

meet your neighbors By Resident Suzie Rankins, Founder and President of Bless This Home



The hearts and muscles behind
Bless This Home

L. to R.: The Bless This Home Board Members Dana Oelkers, Alex Lominy, Suzie Rankins, Ginger Munson, Taryn Lennon, and Jeanne Mellish



L. to R.: Ryan Rankins, Nolan Arnold, Caden Brown, Noah Riley

With so many needs in this world, it can sometimes leave a person wondering, “What can I do to help, or what do I even have to offer?” That question was answered eight years ago in a meaningful way for one Bedford woman. A social worker at Elliot Hospital asked our founder, Suzie Rankins, if she and her husband could help obtain beds and a few essentials for a homeless family, a young mother with four children. Within two weeks, and just by reaching out to a few friends in the Bedford area, she was able to fully furnish a three-bedroom apartment with beds, couches, tables, chairs, television, kitchenware, curtains and even art. This group of willing hearts transformed an apartment in Manchester into a home for this family who previously had nothing.

The seed of an idea took root. Suzie quickly realized this could be the start of a community effort to help women and single-parent families jump-start their lives after a deep struggle. She could take her love of design and home staging, combined with the generosity of friends and neighbors, and together establish these women in new “homes.” (Note, after working through restorative programs and reinventing their lives, many women often have very little to bring with them into their next chapter.) Programs in our area provide many opportunities to help those who are successfully ready to take the next steps in life, and their graduates benefit from the encouragement provided by a peaceful place to call home.

Over the ensuing years, Suzie continued these efforts — each time receiving abundant donations from town members and garnering a group of volunteers to help pull it all together. Initially, the group helped women from one local recovery house, but soon the word spread. We learned of more worthy programs with more women in need. Additionally, our donation supply grew and grew.

Three years ago, Suzie decided to ask her core volunteers to help formalize their efforts, and Bless This Home was born. We currently have a small board of six women who organize, outreach and fundraise. Teens from Bedford High School provide lots of muscle for us and build up their community service hours. And over 35 other volunteers from the community work tirelessly every month to make each apartment space feel like a home.

Since inception, we have helped 87 women and children literally move into the next chapter of their lives. We could share a “divine happenstance” story for every single move: a last-minute dryer donation, a friend stopping by with a toaster oven (just what we needed), having sports-themed sheets and décor for a young boy, etc. It is both effort and joy to work with each recipient.



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At the end of the day, at Bless This Home, we want everyone we help to feel cared for, encouraged and loved. Each one of us has made mistakes and endured struggles in our lives. No one is perfect. No life is without challenge. As a faith-based nonprofit, we truly believe the Bible's words in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." We feel fortunate we have an opportunity to serve others in our community in a way that utilizes our talents and abilities and meets their very practical needs at the same time. In the end, we are ALL blessed.

Our goal is to create functional, pleasing, and welcoming living spaces to establish women in their new homes with both dignity and pride. We are always in need of muscle and moving support. We welcome anyone who wants to offer their time and talents on prep and move days. We also have a small fund that supports essential purchases which go beyond our physical donations: new beds or occasional moving expenses when we are short volunteers.

To donate or learn more, go to www.blessthisshome.org. You can also email us at info@blessthisshome.org. Please see our wish list or designate us as your charity when you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

From a mother after she arrived at her one-room space in a rooming house:

"I am crying tears of joy. I was in absolute shock when I walked in. Absolute amazement! This is the most beautiful room I have ever had. I can't even believe it. Somehow you all fit everything we could need in this room. I am so shocked by so many little details. I could go on and on. I can not thank you all enough! I feel so loved by you all and God. Thank you."



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Decorated breakfast nook



Foyer



Kids' play area



Bedroom



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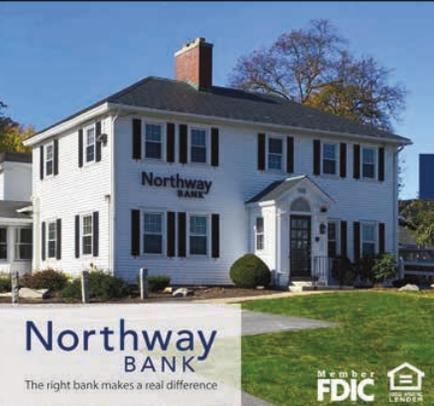
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