

LYDIA'S HOUSE // SUMMER 2013



1000 SEEDS PLANTED



LYDIA'S HOUSE *offering a nurturing home for women and children in crisis and transition*

## *Join us in prayer*

For the women of our city who live in fear of where they will sleep tomorrow; for children with no address

For the many who have come alongside Lydia's House, laboring, organizing, cooking, planning and sacrificing

For those whose work is with and for the poor, especially Catholic Worker Houses, their workers and guests

For the future of Lydia's House. For the guests who will come. For the organizations we will partner with. For the lives that will be changed—lives of those who have much and those who have little.

For gratitude for what has come; For grace in what is needed

LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYERS



photos from The Feast of St. Lydia in January and our house blessing in May



## 1000 SEEDS PLANTED

Over the last month Meridith and I have joked that Lydia's House is on tour. We have gray folders that we give out at events that have budgets and basic information in them, and often we are putting these together as we drive to a church or coffee shop or wherever the next presentation will be. Paper is in a pile in my lap, and running over into the car console. It's been kind of frantic as we meet with groups nearly every other night of the week. Many of you have held us in this crazy season, by placing the last minute donor card order or bringing the desserts or loaning us your projector and giant screen (you know who you are, and thank you). Others of you have surprised us, by adopting rooms, sending second and third donations, volunteering to decorate, or spending your weekends extracting poison ivy from the backyard.

As we haphazardly make our way across the city, showing photos, speaking to groups, and sharing our needs, we've thought a lot about the farming and gardening metaphors in the Bible. It seems that this season of life we are sowers. On whose ears will the Good News of Lydia's House fall? Which seed will find fertile ground and grow?

The seeds we've planted include stories of the calls we are already receiving for housing for women with children who are in desperate straits—living in

cars, homeless with newborns, living in a motel with six kids. We have become their voice because, Lord knows, they don't have time to go on tour or make folders or worry about who's in charge of dessert. Their needs are profound, and it is for them that we've taken this big bag of seed and gone out sowing, in Anderson Township and Pleasant Ridge, to churches, to individuals, to foundations. We've answered emails and phone calls and fielded potential furniture donations and been overwhelmed writing many, many thank you notes (this is a good problem to have).

WE'VE HAULED OUT THE GIANT GARBAGE CANS FULL OF YARD WASTE AND LEFTOVER HOUSE JUNK WEEK AFTER WEEK, BELIEVING IN FAITH THAT THE FUNDS WILL COME TO MOVE FORWARD— TO EXTEND THE METAPHOR, THAT A SURPRISING GARDEN IS ABOUT TO POP UP IN A LOVELY AND UNEXPECTED WAY.

And now we wait for something to sprout. We have plumbing quotes in hand and permits and budgets; we've hauled out the giant garbage cans full of yard waste and leftover house junk week after week, believing in faith that the funds will come to move forward—to extend the metaphor, that a surprising garden is about to pop up in a lovely and unexpected way.

So it is at this point that we'd like to ask you to come along with us, to step out in faith, and consider giving specifically to our renovation project. We need about \$40,000 more to

make Lydia's House both livable and hospitable, and to actually be able to respond to the desperate calls we are receiving. Enclosed is a donor card that offers a few options for giving, and a return envelope if you're able to join us in this way.

**Let's grow something beautiful together.**

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen,  
on behalf of us all at Lydia's House



The Mitchell-Eilerman family, co-founders, at the future home of Lydia's House.

## LYDIA'S HOUSE TIMELINE:



**January 2012:** Mitchell Eilerman family and Meridith Owensby begin serious conversations about starting a house of hospitality for homeless women.

**March 2012:** Rick Boydston, JD is brought on board, and the small group begins considering properties to house four women plus up to six children and two live in volunteers.

**May 2012:** Norwood Building Commissioner is consulted to determine feasibility of locating within the Norwood city limits. The ministry is christened "Lydia's House," referencing the New Testament story of Lydia, a woman who welcomes the apostles into her home after hearing the Good News from Paul (Acts 16:13-15).

**June 2012:** First newsletter is sent to potential funders and supporters.

**July 2012:** Articles of Incorporation are filed with the Secretary of State of Ohio and a Code of Regulations is adopted.

**September 2012:** Form 1023, Application for Recognition of exemption Under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, is submitted to the IRS.

**October 2012:** 501(c)(3) status is granted. Meetings are held with Interfaith Hospitality Network and Catholic Charities refugee relief to establish the groundwork for future partnerships.

**November 2012:** First donations are received. The board of Lydia's House begins conversations with the nascent young adult formation ministry of the Episcopal Church and agrees to pursue a partnership.

**January 2013:** Enlarged board of Lydia's House holds its first meeting. 2013 financial goals are established with the hopes of opening the doors of Lydia's House to homeless guests in January 2014. Feast of St. Lydia event invites in a larger support base, and raises \$17,000 toward the purchase of a home.

**February 2013:** Remainder of funds is raised and Lydia's House makes an offer on 2024 Mills Ave. of \$40,000. The offer is accepted, contingent on zoning approval.

**March 2013:** The trustees of Lydia's House and 18 neighborhood supporters testify in front of the Board of Zoning Appeals to request a variance to increase occupancy on 2024 Mills Ave. The Board votes unanimously to allow the variance.

**April 2013:** The Trustees of Lydia's House close on 2024 Mills Ave. Renovation documents are submitted to the City of Norwood.

**May 2013:** An ecumenical prayer service is held to bless and dedicate the house; renovations begin.



# THE GIFTS OF THIS SEASON

by Meridith Owensby

When we set out to create Lydia's House I can honestly say I didn't give much thought to all the things that would have to happen before we could welcome our first guests. It can sometimes feel disheartening to look at pages and pages of to do lists with tasks like "Email J about event" when I can no longer remember who J is or what event I was referencing. However, many blessings have emerged in this introductory period and there are abundant reasons to be grateful, including:

## Saying it with Scripture

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." "I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." These scriptures and more have been bandied about in the past month, in reference to one situation or another in which we've found ourselves.

## Enhanced Prayer Life

Between the needs and the praises there is always something Lydia's House-related that needs prayer. The little prayer circle that meets every weekday before work has heard a multitude of requests and petitions and has rejoiced when those prayers have been answered. There are also the prayers before meetings, the prayers en route to sharing engagements, and the pop up prayers (God, please help! Thank you Lord!) to round out the experience.

## Overt Dependency on God

From the beginning we've known that we would not be able to open Lydia's House ourselves. Speaking for myself, so many of the things we're currently doing do not play to my strengths. Public speaking has never been my wheel house, and asking people for money less so. But for every shortfall or skill deficit we've always had someone come to our aid or some miracle fill in the gap, which leads me to my final reason for gratitude...

## Ample Opportunity to See the Best in Others

Do you want to meet talented, generous people? Do you want to be awed by your friends and family members? I recommend that you start a house of hospitality. We could speak at length about how many interpersonal miracles we have seen in this short time. Our friends have given beyond what we thought they could manage,

humbling us in the process. Complete strangers have showed up right when we needed them, bearing gifts of funds and skills. It's as if I've donned a pair of glasses that enhances everyone's goodness. It's an incredible vantage point from which to view the world and I'm flat-out floored by it on a regular basis.

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Perhaps the best news is that these salutary effects are available to absolutely everyone involved. If your prayer life needs rejuvenation, if you need to experience some life-affirming goodness in these frequently difficult days, please come join us in our pursuit of this dream. We need you, and I can guarantee you'll find unexpected gifts of your own in this effort.



Meridith Owensby,  
Co-founder of Lydia's  
House.

## PRESSING NEEDS:

### **Renovation Services**

We've bought a house that needs lots of work. If you are a skilled professional in drywall, landscaping, electrical, tile, painting, carpentry... we need you. If you can donate skilled services please contact Ben Eilerman at [ben.eilerman@gmail.com](mailto:ben.eilerman@gmail.com)

### **Fundraisers**

We would love if you would host a fundraiser for us. We'd also be more than happy to come out to speak at your church, small group, or basically at any venue where you think "maybe they'd like to hear about Lydia's House."

### **A Vehicle**

Ideally we want a minivan or some other 7+ seater in pretty good condition. We don't need this right away but hope for it by the time we take in guests.

### **2 Washers and 2 Dryers**

We need one stackable and one set of side by sides, all working and in good condition. If you have these now we will find a place to store them.

### **Folding Tables**

In the coming season we'll be hosting many events at the house and we're looking for a donation of 4 long tables.

### **Furniture/Household Items**

At the moment, we don't need these because we don't have storage. We will need these starting in October of this year. If you have something and you think "this is really great and I'd love to give it to Lydia's House" just wait--we'll be needing a whole lot of these kinds of items come fall.

## REGISTER YOUR KROGER PLUS CARD TO BENEFIT LYDIA'S HOUSE

Visit [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com). Click the Enroll button on the bottom right corner of the web page. **Enter organization number 83657**. Lydia's House should populate in the form with our administrative address on Courtland Ave. Save your selection and continue with completing the registration.

If you do not have an online account for your Kroger Plus Card, you will need to have your card number available and provide your email address.

If you don't remember your card number because you use only your phone number at the register, call 800-576-4377, select option 4 to get your Kroger Plus card number.

If you do not have a Kroger Plus Card, cards are available at the store customer service desk. Thank you for your support!



Laura Menze, a dear friend of Lydia's House, with the original piecing of the quilt that will hang in our entry way



## ROOM ADOPTION UPDATE

In April we launched a room adoption program, asking families, friend groups and churches to “adopt” spaces of the house. Many have responded and pledged to raise funds for our renovation.

### **We’d like to thank the following:**

St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House- Dining Room (\$10,000, *fundraising is complete*)

Friends of Meridith- Attic (\$10,000)

Bellarmino Chapel- Living Room (\$10,000)

Bethany’s Friends – Backyard and Children’s play area (\$5,000)

The Mitchell/Stehlin Family – Laundry Room (\$2,500, *fundraising is complete*)

Vineyard Central Church – Entryway (\$2,500, *fundraising is complete*)

Lydia’s Circle of Business and Professional Women – Office (\$2,500)

The Lockridge Family and Norwood Grows Garden Program-

Frontyard and Gardens (\$2,500)

**We still need adopters** for four bedrooms and the kitchen. Please let us know if you’d like to get involved in this way by emailing [Maryellen@stlydiashouse.org](mailto:Maryellen@stlydiashouse.org). If you’d like your contribution to be applied to one of these spaces, please note that on your return card.



Lydia's House supporters plant flowers at 2024 Mills Avenue

## LYDIA'S HOUSE CALENDAR

**June 29/30** - Work days. Please contact [info@stlydiashouse.org](mailto:info@stlydiashouse.org) if you can come. We need both skilled and unskilled volunteers, age 16 and over. The work will be dirty so bring gloves, wear long pants and closed toe shoes, and be prepared for heavy lifting. We'll work Saturday 9-6 (lunch will be provided) and Sunday 1-6.

**July 14**- Calista Smith and the Lydia's Circle of Business and Professional Women will be hosting a "Wine and Dime" at Calista's home to raise funds for the office adoption. Email [chs@chsmithassociates.com](mailto:chs@chsmithassociates.com) for more info.

**July 20**- Bellarmine Chapel young families will be hosting a cookout and carnival at 2024 Mills Ave in Norwood to raise awareness of Lydia's House and funds for the living room adoption. 4-7pm.

**July 27**- Bethany's Friends are doing a wine tasting fundraiser at the Speckled Bird Café (1766 Mills Ave) in Norwood to support their adoption of the backyard and children's play area. 7- 9pm.

**August 3**- Catholic Mass at 2024 Mills Ave, celebrating the Catholic Feast Day of St. Lydia. 4pm with dinner to follow. All are welcome.

**August 8-11** – Wild Goose Festival. The Mitchell/ Eilerman crew and Meridth will be attending this gathering of Christian communities in Hot Springs, NC. If you will be there let us know!

**August 17** – "Eat Local for Lydia's House" event at Deeper Roots Farm in Mt. Healthy. The Lockridge Family will be preparing a meal of locally grown produce, complemented by Stehlin's Meats of Colerain Township, locally brewed beers and Deeper Roots direct

trade coffee. Proceeds will benefit the front yard and garden adoption. Coursed dinner starts at 7pm. Suggested donation is \$100 per person and seating is limited to 36. RSVP [info@stlydiashouse.org](mailto:info@stlydiashouse.org)

**October 6**- Concert and art event at Redeemer Episcopal Church in Hyde Park. All are welcome. More details to come on our website at [stlydiashouse.org](http://stlydiashouse.org).

**November 7**. Bellarmine Chapel young musicians will be hosting a benefit concert for Lydia's House at Bellarmine Chapel on the Xavier University Campus. 7pm. Entrance is by donation.

**Spring 2014 (date TBD)**- Norwood 5k. A joint effort of Woven Oak Initiatives and Lydia's House, this event will be a fundraiser for a variety of West Norwood projects. To learn more or to volunteer please contact Angela Pancella at [angela@woven oak.org](mailto:angela@woven oak.org).