MISSION/VISION

OUR MISSION
To change lives in a spiritual environment that is both compassionate and disciplined as we provide housing for the homeless, food for the hungry, and comfort for the addicted and suffering.

OUR VISION
To become a model agency to provide services and resources to serve the least of these while seeking to expand the capacity to meet present and future needs in the most effective and efficient manner.

OUR CORE VALUES
Helpful—We are called to care for the “least of these.”

Healing—We show the love of God by offering healing to all who come to us in need.

Excellence—We strive for the best ministry and business practices in all we do.

God-Honoring—We honor God by serving the hungry, homeless, and broken.

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ST. MATTHEW’S HOUSE
At St. Matthew’s House, we meet people right where they are—in the midst of hard times, sleepless nights, hunger, loneliness, and pain. We meet people at their most desperate, but it is at these darkest moments where we can remind them there still is light.

Let us be bold as our vision points us to serve those who need hope most, because we know hope starts here.

STEVIE
Each year St. Matthew’s House is blessed to serve in our community—and beyond. We are taking people off the streets who are hungry, homeless, and addicted, and giving them hope.

Fiscal year 2018 spanned from July of 2017 to June of 2018. During that time, we faced a hurricane and economic shifts in our community. Southwest Florida was hit with Hurricane Irma and red tide, while nationally the economy was doing well. St. Matthew’s House was able to overcome these challenges, even with a million-dollars’ worth of losses from Irma, because of donor support that rallied behind our programs, thrift stores, and social enterprises.

After searching for a permanent place to call their own for many years, the Justin’s Place Recovery Program for women settled into their new home in Alva. Jill’s Place Retreat Center is an 11-acre property with room to grow. To help house our growing recovery community, we purchased Justin’s Village, a gated community of single-family homes, as our next affordable housing project in East Naples.

Looking forward to fiscal year 2019, we are planning to open a sixth thrift store. Organizations nationally and locally continue to look to St. Matthew’s House as a model of how to provide excellent care and service in three areas: poverty and homelessness, drug and alcohol recovery, and social enterprises. In calendar year 2019, we will help organizations launch similar programs in Colorado, Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, West Virginia, and possibly Indiana. We are in talks with several different states to form a governmental leadership group to help community leaders launch programs like ours at St. Matthew’s House. We want to be there to help and mentor ministries, missions, and recovery programs across the country with what we’ve learned in our community.

VANN ELLISON | CEO REPORT

15 THE ELLISON’S CELEBRATE 15 YEARS WITH ST. MATTHEW’S HOUSE

OFTEN TIMES WE BECOME A FAMILY OF LAST RESORT FOR THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE—WE ARE HONORED BY THAT CALLING.
My name is Jennifer Wellman. I am 46 years old, and I’ve been at the St. Matthew’s House shelter for six weeks. I came to St. Matthew’s House with my daughter, Chloe. She’s 10 years old. I desperately needed help and came to get back on my feet and get recovery.

I started using drugs when I was 30 years old. I was a nurse, so I had a great deal of access to narcotics. I also had a doctor who was very opioid-friendly. After a back injury, my addiction to pain medication began to take over. I quit nursing and I no longer had access to what I wanted. Opiates.

Then I started smoking crack and everything fell apart. My husband is also an alcoholic and an addict, so our bills didn’t get paid, we lost our house, we lost our car, and we had to leave our daughter with our son. I thought it would just be a few weeks until we could get back on our feet. Two weeks turned into three years. Finally, I just couldn’t take it anymore. I missed my daughter terribly and I knew I couldn’t keep living this way. I just woke up and had a thought: I am responsible for my daughter. The only way I can be responsible is to be clean.

As a resident of the Campbell Lodge at St. Matthew’s House, I am able to work and save money for an apartment. They provide everything we need. Being with my daughter is the second most important thing to me. The most important thing is that I stay clean. I can’t take care of my daughter if I don’t stay clean.

My hope is that I would be able to stay at St. Matthew’s House until I become financially stable. And I know Chloe wants a better birthday this year. My husband and I relapsed on her last birthday. We had no money, no food in the house, and we couldn’t take care of her. I don’t want to ever have that happen again. I want the rest of her birthdays to be happy memories. So even though we may still be at St. Matthew’s House, we’re still going to have a happy birthday because I’m going to be clean.

I am very grateful for this opportunity and a second chance. St. Matthew’s House gave me that chance and I don’t want to let myself down, my daughter down, or St. Matthew’s House down, because they put their faith in me. They gave their time and their resources to help me. It’s just changed my outlook on life.

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Individuals transitioned to permanent and stable housing: 1,100
Individuals prevented from becoming homeless: 180
Individuals in our care who received workforce training: 120
Individuals in our care placed or hired into full-time jobs through our social enterprises: 120

SHELTER OPERATIONS

The landscape of Naples, Florida is unique; an estuary of wealthy retirees and the working class who struggle to make ends meet. With palm trees, nearly endless sunny days, and white sand beaches, it is easy to forget there are those who find themselves without a roof over their heads.

According to the Hunger & Homelessness Coalition of Collier County:

- 40% of Collier County Residents are considered “housing-cost burdened” meaning they spend at least 30% of their income on housing.
- Over 650 people, on average, are living in a place “not fit for human habitation”—up 5% from last year.
- Over 130 children are currently homeless or in emergency housing in Collier County.

Lack of income stability and job security are two major reasons local individuals and families become homeless. Job opportunities vary by season and unemployment rates spike during the summer months—making that time of the year especially hard for some single-income families. Underemployment is also a problem all year round, as the median wage in Collier County falls below the amount required for self-sufficiency.

WHO WE HOUSE

Situational homelessness due to job loss
Eviction
Teenagers aging out of foster care
Men and women released from jail
Elderly or disabled residents
Those suffering from chronic homelessness due to mental illness or addiction

385 Individuals transitioned to permanent and stable housing
1,100 Individuals prevented from becoming homeless
180 Individuals in our care who received workforce training
120 Individuals in our care placed or hired into full-time jobs through our social enterprises
Through targeted case management, job training, job placement, educational opportunities, structure, and accountability, our program strives to identify and alleviate the root causes of poverty and homelessness, rather than simply provide temporary relief.

Once a resident receives a bed, that bed is theirs until they are able to find a place of their own, with the average length of stay being 90 days. We project to house over 1,000 individuals within the upcoming year.

**EMERGENCY HOUSING**

St. Matthew’s House runs two emergency shelters: the Immokalee Friendship House in Immokalee and the Campbell Lodge in Naples.

Our homeless shelters are the only emergency housing in all of Collier County, an area twice the size of the state of Rhode Island.

Operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with no exceptions, our emergency shelters house over 150 people each night. It costs us $70 per day per resident to operate the shelter. Once our residents find employment, we charge them only $10.72 per night for the duration of their stay, making St. Matthew’s House shelters some of the most cost effective homeless rehabilitation programs in the nation.

Our shelters are focused on providing a hand-up, not a hand-out. We provide basic necessities of shelter, food, and access to resources needed to live a life of self-sufficiency.

87% of our emergency housing shelter residents gain full or part-time employment within the first month of their stay.

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**TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

Transitional housing is available at the Wolfe Apartments in Golden Gate and Justin’s Village, a housing development in Naples within walking distance to many St. Matthew’s House resources.

Transitional housing provides more independence for individuals on the track to recovery and stability, yet still provides structure, accountability, and community that is vital to their success. All transitional housing locations are alcohol-free and supported with on-site staff. These facilities promote growth in the areas of recovery, self-sufficiency, and financial stability while offering affordable housing for those most in need.

This is one of the greatest needs currently in Collier County, and through the recent addition of Justin’s Village, we will be able to offer a significant number of housing options on a first come, first serve basis.

Justin’s Village, our newest facility within St. Matthew’s House, is a gated community that will provide affordable housing in the form of single-family homes and apartments. This environment will provide the community and structure that enables individuals to flourish as they regain their independence.
HOPE STARTS HERE

HUNGER

St. Matthew’s House began as an initiative to end hunger after a photograph published in the Naples Daily News showed a homeless man eating out of a dumpster. This photograph was the catalyst for a small group of churchgoers to spring into action, preparing and serving meals to the local homeless population.

Since then, we have never missed a day feeding the hungry. As the only facility approved for public feeding in the county, St. Matthew’s House has the greatest impact for the over 40,000 Collier County residents who suffer from food insecurity. In fact, almost 64% of local households with children under 18 receive food stamps or SNAP benefits, compared to the national average of 50%.

$1.85
The cost of each meal served at our shelter

513,000
Over 513,000 hot meals served this past year

4,658
bags of groceries distributed

DIRECT ASSISTANCE
For those residents living in their own home, but needing extra help to make ends meet, we offer direct assistance through our food pantry and grocery distribution. In 2017, we helped 2,599 families, comprising almost 10,000 individuals, receive the food they need to feed their families, including holiday meals with all the fixings! Our food pantry also helps us connect to local businesses and charities within the community.

ENDING HUNGER

ANTHONY | TESTIMONY
I was born and raised in a Christian family, but I suffered from insecurities like self-consciousness and anxieties. By the time I was 13 years of age, I made the decision to leave my faith in Christ and see what the world without God had to offer. Once I made that harsh choice, many negative events occurred in my life. I got involved with drugs, gangs, unstable relationships, incarcerations and many near-death experiences. That lifestyle went on for 12 years and in my eyes that was the only way I knew how to live.

After many drug overdoses and incarcerations my family introduced me to the hope of Justin’s Place. I didn’t know what a rehabilitation program was like and I was scared, but I decided to surrender my life to God and put it in His will. From that day on, I committed to my recovery and went through the year long Justin’s Place Men’s Recovery Program.

My life has never been the same since and I’ve never lived as full a life as I do today. Justin’s Place has taught me to love myself and others without selfish intentions, to love everyone and anyone like Jesus did. The brotherhood and discipline that was shown by example and taught to me was the most beautiful, life changing experience I’ve ever had.

My life kept progressing more and more. I’ve become something I never expected: a man of God, leading by example and fueled by faith. Today I’m living a selfless life. I want to please God and show others that are suffering that there is hope for a better life by choosing to surrender to Him. I continue to look forward to what else God has in store for me.

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GOD, THROUGH JUSTIN’S PLACE, HAS SAVED MY LIFE.
After identifying substance abuse as one of the leading causes of poverty and homelessness among our residents, the Justin’s Place Recovery Program was established in 2010 to provide affordable recovery solutions to those we serve.

The primary objective of the Justin’s Place Recovery Program is to equip each resident with the tools needed to live independently and stay sober. This is a long-term, residential rehabilitative program designed to equip both men and women battling addiction with the tools and resources needed to live a productive, self-sufficient life. The 12-month program is comprised of structured faith-based curriculum, counseling, case management, and peer support. Because we believe that a person should thrive, not just survive, we also offer employment training, legal assistance, physical wellness, community service, and family reunification support as we gradually transition individuals to independence.

As overdose rates skyrocket due to the opioid crisis, the Justin’s Place Recovery Program is more important than ever. In fact, Southwest Florida is rapidly emerging as an epicenter in the crisis, with overdose rates in Lee County rising 800% over the past four years. We receive at least five times as many applications as there are available beds, which is a testament to both our incredible success rate, but also the increasing need for programs like ours.

To date, over 400 men and women have graduated from the Justin’s Place Recovery Program. As the program enters its ninth year, we are encouraged by the success we’ve seen. Elected officials, community leaders, judges, sheriffs, chiefs of corrections, and probation officers across Collier, Lee, and Hendry counties have partnered with us to provide continued oversight and referrals. We also work with local agencies such as Hazelden Betty Ford, Salis Care, and Crossroads to share resources. St. Matthew’s House is working with other like-minded organizations across the U.S. to see how our model and curriculum can be used.
Growing up my mother wasn’t in the picture. She left when I was two, and never came back. My father raised me and my two brothers. My father did the best he could considering he suffered from alcoholism.

I started experimenting with drugs and alcohol at the age of 17, when my older brother Sammy passed away. He was my best friend. I loved him with all my heart. So that is how it began. I used alcohol to numb my pain. As time went on, I tried a multitude of different drugs. I just didn’t want to feel anything. I guess I didn’t want the life I had to be the life I had. So I hid inside my new life of addiction.

I used opiates at the age of 26. That’s when my life just completely turned into a downward spiral. I started losing friends and family to addiction. From the age of 26 to 36 I attended 29 funerals. The last one being my husband’s. He died from an overdose on May 29th, 2017. This is the event that shook me into reality. I knew at this point that my life had to change, or I would be next.

I made the best decision of my life the day I got the application paperwork for Justin’s Place in the mail. I filled out the application, and shortly after, my father was dropping me off at the women’s program. While I was in Justin’s Place, I learned the root of why I did what I did. I learned healthy coping mechanisms, and created healthy boundaries for myself that I now rely on when faced with the temptations that go along with addiction.

I WILL FOREVER BE GRATEFUL TO JUSTIN’S PLACE.

Since graduating Justin’s Place I continue to build a healthy relationship with my two daughters and my father. I currently work for St. Matthew’s House, in Café M25 in the Naples Thrift Store. I accepted Jesus into my life while in this program, and as a result, I can honestly say that I have a peace that surpasses all understanding.
Over 180 men and women are projected to receive employment training assistance over the next year, and a large portion of that training is found through our unique social enterprises: five thrift stores, two cafés, two catering companies, a car wash, and a hotel and retreat center. Not only do these social enterprises offer a safe, professional environment to foster learning and growth—they generate 60% of the income needed to operate St. Matthew’s House initiatives, which funds all salaries and administrative costs. This means 100% of donations received can be allocated directly towards our life-saving programs.

Evidence of the success of our approach can be found in the over 800 individuals who have benefited from our Workforce Readiness program, many of whom have received post-secondary degrees, started businesses, and completed vocational training.
Our almost 3,000 volunteers are the heartbeat of this organization. With over thirteen locations across Southwest Florida and over 100 unique opportunities each day, we would not be the organization we are today if not for the men, women, and children who donate their time and talents serving with us.

LAST YEAR VOLUNTEERS DONATED NEARLY $1 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE HOURS

$1,000,000

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COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

Naples Community Hospital
Lee Health
Neighborhood Health Clinic
David Lawrence Center
Salis Care
Project Help

College Source
Collier County Sheriff’s and Corrections Office
Lee County Sheriff’s and Corrections Office
20th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida
Jackson County Municipal Court

Lorenzo Walker Technical College
Starbucks
ECHO Sustainable Farming
Fifth Third Bank
Wells Fargo
Ibera Bank

Citygate Network
www.citygatenetwork.org

Catalyst Kitchens
www.catalystkitchens.org

Certified Best Christian Workplace
www.bcwinstitute.com

The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce
www.napleschamber.org

Guidestar – Platinum Member
www.guidestar.org

FareStart – Platinum Member
www.farestart.org

Best of Naples Winners
www.bestswfl.com
St. Matthew’s House does not solicit any government support. And because of our robust social enterprises, all staff salaries and administrative costs are covered by the profits from our businesses. This means that 100% of every dollar donated to St. Matthew’s House goes directly to support the men, women, and children in our care.