



# From Concrete Steps to a Place Called Home: How Community Partnership Changed Thomas's Life

## **Dear PADS of Elgin Family,**

I've faced three critical moments when, without my safety nets, I could have easily needed help from an organization like PADS of Elgin. At 25, a major illness landed me in the hospital for nine days, followed by six months of weekly specialist visits—expenses that would have been financially devastating without health insurance. Twice I've lost my job, situations that could have led to homelessness if not for the support of my spouse. These experiences taught me that the difference between stability and crisis often comes down to having people and systems in place when life falls apart.

That's what we do every day at PADS of Elgin. Yes, we provide shelter and hot meals. But what truly transforms lives here is the respect and compassionate empowerment that help our guests rediscover what they need to move forward.

### **When Partnership Saves Lives**

Thomas was living alone in southern Illinois after losing his wife during the COVID pandemic, working as a hotel janitor and barely scraping by. Years of untreated diabetes had left him legally blind. When he lost his job, he had no savings and nowhere to turn.

Thomas took Amtrak to Chicago, then Metra to Elgin to stay with his daughter. When that didn't work out, he ended up on the steps of the Elgin Police Department, sleeping on concrete with everything he owned.

What Thomas didn't know was that PADS had recently met with the police department—a meeting that would save his life. When a Sergeant heard Thomas's story, he immediately contacted PADS and advocated strongly for this kindhearted gentleman.

## **A Community That Cares**

When Thomas arrived at PADS, he wore a huge smile. The staff welcomed him with incredible kindness, and he eagerly embraced this new chapter. He soon befriended another guest who became like family, and they still keep in touch today.

Through our medical assessments and a partnership with the Visiting Nurses Association, Thomas connected with a home healthcare professional who recognized he couldn't manage his diabetes independently. After two months at PADS, Thomas moved to an assisted living facility where his health stabilized.

Today, Thomas jokingly says, "I would jump out of a window to get back to PADS." His long-term goal is finding permanent housing in a home for the visually impaired.

## **Your Impact**

Our shelter remains at near capacity year-round, and demand for outreach services increased by 372% over the last two years. Yet our case managers have empowered more than 25 guests to find housing since July 1st.

This is what keeps me passionate about my work at PADS of Elgin—watching people like Thomas discover hope and rebuild their lives through genuine connection and support. Will you partner with me to create more transformations like his? Your year-end gift provides not just shelter, but the compassionate relationships and resources that guide individuals and families toward a place to call home.

[www.padsfelgin.org/donate](http://www.padsfelgin.org/donate)

Happy Holidays,



**Jen Keller, Development Manager**

