

## **Tamar's on Hatmaker Street**

**April 3, 2025**

Julie and Erin (Tamar's on-site staff) have spent the last three years on Hatmaker Street in Lower Price Hill. In this time, they have undertaken a number of activities to research and understand the needs of this community:

- walked the streets in the neighborhood, spent countless hours talking to neighbors and women, and networked with numerous agencies in the area.
- conducted surveys, collected information, and shared information about the neighborhood with the Board.
- explored multiple avenues to reach women in the sex trafficking world, including offers to transport, pick up, and provide bus passes. They have also offered free clothes, free food, free showers, a place to rest, and free hygiene.
- hosted addiction groups, lunches, self-care groups, haircut events, and self-defense education.

As the Board knows, Tamar's historic mission of serving women in the sex trafficking world has not had the same level of success in Lower Price Hill as it had in OTR because there is little sex trafficking in the current neighborhood. However, the staff at Tamar's believe that what may be perceived as "failures" is really just opportunities to change what isn't working.

Julie and Erin have been diligently working to find a niche that expresses the blessings of what the house the Sisters bought could provide to underserved women. Through conversations with women they have met, they have asked about interests, what they might enjoy, what they would love to learn, and what might bring them together with other women.

- One area of great interest relates to cooking and the positive effects of cooking and baking as therapy. Women shared about cooking and food they would love to make, food they remembered their mom making, and memories of food with their loved ones. In one case, tears streamed down a cashier's face as she remembered macaroni and cheese that her mom made.

- Julie and Erin are exploring whether a ‘culinary art therapy’ may be serve an unmet need for the women in Lower Price Hill (or adjoining areas) and be a healing presence in the community. They chose a few foods to prepare together with women in different sessions and gave surveys at the end of every session. The women responded that not only would return again, but were excited about it. Here are some of the remarks from the women:

*“I have felt so alone and never could open up to anyone about my daughter’s drug addiction. My husband won’t talk to me about it. I have no one. Today I was able to talk about it”.*

*“I don’t know what to do in retirement. My friends and I feel lost. Today reminded me that I can still learn new things”*

*“I can’t wait to have my own group with my friends at home”*

*“I want to invite my mom and sister to come back!”*

*“I never have time away from my daughter. She has problems and I needed this break”.*

*“This is the therapy I didn’t know I needed”.*

*“I feel a lot more confidence in trying this on my own”*

*“The house felt very welcoming. I felt I could talk comfortably”*

- They feel that cooking is an opportunity for fellowship, a way for women to talk together, to connect them and empower them, and they look forward to sharing more with the Board’s Task Force.