

Issue 10, December 29, 2016

OUR HOUSE

IN FOCUS



HOUSING

Meet Lindsey Fizer

The Savings Program

Managing money with
First Security



HUMANS OF OUR HOUSE

Lindsey Fizer

“As long as you have breath in your body, you have the opportunity to do something different. You don’t get many opportunities like this.”

Six days after leaving Shreveport, Louisiana, Lindsey arrived at Our House with her two children, Cerella, 5, and Carlos, 4. “We had been on the streets with our kids for a few years.” Lindsey’s family struggled to make ends meet for years due to her husband’s mental illness. When she called Our House, she learned there were only 3 beds available. Within 20 minutes, Lindsey and her children were on their way. “The taxi driver knew a lot about the shelter I was leaving, and about Our House too, so he gave me a free ride.” At the time, Lindsey had only \$25 dollars left from the last paycheck she had earned in Louisiana. From that point on, she immediately began her hunt for a job. Cerella and Carlos had successfully been enrolled in Little Learners and were adjusting “perfectly.” Lindsey applied for multiple jobs and eventually interviewed for a position at Walgreens on Main Street. It had been a month and a half since she had come to Little Rock when she accepted the job offer.

OUR TEAM

Drew Smith

Housing Case Manager



Team Member Since: 2015
Hometown: Hot Springs, AR

"I love to talk with clients and help them see their own strengths, assets, and tools that they already have. Using a strengths-based approach is so important in helping them never experience homelessness again."

Drew Smith is our case manager for clients in our housing program. Before Our House, Drew served in a program for homeless youth in Oklahoma as well as provided developmental aid to tribal communities in Madagascar. Drew is also the manager of the Savings Program at the shelter. "The Our House Savings program is one of the most vital pieces to the success of our clients. The balance our clients have in their savings is directly correlated to how likely they will be to use our services again." Drew ensures that clients put money each pay period into their savings account as well as helping them plan a budget, pay off fines or debts, and setting goals for their savings. *"Savings is only possible with goals. If you don't have an idea where that money will go someday, you are less likely to put it away. But my primary job is to be an encourager and motivator for our clients. My favorite part of the job is when clients get close to exiting and they thank me, and I get to honestly tell them that they did all the work and should really thank themselves."*

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

The Savings Program

A cornerstone of our housing client's success is the Savings Program. Each resident is required to save 75% of their paycheck each week. After one month of saving, a resident is projected to have at least \$500 in their savings account- according to Economic Policy Institute that is more than 25% of all Americans! Not only will resident's savings provide the necessary protections from different crises that arise, the savings program is incentivized. Once a resident has saved a certain amount and attended the required financial empowerment course in our Career Center, they are able to skip a day of chores, or have a late curfew. As the savings increase, so do the rewards. With several thousands of dollars in savings, residents may skip chores for an entire week or have a 3-day weekend pass. If a resident saves over \$10,000 and completes all financial empowerment classes, they earn a dinner with the team at a restaurant of their choice- a much-deserved celebration!





HUMANS OF OUR HOUSE

Lindsey Fizer

Lindsey and her children, Cerella and Carlos, arrived at Our House on July 29, 2015. They came seeking something better than their years of life on the streets in Shreveport, Louisiana. Carlos and Cerella were enrolled in Little Learners. Lindsey was hired to be a CSR- Customer Service Representative. Now, just over a year since becoming a Walgreens employee, she's still excited to go to work, *"I love my job! I love it! They know I live at Our House, and they're very supportive and helpful."* Lindsey has earned three raises and reports there may be a promotion on the horizon.

"I feel like my old self again. I'm self-motivated. I'm free to do what I know how to do. I've been held back so long I was beginning to wonder if I still had it." She continued, *"I've been able to save a lot of money being here. Many residents scoff at putting back 75% of their income for savings. The amount is not the sacrifice. The sacrifice is doing what you are doing for yourself now and continuing to do it later. I feel like all the hard work is for my children and myself. That's why I did it- for them."* Last week, Lindsey successfully completed the program at Our House and was able to move out of the Family House and into her own place with her children and a bright outlook on life.

OF ALL THE THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT
ARKANSAS,
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE
DIFFERENCE.
THERE IS A SPIRIT OF
TOGETHERNESS HERE.
PEOPLE WITH CHARACTER. AND PEOPLE WHO

CARE.

ARKANSANS WILL GET IN THE TRENCHES
WITH YOU, AND TOGETHER WE'LL FIGHT
OUR WAY OUT.



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PARTNER APPRECIATION

First Security Bank

Our House clients participate in the Financial Empowerment program to build self-sufficiency. First Security Bank is an important partner of the program and provides invaluable support and volunteers to teach classes. They facilitate courses such as Money Smart and Practical Budgeting Skills. "The volunteers from First Security Bank are always enthusiastic and interactive when teaching classes to our clients... we get a lot of positive feedback from our clients that are excited to learn," said Drew Smith, Housing Case Manager. The partnership of First Security Bank plays a vital role in the financial empowerment process that clients use to build a savings and invest in their future.