impact on the community through its work. The families are not only breaking the cycle of homelessness, but are also breaking the cycle of despair and everything that homelessness creates. There have been many New Life Mission success stories."

People who attend New Life Mission's Community Care & Share luncheon will hear firsthand one of those success stories. This year's event is titled "A Million Dreams" and is presented by State Farm's Robert Ranew. Community Care & Share is from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. April 9–10 at the Hilton Melbourne. People can attend either day.

For information on being an event sponsor, visit www.newlife-mission.org/ccs. Donations can also be made at that site.

Table hosts play a crucial role in New Life Mission's annual fundraiser. Hosts are asked to invite nine of their friends who would make a financial contribution to New Life Mission at the luncheon. You can host a table yourself, with a friend or with your spouse. Reach out to CCS@NewLife-Mission.org to learn more about hosting a table. There is no cost associated with hosting a table.

"We typically have around 800 people attend Community Care & Share over the two days," said Staci Donovan, director of development for New Life Mission, whose nonprofit organization does not receive government funding and relies on private donations from businesses and individuals.

"We are inviting the community to be part of this story and fundraiser. There will be a complimentary lunch. Toward the end of the program people will be asked to donate to New Life Mission."

"This event raises a significant portion of New Life Mission's annual budget," said Dr. Diana Adams, a



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

New Life Mission, a nonprofit entity that does not receive government funding, will host its annual Community Care & Share luncheon April 9–10 at the Hilton Melbourne. People can attend either day. There is no charge. A complimentary lunch will be served and the program will feature speakers. Josh and Dr. Diana Adams are the event co-chairs. Josh is holding Vito, who the Adams' recently adopted.

New Life Mission board member who is co-chairing this year's event, A Million Dreams, with her husband Josh Adams.

"This fundraiser plays an important role in our mission. It is purposely saying to the community 'partner with us' so that we can continue uplifting mothers and their children as they continue to grow."

Dr. Adams serves as deputy mayor and is a council member for the City of West Melbourne. She earned her doctorate degree in public administration from Valdosta State University, with a focus on public sector management.

Her award-winning doctoral research analyzed organizational and community data from Family Promise of Brevard to evaluate program effectiveness for families experiencing homelessness.

Josh and Dr. Adams are active in the community as

volunteers and are licensed foster parents in Brevard. They adopted baby Vito at last year's "Celebration of Adoption" at the USSAA Space Coast Complex. The event is sponsored annually by locally based Family Partnerships of Central Florida, whose chief executive officer is Phil Scarpelli.

New Life Mission's Community Care & Share is an inspiring event that draws community leaders and professionals in support of an organization whose families work through four levels of the program.

They have access to case management services, mental health counseling, financial coaching, no-cost child care, educational opportunities, and employment assistance.

Financial literacy is another component that is tied

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to homelessness and generational poverty. Financial and education experts say that one way to break the cycle of generational poverty is through education.

Financial strains such as debt or unemployment are significant risk factors for becoming homeless.

With the tagline of "Transforming Homeless Families in Brevard County," New Life Mission addresses issues that cause homelessness, including financial literacy education. New Life Mission offers "financial literacy coaching."

One of New Life Mission's hands-on programs is the Transformed Shop, a social enterprise that empowers women by teaching them sewing and crafting skills. The shop sells handmade, upcycled products, such as denim tote bags and lanyards, providing therapeutic healing and a pathway to financial self-sufficiency for the women who are students in the program.

The products are sold at transformedshop.com and at local community events to help fund the New Life Mission program. Currently, New Life Mission has 27 families in its program. They are making strides to improve their lives.

"We believe the way we have structured our program — with wraparound services and increasing our mental health services, plus having on-site child care at no cost for the families — has driven our success," said Amy Lyon, New Life Mission's chief executive officer.

She added, "New Life Mission added child care three years ago when we opened the Kids Academy. We are going even deeper with the services we offer to ensure that mothers do not go back to experiencing generational poverty."

This year's Community Care & Share theme — A Million Dreams — reminds people that when families are stabilized and given the chance to heal, they are free to dream again, said Donovan.

"On the Space Coast, we are known for making the 'impossible possible. We launch rockets and are the hub of human spaceflight. Those who went to the moon launched from here," she said.

"Brevard County is a place where people literally reach for the stars. At New Life Mission, we believe that same community spirit can help launch families into a new future. If there is any community that understands dreams, it's ours," she added.

Donovan said when families find stability "children succeed in school, women are employed, dependence on public systems decreases, and communities become safer and stronger."

Donovan also emphasized the fact that New Life Mission does its work without government funding.

"Our work is supported entirely by private donors, churches, and community partners that believe in strong communities and transformation."

"When a community invests in struggling families, the return is stronger children, stronger parents, and a stronger future for all of us," she added.

Addressing the root causes of homelessness for one family removes the stigma and fosters a more empathic, connected, and resilient community.

Donovan said A Million Dreams "isn't just a fundraiser, it's an invitation for the community to be part of restoring families."

"When families are stably housed, children face fewer disruptions in their education, improving their school performance," said Dr. Adams, whose honors include having been presented the Zonta Yellow Rose Award of Excellence for Community Service and the

Stephen R. Wise Disability Advocacy Award, which is given annually by the Florida Rehabilitation Council and honors Wise, who served in the Florida House of Representatives and Florida Senate.

She singled out the New Life Mission board and the staff for "driving forward the organization's mission."

The 2026 board of directors includes: Dustin Hagy, chair; Kristina Talbot, vice chair; Steve Bierbrunner, treasurer; and Lori Conte, secretary.

The board members are: Lindsay Aviles, George

Borell, Pati Chaffiot, Kevin Downs, Jennie Kriete, Dedra "Dee" Sibley, Ginny Whitley, and Dr. Adams.

"New Life Mission helps to create dreams that seem impossible, and that is because of the community," said Josh Adams. "Members of the community are stepping up to help with New Life Mission projects and their support is making a huge difference. We're looking forward to two exciting days of A Million Dreams. New Life Mission has a history of tackling the impossible, and succeeding."



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