



# Saint Stephen's Way

A Community for Homeless Families with School Children

Fall 2018

NEWSLETTER

Premier Issue

<https://www.ssway.org/>

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## OUR MISSION

**Saint Stephen's Way** provides affordable housing, along with supportive services, to homeless families referred by the Brevard School System.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

### Executive Director

John Farrell

### President

Eddie Struttmann

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Dave Myler

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Tom Boyle

Linda Lees

Bob McCarthy

Jan McCarthy

Brian Bussen

Glenda Shirhall

## Origins: Why Saint Stephen's Way? ...

**Homelessness is hardship. Homeless families with school children is tragic.** In 2016, Eddie Struttmann learned of a local family of four who became homeless and could not find shelter. Not wanting their two infant children to live on the street, the mother and father sought help at a local fire department to place their children into someone else's care. Instead, Genesis House, who focuses on helping homeless mothers and their children, took those three in—but the father ended up living on the street. Eventually the family was reunited after an apartment was found for them, but imagine the emotional stress of living through that! "That story got me started," says Eddie Struttmann. "You don't want to separate a family if you don't have to." So he took the first steps, recruited like-hearted people, and now continues this work as President of Saint Stephens' Way.

**When a family with school age children becomes homeless,** the negative effects of living on the street are compounded. In the 2017-2018 school year there were nearly 3,000 homeless school children in Brevard. The previous year, 13% of homeless children failed their grade. Mark Broms, Executive Director of Brevard Homeless Coalition sees the need for shelter daily. "Right now we try to get people into permanent housing situations quickly, but lack of affordable housing is making that impossible." What's needed, says Mark, is more transitional housing "where service providers around families can discuss what their next steps should be to find more permanent housing moving forward."

**Saint Stephen's Way (SSWAY) was created to meet an unmet need:** affordable, dignified, and safe transitional housing for homeless families with school children. **Want to join in, learn more, or donate?** See the contact info top-left under the logo.

## Who Will Saint Stephen's Way Serve? ...

**SSWAY focuses on helping families with school children who face homelessness.** The first step is to keep the family together in safe, wholesome, and affordable housing. Next is counseling and assistance through our "Trans4mational Life Program" (TLP) where trained services providers work with the family to tailor their optimal path toward a better and more stable future. Program objectives include: economic/financial stability through career development, budgeting, and a savings plan; physical wellness through a healthy lifestyle; create a family health care plan; family social skills and team building; intellectual development through continuing education; and emotional/spiritual development through faith-based decision-making skills and spiritual mentoring.

**Achieving these objectives for these families is more than hard work, it's a calling.** Do you feel a call to be a part of SSWAY? If so, please don't hesitate to call 321-802-3818 or send an email to [office@ssway.org](mailto:office@ssway.org). You can help us make a difference for a family in real need.

## Where Will the Housing be Built?...

**SSWAY recently acquired an undeveloped piece of property in the Crane Creek area of Melbourne.** From 1948 to 1978 this land was owned by medical missionary Dr. Nellie Holman and her husband, Lincoln, a civil engineer. When Nellie became a widow, she bequeathed that property to the Tabernacle Church of Melbourne with the promise that it would only be used to continue God's work. The Tabernacle Church retained the property until it was made available to SSWAY, who intends to fulfill that promise made 40 years ago!

Now, the SSWAY vision is to build as many as 32 apartment-like family units on a piece of land. Plans for these dwellings are being drawn up now (see the "Developing Affordable Housing: The Plan" top of page 2).

# Developing Affordable Housing: The Plan

**It seems like only yesterday** that Eddie Struttman shared his vision with a few good souls who joined their hearts and minds to help create SSWAY. In time, more people joined in, including legal professionals, experienced non-profit and ministry leaders, engineers, architects, contractors, Brevard Public School officials, and a host of volunteers, all eager to help realize the vision.

**Today the vision has become a mission.** The People of Destiny Christian Fellowship Church donated more than eight acres of land; eighteen agencies, ministries and other charitable organizations have pledged their services and support; growing numbers of people have embraced the vision, some providing their talents, others their time, and still others their treasure. We have truly witnessed God's love in action through his faithful, obedient and action-oriented servants.

**In the first half of 2018,** Ken LaBron of C.A.G. Carabeño Architectural Group drafted plans for the Crane Creek property for the Advisory Board (see "Where Will the Housing be Built?..." bottom of page 1). These draft plans had three floor plan options, each a 3-bedroom single-story dwelling, and a site plan of the property with 32 units, road access, parking, and a separate building as a community center and meeting place.

**On July 31<sup>st</sup>,** John Farrell, Tom Boyle, Brian Bussen, Ken Lebron and Kim Rezanka met with Cindy Dettmer and Cheryl Dean of the Planning and Zoning Department for the City of Melbourne. The purpose of the meeting was to present the plans, goals and mission of SSWAY to city officials and obtain their thoughts, comments, ideas and suggestions prior to a formal presentation to the Planning Board. The meeting was very fruitful as Cindy and Cheryl were enthusiastic about our plans, affirming our goals and encouraging us in the SSWAY mission.

**A second meeting on August 8<sup>th</sup> with Planning and Zoning experts Cindy and Cheryl** focused on questions from the first meeting. Both of them were again extremely helpful with suggestions and ideas, especially on the site plan. Then on August 27<sup>th</sup>, Ken Lebron sent the proposed site plan to Cindy and Cheryl for their review and critique.

Currently, Ken Lebron is reworking the plan per the city's guidelines, which means some of the dwellings may need to become two-story units. In any case, Ken and the Board members are eagerly working to obtain a city approved Master Plan as soon as possible. Hopefully that will happen very soon so clearing the land and construction work will begin early this Fall.

## ADVISORY BOARD

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Rev. Garry Edwards  
Rick Thompson

## Partners & Support Services to Succeed!

**Starting a new 501(c)(3) is one thing. Sustaining the enterprise is quite another!** SSWAY will be successful only if the families it will serve succeed, and that cannot happen without the support services from community partners! Below are each of the logos of these eighteen partners who are ready to support the TLP objectives (described in "Who Will Saint Stephen's Way Serve? . . ." middle of page 1). You can find these logos on the SSWAY web site (<https://www.ssway.org/>) under "What We Do/Support Services" where you can click each one and learn more about them.

With such solid partners, plus the generosity and support of our community, SSWAY will soon be helping homeless families with school children find their path to stability and success.

