

Carol Croteau's Story



The story of Bethsaida Community, my story began in 1980 when I found the courage to leave an abusive marriage of ten years. When I walked away from the only home I had, I did not know how difficult-or how rewarding-the journey ahead of me would be. At the time, I had only a part time job and would have been literally homeless had not my sister and her family offered me a temporary place to stay.

My search for a full time job led me to Southeastern CT, over an hour away from the support of people who knew and loved me. As I struggled to find a permanent place to live, to manage on limited finances, to discern a direction for my life, I really missed the reassurance and guidance that my family and friends could provide.

I came to realize that my deepest hunger was to find a purpose for my life that went beyond earning a paycheck. I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. And so, instead of sitting alone in the evenings and on weekends, I began to volunteer-at the mental hospital, at the shelter, at the soup kitchen.

Through these experiences, I discovered a heart connection to women who were homeless: without a permanent place to live, without the support and comfort of friends who transform such a place into a home. I asked myself a fundamental question: when a woman needs a hope, a home, a family, where can she turn? In seeking the answer, I attracted a number of caring people who shared my concern. As we prayed and planned together, we created a community with a commitment to all women who were homeless and alone. In 1987, we became incorporated as a nonprofit agency. We named ourselves Bethsaida Community, Inc.