Lease-Up Program Helps Clients Step Up to a Better Life.

Angela’s journey at Shelter of Flint began when she and her teenage daughters entered the emergency shelter. Now 42, Angela was diagnosed with Olivopontocerebellar Atrophy or OPCA in early 2013. OPCA is a degenerative disease, causing areas deep in the brain, just above the spinal cord, to shrink. For Angela, who was working in the deli of a local Kroger at the time, OPCA led to a decline in her motor functioning and balance and impacted her ability to work at the same level she had been previously.

Despite her diagnosis, Angela continued to push herself forward each day. She worked as often as she was physically able, but little by little her illness forced her to cut back. Losing hours at work, she found herself in a financial situation from which she could not recover. She had applied for Social Security Disability Insurance when her symptoms began, but she was denied coverage. Her landlord had been working with her to keep her housed, but each month she would fall further behind. Eventually she fell so far behind it was no longer feasible for her to stay in her home and she was faced with eviction.

While in our emergency shelter in June of 2013, Angela was assessed and approved for our Lease-Up program. Lease-Up is a part of our permanent supportive housing program and provides affordable housing coupled with supportive services to our homeless clients with emotional, mental or physical disabilities. Clients may remain in this program for as long as necessary to achieve their goal of sustainable housing.

Angela began working with Lease-Up case manager Tonya, who helped her find an affordable apartment and met with the new landlord to explain the specifics of the Lease-Up program. Tonya also helped her to gather the paperwork necessary to appeal the decision regarding Social Security benefits. She went to court in November 2013 and then awaited the judge’s determination. In February, she received the news that she had been approved for benefits. For Angela, this means that she will be able to catch up on the bills she has struggled with for months.

Though not always genetic, Angela is not the only member of her family diagnosed with OPCA. She lost her mother and uncle to the disease, and her sister and brother have fully developed cases of OPCA. Angela has four daughters, who she says have not yet been tested, but are planning to go to Ann Arbor to be screened for the disease.

Angela thanks Tonya for her support and help in accessing the resources she needs: “She’s on it. I don’t know where I’d be without this program.” She also thanks her anonymous friends who made this past Christmas very special with gifts for her and her daughters through Shelter of Flint’s Adopt a Family program.

Your support of Shelter of Flint makes a difference in the lives of families like Angela’s. Please consider a gift today!
1. Volunteers from First Presbyterian Church of Fenton.  
2. Beautifully wrapped gifts from the Adopt a Family program.  
3. Student volunteers from UM-Flint’s alternative spring break.  
4. Christmas gifts from St. Mary’s Student Parish in Ann Arbor.  
5. One of our new highchairs made possible through a donation from the Wednesday Club of Junior League of Flint.  
6. St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Community of Goodrich is a faithful supporter of Shelter of Flint.  
7. Rep. Dan Kildee, pictured with Shelter of Flint staff, visited the shelter in February.  
8. A client’s work uniform sits on the new dryer from the Wednesday Club.  
9. Gleaner Life – Flint Arbor supports Shelter of Flint with donations and volunteers.  
10. New computers from the Wednesday Club. Clients use these computers to do homework and search for jobs and new housing.

Community support is vital to our mission. Find out how you can make a difference by calling 810.238.4711, ext. 304. Thank you!
THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR GENEROUS DONORS
The Mother’s Day Appeal is a great way to honor someone special in your life. Children at our emergency shelter handcraft artwork and text for a Mother’s Day card, and those who contribute to the Appeal are given the opportunity to have a Mother’s Day card sent to their recipient of choice. Because the card designs focus on appreciation rather than mothers, this fundraiser is great for recognizing anyone special in your life.

When you honor your mother or someone special to you with a donation to Shelter of Flint, we will send a 5x7 professionally finished card, designed by a child staying at the Shelter of Flint, to your loved one on your behalf. Memorial contributions are also gratefully accepted. Please show these families you care by supporting our Mother’s Day Appeal with a gift in the enclosed envelope.

How Can I Help?
To learn about the ways you can help, please contact Meg Sprecher, Development Assistant at msprecher@shelterofflint.org.