**MARY ELLEN’S HEARTH- Preliminary Determination**

Thank you for inquiring about our Transitional Housing program. Mary Ellen’s Hearth is a 24-month transitional housing program for women with children (11 and under). We offer specialized support to help willing and desiring homeless women with children learn skills needed to obtain suitable employment, life skills and appropriate long-term housing. Each family works with a case manager to develop a family service plan individualized to help meet her/their goal of becoming self-reliant.

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:**

* All applicants are required to complete application for the Mary Ellen’s Hearth Transitional Housing Program
* All applicants are required to disclose information about self and children as deemed necessary or appropriate in order to provide Case Management services.
* Applicants considered for admission will include single mothers and their children. A family is defined as a mother (age 19 or over) with children. (Women with legal documented guardianship are also considered for admission)
* Criterion for admission will include the family's desire to be involved in meeting the goals of the Family Service Plan by actively participating in activities and services/groups designed to help meet the goals.
* All applicants are required to provide identification for self and children
* All applicants are required to submit to background checks.
* All applicants are required to submit/pass drug test
* All applicants are required to be certified homeless or confirm through a third party statement documenting homelessness.
* All applicants are required to demonstrate interest in economic self-sufficiency and long term stable housing.
* All applicants are required to demonstrate interest in participating in supportive services (individual and groups) and case management during residency in transitional housing programs
* All applicants are required to work or be able to obtain employment in the first 60 days of program participation (maintain this employment the ENTIRE time of program participation)
* All applicants are required to provide verification of employment
* All applicants are required to provide proof of income (Employment, SSI, SSD, TANF, Child support, Food Stamps)
* All applicants are required to save 1/3 of their monthly income and pay a monthly program fee.
* Program participation will be determined by progress toward specific goals designed to re-establish family in their own household. Although an average length of participation is nine months (up to two years), each Family Service Plan will be evaluated on a monthly basis and a determination of participation will be made in accordance with the goals of the Plan.
* All applicants are required to complete all program requirements.
* All applicants are required to certify that all information provided and all documents submitted are true and complete to the best of knowledge.

**Unacceptable Criteria:**

* All applicants who are outside of the River Region area and are at a distance from their only sources of social support;
* All applicants actively involved in a domestic violence situation or have less than one year removed from abuser/perpetrator
* All applicants who have severe drug or alcohol issues which require residential treatment, have less than a year of documented sobriety/clean-time or whose primary diagnosis is substance abuse;
* All applicants who exhibit the following specific physical, mental, developmental or functional impairments (emotional and behavioral problems) would not be effectively served in the Transitional Housing Program at Mary Ellen’s Hearth:
* All applicants who have psychiatric care and psychotropic medication needs that require the dispensing of medication on a daily basis;
* All applicants who are risk of harm to themselves or others as demonstrated by recent or repeated suicidal behavior, self-injurious behavior, aggressive behavior or other clinical indicators;
* All applicants who require daily, 24-hour supervision to ensure safety;
* All applicants who have an IQ below 70 and are unable to be employed due to cognitive deficits;
* All applicants with a safety plan requiring 24-hour supervision or limitations on their employment or community functioning
* All applicants requiring registration as an adult sexual offender;
* All applicants who have a conviction of arson, diagnosis of Pyromania, or who have participated in fire setting behavior within the past 36 months that willfully caused property damage and/or bodily harm;
* All applicants who have a recent history of psychosis or other psychiatric disturbance which would compromise their ability to live in an independent apartment setting;
* All applicants who due to emotional disturbance or physical disability lack a basic self-care skill which would compromise their ability to live independently (i.e., encopresis, eating disorder, or other self-care related issues);
* All applicants who have exhibited multiple actions of purposeful, physical harm to others within the past 6 months and demonstrate the inability to bring self-back under control by requiring physical restraint, as evidenced by court or police records, etc.; and
* All applicants who have been psychiatrically hospitalized in past 6 months.