

Our Story

Ladder's story began in 1990, set in the hearts and minds of parents who were struggling with how to help their adult children suffering with chronic mental illness. In the midst of the tears and frustration at the lack of support and appropriate housing options, a challenge was issued to them by the local housing agency – "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

A small house was given to the agency by the Holland Ladder and Manufacturing Company, who also offered their support to refurbish the house into Ladder One, later renamed the Jon David Miller Home. Parents, families, future residents, and community members came together in support of this answer to the challenge; a new reality that became our first chapter in a story which God has continued writing throughout the years.

A shelter, a haven, a home where residents feel safe and accepted, where they are encouraged and empowered to become all that they can be; this is the thesis of Ladder's story. Quality, affordable, suitable and safe housing is the first step. Over the years, Ladder has acquired multiple houses and apartment buildings, allowing us to provide homes for married couples, men, and women and children. Support services for our residents come from the Ladder Homes Board of Directors and support staff, who serve as licensed and experienced case managers, guides, and friends. Residents receive help by any means necessary to reach their ultimate potential, living healthy, independent, fulfilled lives.

Another chapter in Ladder's story has been community involvement. The Outreach Program provides case management services for people who are not residents of Ladder Homes, but who need the support we can provide to live successfully. Together the community volunteers, the residents themselves, the Ladder Board, and the support staff form the heart of Ladder. Out of this heart, houses have been transformed into homes and strangers became family. This sense of family remains at the core of Ladder in our dynamic and relationships with each other. We recognize we are better together, and continue to grow as such.

Ladder residents are intelligent, capable, creative people who are not defined by their mental illness. Future pages in our story include a new hope of meaningful lives. A prolific artist has showcased beautiful pieces throughout the community, authors emerged through the telling of their story in a book, a student graduates having mastered knowledge or a new skill, and gardeners have grown food and flowers for their enjoyment and that of others. Testimonies have been shared and impacts on the community have been made. Many of the residents work part time jobs, attend school, and are passionate about volunteering in their communities. They are able to set goals and have dreams about their future all because of a home, a family, and support from people who see them as equal children of God.

The need for Ladder's services are great. Those who too often have experienced rejection and pain, stigma and misunderstanding can grow and blossom into the unique, important, worthwhile people they are. As our understanding and ability to provide proper care for mental illness grows, so does the need for affordable, safe, inclusive housing and support. Ladder's story is your story and my story. It's the story of a parent or a sibling, a friend or a colleague who has been affected by mental illness in any way. We trust on God's plan for Ladder and believe this is a story is one worth sharing, as worthwhile and special as the Ladder residents themselves, and all the potential and future members of the Ladder family yet to come. Join us on our journey!