Just a few months ago, I hit the lowest point in my life. You think you’re at the bottom of the barrel, then you sink deeper.

A single mom escaping a bad situation, I was living with my boys when our rental home was suddenly put up for sale and we were evicted. Health issues kept me out of work a while. I was pouring my heart out to a worker at the food stamp office when she told me to go to MUST.

I knew about MUST because I used to donate clothes there. Now I needed some help. And they gave it to me.

Thanks to the Rapid Rehousing program, I received a hotel voucher and soon got a job across the street. I was quickly promoted and getting stabilized so MUST was able to help me lease a duplex by paying my deposit and first month’s rent.

That changed my life. That’s all I needed. I am now able to sustain my family.

I am extremely grateful. MUST is a God send. I don’t even know how to put it into words. 

-Kim

I MUST tell my story
From Colonel to Case Worker: Serving Veterans Daily

After 31 years in the military, Col. Jan Apo was ready to assimilate back into civilian life with her family, including her three children. She was unsure of a new career but eager to work with an organization that aligned with her values. “I wanted a job I could be passionate about.”

She joined the military at age 17 and retired at 50, starting in the Army as an Artillery Officer then spending much of her career conducting Military Police work. “The military taught me discipline,” she continued. “Through the Army, I learned how to treat people with dignity and respect to achieve the outcomes needed to succeed.”

Upon retirement, Jan began volunteering as a mentor in Veteran’s Court. Through one of her mentees, she was introduced to MUST Ministries and Veteran’s Supportive Housing and discovered an open position as Veteran’s Case Manager. With a vast military background, Jan was ready to apply her knowledge to a new career in social work.

Now, Jan uses what she learned in the military to help former veterans overcome poverty. Every day, she works to build trustworthy relationships by empathizing and connecting with clients who come from a life she knows well. She also helps clients assess their needs and matches resources and actions to accomplish their goals. “My hope is to see our clients be successful and make this a short stay on their life plan,” she explains.

She is already making a huge impact on the veterans and the program. In 2018, the program has served 24 individuals with a 92 percent housing stability rate, and 83 percent of veteran-clients have either maintained or increased their income.

“It’s important to help the clients see that they can be successful despite disabilities.”
LEAVING A VOLUNTEER Legacy

While thousands of volunteers have helped MUST Ministries over the years, perhaps no family has worked from the beginning and so extensively as the Davison siblings.

Their family’s journey with MUST began when their father, Thomas Garth, volunteered with Bethany Methodist Church to wash clothes and spend the night at the Safe Night of Rest (S.N.O.R.) once a month. Thomas Garth’s wife and three daughters—Anne and twin sisters, Karen and Donna—brought food and other necessities to the clients staying in the shelter.

“We had a station wagon that my dad filled with bread and other items and we all called it the ‘MUST Mobile,’” Donna laughed.

Over the past 47 years, Anne, Karen and Donna have found numerous ways to continue volunteering and helping at MUST. “Dad created a legacy of faithfully giving back to the community and we have continued what he started,” the daughters explained. Anne volunteers in the Marketing Dept. and helps pack lunches for MUST Summer Lunch. Karen and her late husband, Bill Hamilton, raised money for MUST for many years through Fourth of July cookouts. She recently retired from MUST’s HR Dept. but still comes back every week to volunteer at the front desk. Donna and her husband, Travis Carter, also volunteer their time at the front desk as well as helping wherever needed.

All three women passionately want to honor their father and spread God’s word through service in the community. “I continue volunteering because I love MUST, I have a heart for people experiencing homelessness and I want to help,” Karen said. The daughters are humbled by their parents’ hearts to serve and give. Volunteering has become a commonality appreciated in their family.

Because MUST’s roots are in the Methodist Church and we attended one, we were always involved in one way or another,” Anne recalled. The act of Thomas Garth giving back to members of his community created a family legacy that has continued for decades. The Davison family has created a history for themselves at MUST while also helping the organization make history through their faithful service.

Pilgrim’s

On-site hiring events had not worked particularly well for Johnny Martinez in the Canton Human Resources office of Pilgrim’s, the second-largest chicken producer in the world.

“Like any other company, we deal with turnover. Part of my job is to increase our applicant flow,” Martinez explains. “Our regional manager asked me to look around for organizations that might help, and I found MUST Ministries’ Workforce Development online. We have hired about 10 people sent to us by MUST.”

Even though Pilgrim’s is a global company, Martinez says they want it to be a “mom and pop, old-school business” where people feel they are part of a family. “We would love for MUST to keep sending us people,” he adds. “We want to help the community, do what we can to have employees stay here for years and help them out along the way.”
ARE YOU CONNECTED?

MUST Ministries is a nonprofit, faith-based organization helping people in your community break the cycle of poverty. MUST provides basic needs such as groceries, hot meals, housing, emergency shelter, workforce development, Toy Shops, children’s summer lunches and clothing. All services are free and provided without regard to income, race or religious beliefs.

© 2018 IMPACT REPORT is a publication of MUST Ministries. All rights reserved.