

Talbot Interfaith Shelter

The Journey Home

The word home rarely stands out when most people think about a homeless shelter. But at Talbot Interfaith Shelter (TIS), *home* is the goal from the first moment a guest sets foot into one of their shelter facilities, to their move into TIS' transitional housing, and finally, when they can move on and live independently.

Talbot Interfaith Shelter was formed in 2008 by a group of concerned members of various Talbot County faith communities, led by founder Evelyn Sedlack. They first began serving the community in January of 2009 as a cold-weather shelter, rotating between churches and the local synagogue and serving only five people at one time.

In 2014, the organization received its permit to operate its first shelter at Easton's Promise, a former bed and breakfast located in the heart of historic downtown Easton. Guests responded very positively to living in what was essentially a home. They were afforded privacy, dignity, and respect, shared "family dinner" around a dining room table every night, performed chores, and were able to do their own laundry. Their sense of comfort and safety was reflected almost immediately in their self-worth and confidence. Shelter leadership began implementing the beginning stages of what would become known as the innovative S4 Program. S4 stands for *Shelter, Stability, Support, Success*.

In the intervening years, TIS has greatly expanded its operations and now has two shelter facilities – Easton's Promise for families and Evelyn's Place for single men and women – and fifteen off-site transitional apartments. They currently have the capacity to serve 50 or more men, women, and children at once.

S4 is designed to guide guests step-by-step from homelessness to self-sufficiency. Once they are invited into one of the shelters, guests



Grateful guests at Evelyn's Place, TIS' new shelter for single men and women

work with a case manager to develop a personalized plan of action. Case managers connect them with necessary services, and they attend life skills training, including parenting, money management, character counts, anger management, and a class on poverty called "Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' By World," among others. When they have achieved certain financial milestones, guests are invited to move into transitional housing. They begin by paying a portion of the rent, while TIS subsidizes the rest. Over the course of approximately two years, their portion of the rent increases until they can take over their full expenses. When they can sustain this for 6 months or more,

they are ready to graduate into their housing.

What does TIS mean to its guests?

One mother, whose family is thriving and close to graduating from the S4 Program, shares, "If TIS was not here, I don't know where I would be. They have offered me so much in the time that I have been here... The whole program is just – it's a literal blessing."

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Talbot Interfaith Shelter
and how you can help
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