



Saint Stephen's Way

A Community for Homeless Families with Schoolchildren

Fall 2023

NEWSLETTER

Issue #16

<https://www.ssway.org/>

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Saint Stephen's Way is an active non-profit 501(c)(3) Corporation, Federal Identification Number 45-5390085, providing affordable housing with supportive services to homeless families with schoolchildren in Brevard County, Florida.

OUR MISSION

Saint Stephen's Way provides affordable housing, along with supportive services, to homeless families with schoolchildren in Brevard County.

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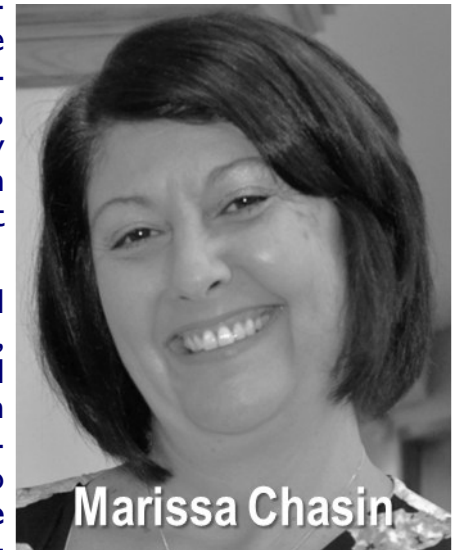
Nina Rawal

Meet SSWay's New Project Manager, ...

"I love this job," says Marissa Chasin, SSWay's new Project Manager. "Helping people through non-profit organizations is my thing." Marissa worked at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Community for 15 years as facilities manager for the 30-acre campus. "I volunteered there, working with fundraising aid for Haiti, with grounds and maintenance, with building maintenance vendors, and Holy Name's outreach program, so I am familiar with helping the homeless." However, after COVID that job was eliminated.

Marissa got involved with SSWay several years ago. "I volunteered to help with mailings, fundraising breakfasts, keeping track of pledges, and anything they needed." With SSWay soon to begin taking in tenant families, John Farrell, Executive Director, and Ed Struttman, President, needed to hire a Project Manager. **"Marissa's experience and qualifications make her the perfect candidate," John explains.** "John and Ed asked me to be SSWay's Project Manager in April this year," Marissa recalls, "And I started in May. The job is a good fit."

The Project Manager's office is in the SSWay Office building at the entrance to the campus. Because there are no tenants yet, Marissa is not yet performing her duties as Project Manager. **"I'm currently helping John with fundraising. But once we have tenants I will be in the office every day, managing SSWay matters."** Marissa gave a short list of such things. "Like working with tenants, collecting and keeping track of rent payments, incident notations, tracking work orders, just overall Project Manager business."



Marissa Chasin

What has most impressed Marissa about SSWay? "The amount of giving from everyone involved. The giving is endless and a very beautiful thing to see!" She continues, "Everyone works well together and all want to see the project succeed. **We're all in it for the same reason—to help homeless schoolchildren and their families.**" (Continued on page 3) . . .

TOUR THE NEW SSWay CAMPUS!

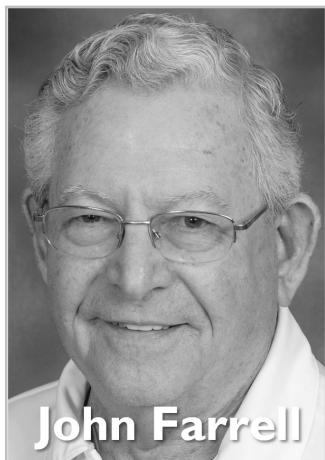
► If you would like to get on the schedule for a tour of SSWay's new campus, call the office at 321-306-8873

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Construction Now in the Home Stretch!

“You just cannot believe how excited I am to finally be near the completion of construction,” exclaims John Farrell, SSWay’s Executive Director, who really IS that excited! “The building phase will be complete in October so we can have families in need enrolled in our program and moved in by the holidays!”



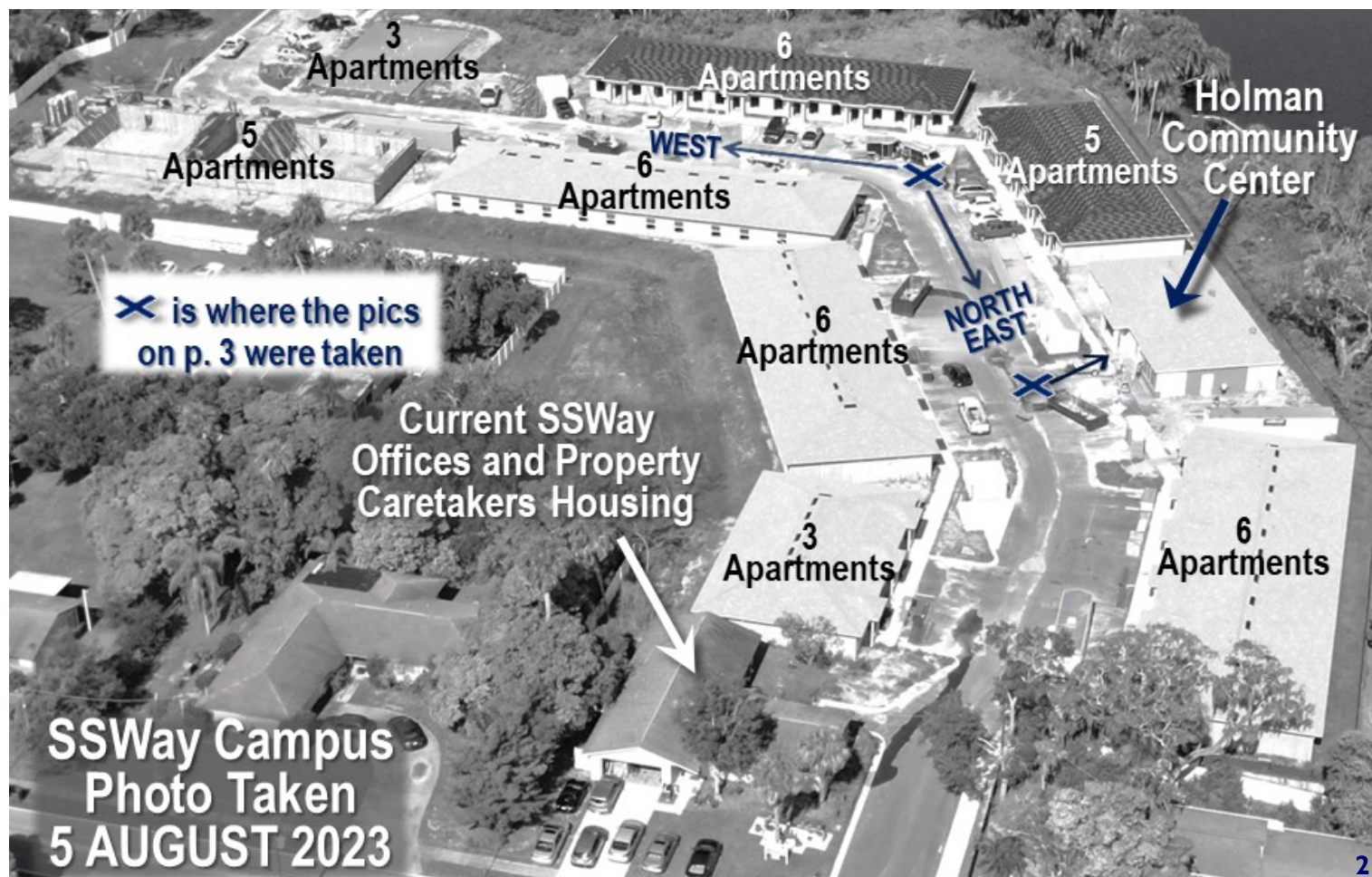
John Farrell

There have been a number of challenges along the way that resulted in the construction phase taking longer than originally expected. “A year and a half ago, our contractors,” Archangel Engineering & Construction, and MH Williams Construction Group, “knew that obtaining wooden trusses for the apartment buildings could take months due to the supply backlog,” John remembers. “**Then we discovered that metal trusses for the apartment buildings could be obtained sooner, so those were ordered early last year. However, delivery of the metal trusses took significantly longer than expected, with the last trusses not arriving until late July this year.**” No trusses meant no roofs, which meant interior construction could not begin. “**But all that is now history!**” John is beaming again! 😊

The work preparing for intake of needy families with schoolchildren continues. “**We are working now with our partners who will soon be providing us names of candidate families that meet SSWay’s qualifying criteria,**” says John. “**We are looking forward to having our first families settled into their apartments on our campus by the holiday season. And all our hearts swell with joy because, we’re almost there!**”

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Holman Community Center



Looking NORTHEAST from the “X”



Looking WEST from the “X”

... And the Onsite Property Caretakers, Ginny & Tom

... (Continued from page 1) **Marissa Chasin, Project Manager** (introduced on page 1) will be working closely with Tom and Ginny Clark, the onsite **Property Caretakers** who have already been on the job since the fall of 2022. “They are wonderful people,” says Marissa, “who go with me to Housing Authority meetings a couple times a month. They also work on manuals we will soon need.”

Tom and Ginny love working with Marissa and the SSWay staff. “Everyone on this whole team is very open and sincere,” Ginny offered. “If something is wrong, you feel free to speak up. Everyone is enthusiastic and very faithful to SSWay.”

Tom was a police officer in Providence, Rhode Island, and retired as a CSI Detective. They moved to Venice, FL in 2005, and later when COVID started, moved to the Melbourne area to be near their grandkids. Tom and Ginny heard John Farrell give a talk about SSWay, “So we talked to him about volunteering,” says Tom, “and John asked us to be their onsite Property Caretakers.” (Continued on page 4)... 3

... And the Onsite Property Caretakers, Tom & Ginny

... (Continued from page 3) **"The first thing we did," Tom explains, "was rehab the apartment where we'll live."** SSWay's office and conference room are part of the house. The rest is 3 bedrooms, a bath, and a kitchen. **"When project construction began, we took on security and surveillance for the property."**

The primary responsibilities as Property Caretakers will change, as Tom explains. **"Once families start living here, we'll do the working maintenance, groundskeeping, security and surveillance. When there are issues, residents will call us and we'll adjudicate their problem. We expect to be the first people they call."** They will make sure everything is physically good with the neighborhood. **Tom also talked with people in nearby churches about SSWay. "Everyone is very positive about SSWay starting up here."**

Tom and Ginny love everyone's involvement and dedication to SSWay. **"There's nothing like this, Ginny emphasizes, "for serving families with schoolchildren that also keeps men and older boys with their family. We feel blessed that we were asked to be a part of this project!"**



Evon Chaney Heads Key Support for Needy Families

After 31 years with the Housing Authority of Brevard County (HABC), Evon Chaney is a seasoned expert. **"I am the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Director, and I manage the voucher program, also called Section 8 vouchers by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)."** The HCV program is a federal rent subsidy that assists low-income households with monthly rental payments. **"All eligible families must pay at least 30 percent of their monthly-adjusted income toward rent directly to the landlord," Evon explains, "and the Housing Authority pays the landlord the difference between the contract rent and the tenant's portion."**

The HCV program came from Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937, when Congress addressed widespread homelessness and economic hardship after the Great Depression. The Act has been amended often.

Likewise, the local Housing Authorities have a history. "When I started," says Evon, "there were four Housing Authorities: Titusville, Cocoa, Melbourne, and Brevard County. Titusville broke off on its own, and later Cocoa did the same. Melbourne, the smallest of the four, stayed with the HABC. These two authorities work together as one, and I work for both sectors."

"When SSWay started developing its property, they asked Michael Bean, the HABC CEO, about housing assistance for future family tenants," Evon recalls. "Once SSWay's campus apartments are completed and ready for occupancy, I will be administering those families' housing vouchers." SSWay, with the help of its partner organizations, is responsible for screening their tenants to ensure they are qualified for the HCV program. **"After all 40 apartments are occupied, the next families SSWay gives us will go on a waiting list for when an apartment vacancy opens, and we will administer their housing vouchers for them."**

Asked what has most impressed Evon about SSWay, she says, "Their passion to help families. They are passionate about the homeless population of families with schoolchildren not having stable housing. Providing them affordable housing is outstanding!" Evon continues, "I would like people to understand that SSWay orchestrated and executed a well thought out plan. People should look at their model, and maybe other people out there can do the same." Amen to that, Evon!

Student Body Donates \$550!



On 16 May, Cassidy Reneau, a student at St. Mary's Catholic School, presented John Farrell a \$550 check from the entire student body. Cassidy is the President of their National Honor Society. Also pictured is one of her teachers, Nancy Potchka, a parishioner at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church. Thank you all so much! 4