

Through the Children's Eyes: What Attending School during COVID-19 Looks Like

The normal hustle and bustle of the school week here at the Mercy Center for Women looks a little different in a COVID impacted world. The loud droning of the alarm clocks, breakfast rush, and frantic scramble to get bags packed has been replaced by a calmer morning buzz as our school-aged children attend school virtually this academic year. Instead of figuring out bus routes and after school schedules – our women and children have been presented with a new Goliath. Learning how to attend classes, complete schoolwork, and stay up-to date on notifications from a host of learning platforms.

Like David though, our women have been resourceful. They have done everything from creating makeshift classrooms in our library and dining areas, to coordinating class schedules so that the noise level of one class does not interfere with another.

What has been most impressive, however, is the incredible resilience that our children have shown in the face of all these changes. Their excited, "Good Morning!" greetings to their fellow classmates and teachers ring out through the hallways.

Your gift will enrich the lives of these children by allowing them to be able to put their full attention to adapting to a new method of learning and thriving.



"A child's life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark."

- Robert Heinlein

Women & Children Served:

Women in Families	21
Single Women	23
Children	34
Total Number Served	78



MERCY CENTER FOR WOMEN
1039 East 27th Street / Erie, PA 16504
(814) 455-4577 / www.mcwerie.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #199
Erie, PA

18% of the women we served are counted as homeless youth between 18 to 24 years old

97% of the women we served have a mental health diagnosis

54% struggle with drug and/or alcohol abuse

81% of our women have a history of domestic violence, while

68% of them are currently fleeing domestic violence

22% are chronically homeless, one of the criteria HUD focuses on for funding

Total Shelter Nights **6,677**

Dress for Success® Erie Suitings **354**



Friendships Take Flight

At the Mercy Center for Women, friendships are celebrated with each other: The Annual Butterfly Celebration walks us through the journey of the Mercy Center: There are definite steps to the journey, through the life cycle of a butterfly. Each transitional development is observed and opportunity for growth provided. Our women and children come full-circle into limitless ways to spread their wings and fly. **Roots to Wings for women, children and caterpillars.**

View our 2020 event at www.mcwerie.org

The Mercy Center for Women Through YOU... Possibilities become Realities



ANNUAL FUND 2020-2021

Will Build a Life of Recovery • Shelter a Mother and Child in Need
Provide Endless Opportunities to Embrace a New Beginning • Turn a Struggle into a Triumph

Dear Friends of the Mercy Center for Women:

Thanks to your generosity, women and children have a safe place to stay, three meals a day, necessary programs, and career development. On behalf of the women and children we serve at the Mercy Center, thank you for enhancing their self-respect through your kind-heartedness. We would like to invite you to make a generous gift for our 2020-2021 Annual Appeal.

Today, we are launching our 2020-2021 Mercy Center for Women Fund. Our hope is to help women and children escape poverty, addiction, and domestic violence. Our goal of **\$275,000** will allow 50 women and children to come in from the inclement weather into a community of warmth and security. Your gift will provide shelter, food, transportation, social services, education and childcare to the women and children we serve.

Giving to the Mercy Center for Women will embrace, enrich, empower, and encourage our women and children to successfully transition their lives into a self-sufficient lifestyle.

We are about to embark upon the largest giving time of the year. There is something special which allows for one to give with an open heart and mind. Your gift will make a lasting impact on the women and children we serve.

The Mercy Center cannot do this without you. Thank you for understanding our impact in the community.

Warmly,

Jennie

Jennie Hagerty
Executive Director



Lori's Story:

They are simple things.

Completing chores. Paying the bills. Scheduling a doctor appointment.

But when you've been ruled by the demons of drug addiction, they are herculean tasks.

"It was like being a baby and having to learn how to be an adult all over again," Lori says.

Lori began her tenure at MCW when she was moved to Erie for rehab but didn't have anywhere to go after completing the program.

She continues, "I lost everything [to drug addiction]. Everything. I was at rock bottom. I forgot how to do simple things."

When she came to MCW Lori struggled with self-confidence issues, was just beginning her road to recovery from drug addiction, and was unemployed. Of that time, she says, "I truly hated myself and blamed myself for so much."

"My caseworker recommended Mercy Center to me. I had my intake interview and a tour of the place. And I just fell in love. It was like something was in the air, telling me that everything was going to be okay. MCW has allowed me to let go of my self-hatred and begin to think, 'maybe I'm not so bad after all.'"

Lori embraced the spirituality and the "24/7 family" atmosphere of MCW. She took all the programming that she could attend and accepted her first job in a long time.

"I felt like a member of society again. I felt accountable to something," Lori said.

She reminisced on her first holiday season at MCW. Fondly rejoicing at the memory of the other women in the house reaching out to her and forcing her to come out of her room to celebrate with everyone, "I thought I would be all alone and lonely. But they did their best to make sure that we felt as normal as possible." The generosity of the community also lingers in her memories, "I was able to give my kids presents that year even though I didn't have anything. That was all thanks to all the donations we received."

Lori currently works as a home health aide, caring for elderly patients in their homes. She says her next step is to finally look for work using her college degree in Health and Physical Education. Lori has used the skills that she built here at MCW to rekindle relationships with her children and grandchildren.

