

## Stories of Hope

### “Lynn”

“They often begin by saying ‘**I thought you were going to pay my rent for me**’, usually there is a story which needs to be explored, as there are a number of issues in their lives that prompted them to seek assistance” noted DeAnna, the full time Prevention Program case manager.

Lynn was the same. She was twenty-four years old, a single mom with an infant. Lynn’s mother had assisted her daughter and grandchild in moving to a small apartment in Appleton. But after several months, Lynn’s mom could no longer afford to provide financial assistance and Lynn fell behind in paying her rent. Actually it was the landlord who referred Lynn to the Prevention Program at the Shelter. When DeAnna spoke to Lynn, it was clear that Lynn did not want to be told what to do, she simply wanted the rent paid! During the first meeting with Lynn, DeAnna made it clear that the Shelter may offer financial assistance if Lynn was able to demonstrate the motivation to make positive changes in her life. DeAnna inquired as to Lynn’s work history—indignant, Lynn retorted “Work!...I don’t work!”

DeAnna went on to discover that Lynn had never worked and had also dropped out of her private high school when her mother could no longer afford to pay. Lynn had refused to attend a public school. DeAnna was insistent that Lynn would have to find child care for the baby and obtain some work, and set out a plan for meeting with Lynn to not only facilitate moving to work, but also to complete her education. Lynn was furious that her child would go into child care, she began shouting accusations at DeAnna of being treated unfairly. DeAnna’s final words to Lynn were “If I can help you in any way, you can call.”

Within two days, Lynn returned to the Shelter and said “I’ve never had anyone speak to me that way.” DeAnna gave Lynn a list of daily assignments to help get her life on track. DeAnna assisted Lynn with referrals to several agencies which provide help such as food, subsidized child care, medical and dental care and job training. Lynn soon had a part time job and enrolled in HSED classes. One of the things DeAnna always supported Lynn with was “You can call me anytime—you will only get the truth.”

With Lynn, the truth hurt-but it was the wake-up call she needed to get her life on track. Lynn did not enter the Shelter, and therefore she is a true success story of the Shelter’s Prevention Program!