



My name is Chris Goodson, and I am the Executive Director of McPherson Housing Coalition (MHC). Thank you for allowing me to share with you today. I have been following this committee, and there have been discussions about bringing ideas from outside Kansas to address the housing and homelessness issues facing our State. The answers you are looking for may be right here in your backyard.

I want to share an idea that is working in central Kansas. The MHC project called "The Oak Harbor Cottages". It is a non-congregate family shelter (individual tiny homes) with wrap-around services and case management.

What is unique about this project? Several things separate this village from other traditional shelters:

1. We built the 90-day Shelter to address the growing population of those experiencing homelessness, specifically kids.(see slide)
2. The Shelter was built with partnerships in the local community that included donations and labor. No State or Federal funds were used to construct the one-million-dollar facility. (see slide)
3. In the shelter each family unit is provided a fully furnished tiny home, and they have access to food and personal care items. (see slide)
4. The family works with a case manager to create a personalized plan with wrap-around services to stabilize and become independent.

Why did we build the Shelter?

During COVID-19, we had more and more families contacting MHC for assistance. With the high cost of housing, we could not get them housed fast enough. Therefore, we needed housing or a space to keep the family safe while remaining intact and keeping life as normal as possible for the kids. We looked at the traditional shelter model and wanted to provide kids and families with an alternative. A home that would give them a sense of family life, while keeping them safe, and allowing them to remove roadblocks, rebuild and stabilize. We realized that we had to get creative if we wanted to help families who were homeless or at risk of homelessness from couch surfing, living in cars, or camping. The traditional shelter model does not typically allow families to remain intact, and they may have to leave during the day. The Oak Harbor Cottages solved that problem and gave a family a fighting chance.

How did we build the Shelter?

When we started looking for funding, we could not find State or Local programs to construct a non-congregate shelter. So, we had to get creative and look to our community to build the homes. As we began to share our vision for this project one by one the faith community, local businesses, the McPherson County community foundation and local donors stepped up to help with the project. Many local churches adopted a cottage were they would build the house from

the ground up, picking the colors, decorating, furnishing, and then naming the cottages. Fundraisers and private grants helped fill in the funding gap, suppliers donated materials, and they installed the finishes at no cost. Our partners provided labor, materials, professional services, and more. Once the village was complete, we utilized KHRC and HUD (Emergency Solutions Grant) funds to manage and maintain the Shelter. This funding and 40 community partners allow us to provide case management and wrap-around services.

We built the Shelter because traditional shelters were not private; they separated families who had trauma, and it was difficult for a child to live in one room or a large room with many families. The Cottages allow a family to stay together, have privacy, feel safe, and live life as normal as possible with such things as cooking, cleaning, and schoolwork.

What is Next?

The Oak Harbor cottages are only the beginning of a long journey to bring people to stabilization. Many have experienced trauma and need time to work through complex challenges to find independence. Our newest project, the Sutherland Estates Permanent Supportive Housing Complex, will give them that time as it allows families to continue receiving services while paying only 30% of their income towards their housing costs. For people to gain independence, they need unique housing opportunities and wrap-around services.

My name is Karolyn Moore, and I am the Program Director for McPherson Housing Coalition. We have been working with the homeless and housing insecure in McPherson County for 8 years and the one thing we have learned is you cannot just house a family and walk away thinking whatever problems they faced that caused their homelessness and insecurity will just disappear. Once we place a homeless family into the non-congregate shelter, there are weekly check-in meetings, and we begin hard conversations about what the roadblocks are that they face to be stable and how will you support yourself once MHC can no longer assist you.

A family works with the case manager weekly to create a personalized plan with wrap-around services to stabilize and become independent. With the community services block grant from KHRC and our 40 partners we can provide the services needed. We are able to provide legal assistance for those needing to get a divorce or custody and child support. Mental Health counseling to help sort through emotional and relational issues, let's face it everyone could use support in this area especially after covid. Not all poor people have medical insurance and so we are able to pay for the families to see a doctor or dentist for health issues they may have, medication they may need. Transportation to and from work and appointments is another roadblock if you don't have a vehicle or can't drive because you've lost your license. Childcare is another huge problem many families are facing but the families we work with may have to choose between rent or childcare each month. It's easier to find a job with an address, driver's license, and social security card. However, if you have been locked out of your rental by your landlord, chances are all your important documents were inside.

We are not trained to work with those who are in active addiction or those who are leaving domestic violence, fleeing or are being stalked, however once they are working with an advocate, we help with the housing component.

One family came to us because there was a fire in the neighbors' garage that burned so hot it melted the siding on their apartment building and caught the wood frame on fire. The Red Cross could only put them in a hotel for 2 weeks and then they were on their own. Anyone looking for housing knows that simply is not enough time to find housing. We were able to offer an emergency shelter cottage, where the family could move from survival and crisis thinking and begin to put a plan into place. Their 2 boys were both on the autism spectrum and all the chaos had their routines upset and they were struggling. Within two weeks the behavior of both boys had taken a significant improvement, and they were able to settle back into a routine. The parents both got new jobs with Pfizer and when they moved out 90 days later, they didn't need our assistance any longer.

Another mom with 2 children contacted us when she came home from work and found all her belongings in the front yard. She was behind on rent and while at work the landlord changed the locks and removing the family's items. They moved into the shelter cottages, and we helped

her hire an attorney who took the landlord to court, and she won her case. He had to pay her restitution. She was able to find housing and moved without needing our assistance.

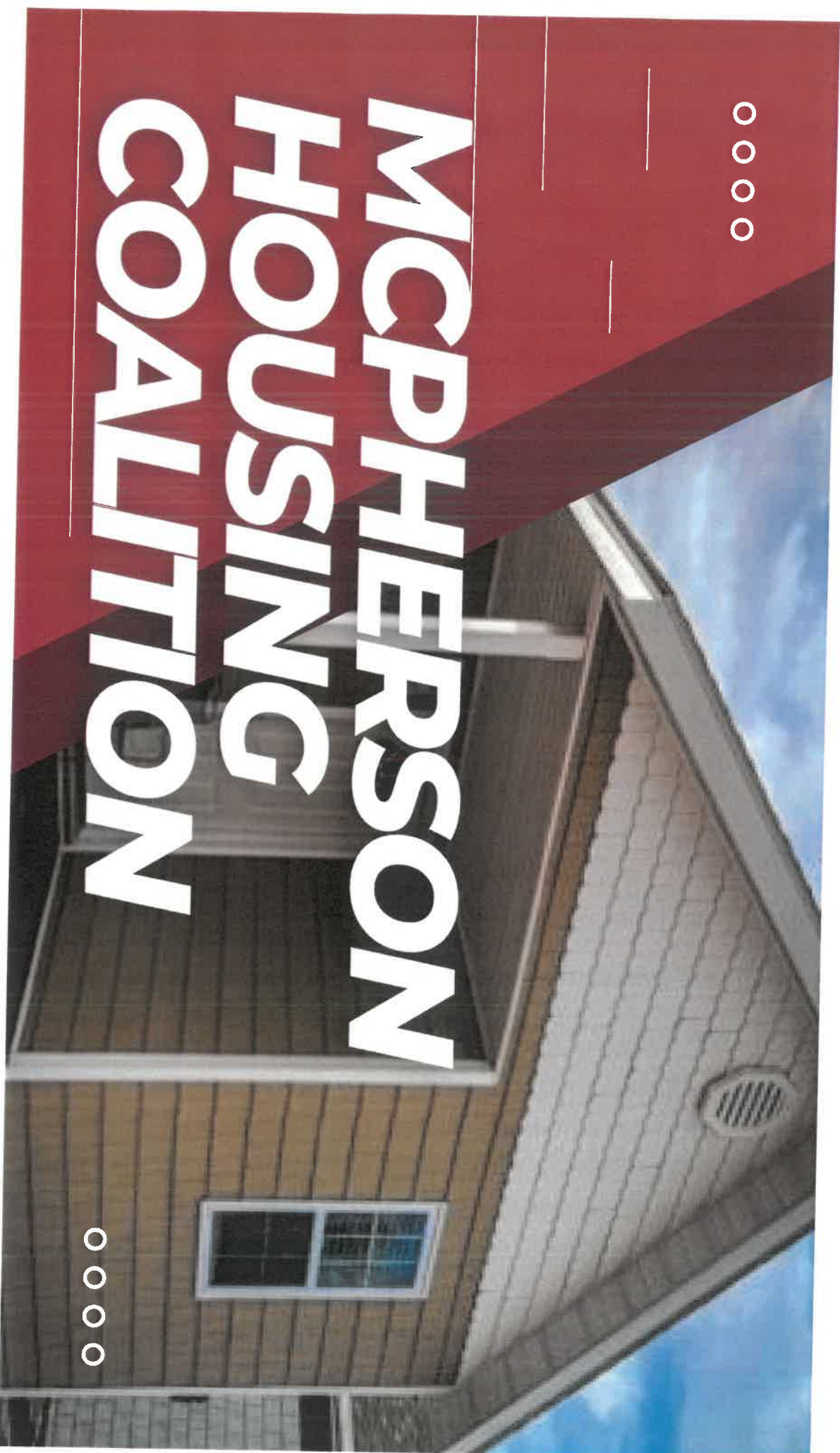
Not every family is able to self-resolve, and if this is the case then MHC works to help them find housing and will continue to meet with the family monthly to continue the support services that were started. If we have the funding, we can continue to assist the family for up to 2 years.

In the beginning, we had a 38% success rate. Now, we are at a 75% success rate. We believe the Oak Harbor Cottages model can be scaled to address homelessness in communities in Kansas.

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MCPHERSON HOUSING COALITION

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What is Working in Central Kansas ?

The Oak Harbor Cottages (Non Congregate Shelter)

What is unique about the project?

- Family Friendly Shelter
 - Community Involvement
 - Individualized Units
 - Support Services
-

Oak Harbor Cottages Emergency Shelter





Local Churches



Business Community



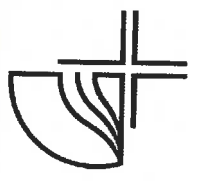
Community Engagement



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COUNTRYSIDE COVENANT CHURCH
McPHERSON, KANSAS



THE FINISH FLOORING INTERIORS



CertainTeed
SAINT-GOBAIN



McPHERSON COUNTY Community Foundation



Peoples Bank and Trust



Ian Hartley Heating and Air
Gary Boesker Plumbing
Royal Mellingier Electrician
Precision Dirt Works
Raber Roofing & Construction
New Gottland Evangelical Covenant Church
Freedom Chapel
United Center Mennonite Church
Lone Tree Mennonite Church
St. Stephens Charitable Trust
Louie's Service Center
MANY volunteers and individual donors



Benefits of the Shelter

- Fully Furnished
- Privacy
- Life is Normalized
- Families Stay Together

Oak Harbor Cottages



Oak Harbor Cottages



Living Room



Kitchen



Bath

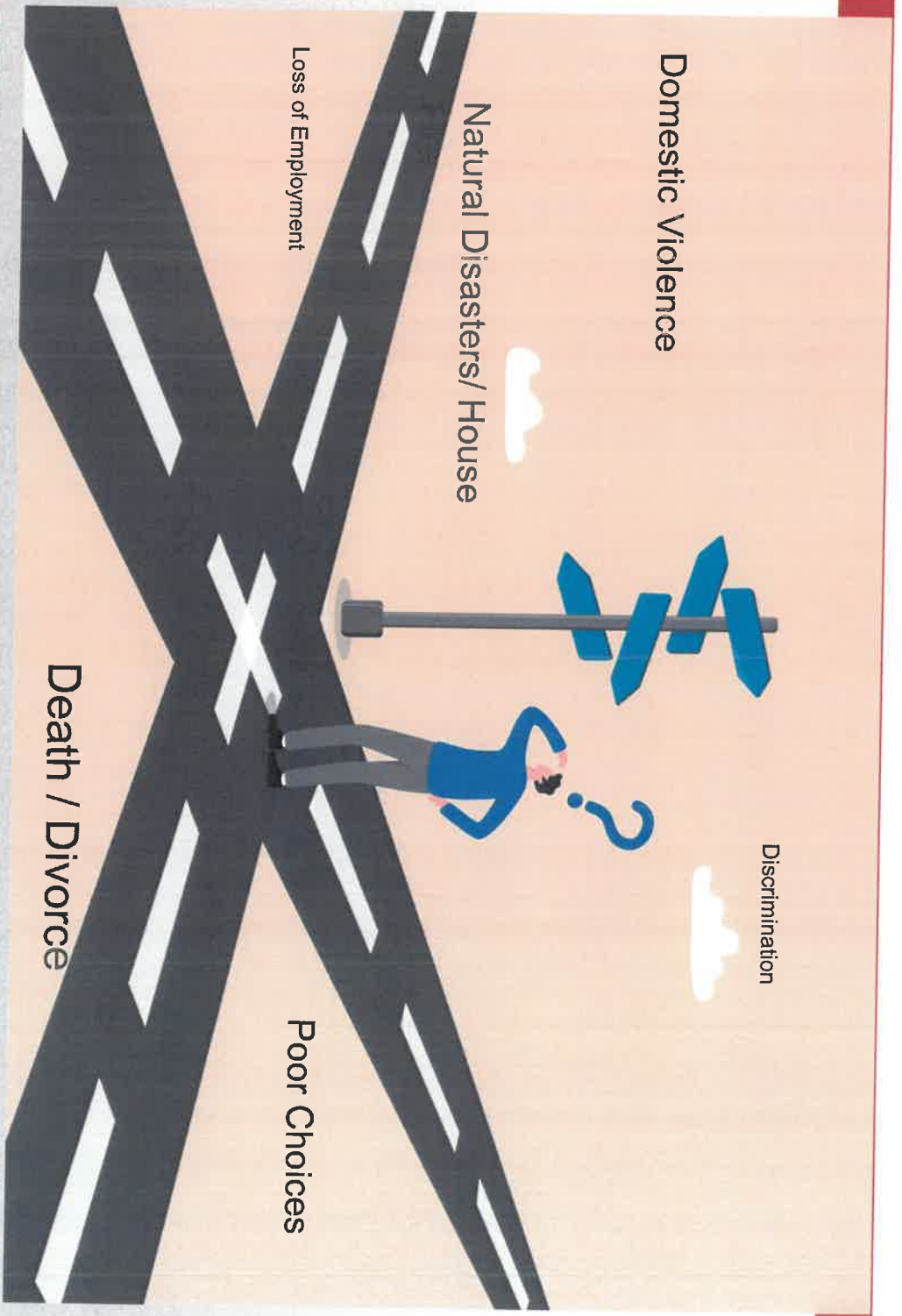




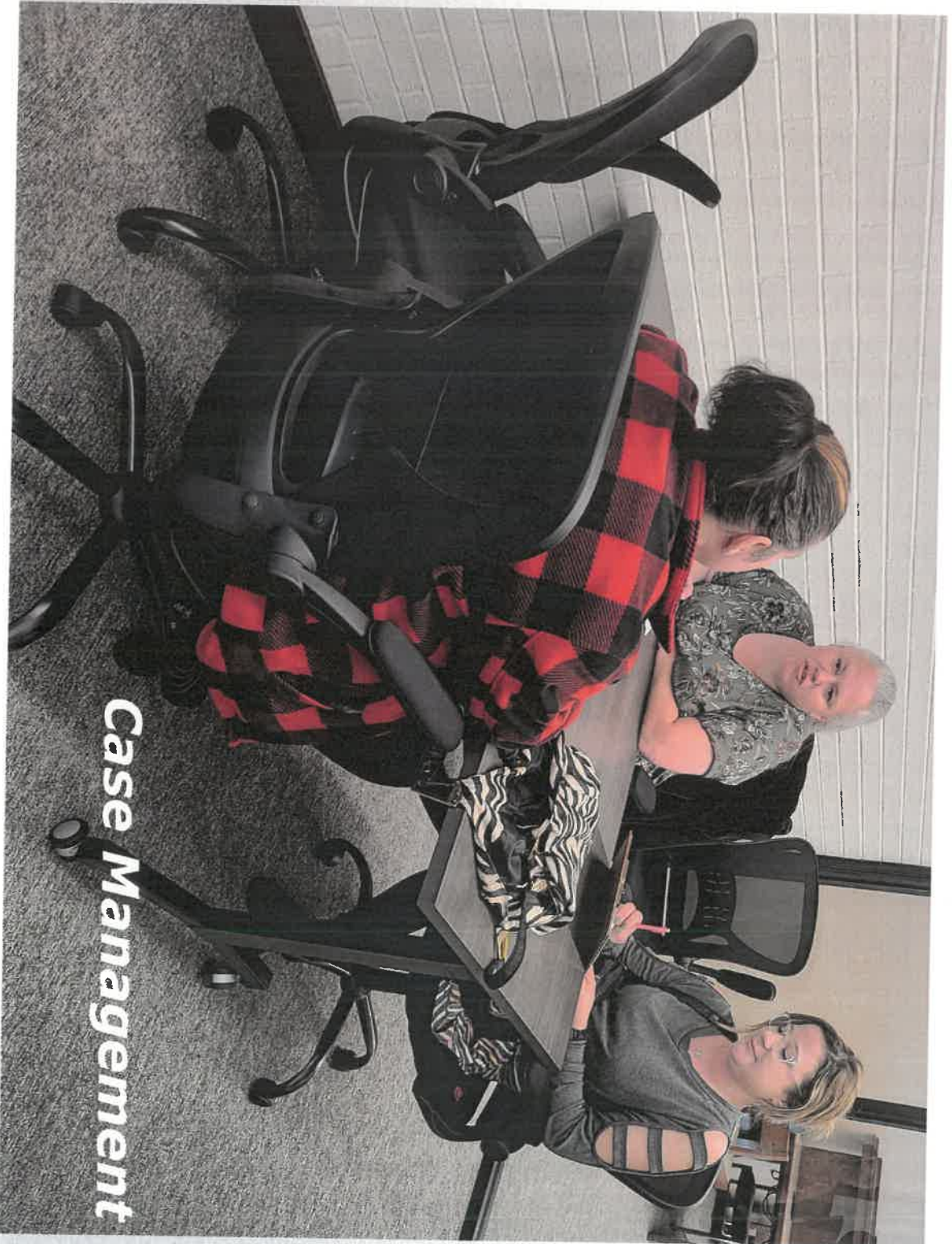
Laundry Area



Closet



Road to Homelessness can come from many different directions



Case Management

Housing Stability

- Employment
- Education
- Childcare
- Access to needed resources
(Legal, medical/dental services,
mental health services,
transportation)
- Permanently housed



Contact Us



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