

## A FOND FAREWELL

*from Jody Collins Skinner,  
Retiring Director of Development*

Mission of Deeds greeted me, like it greets everyone, with a friendly smile and open arms when I started to volunteer in 2013. It is beautiful to be a part of the volunteers who lovingly give new life to donated items and then give them to our clients. In 2014, I joined the Board of Directors, serving MOD in a different role – one that filled me with a purpose of being an advocate for Mission of Deeds in the broader community.

Becoming the Director of Development in 2017 was a new chapter for me. I had been a social worker in my previous professional life but had been home raising my children for many years. Nevertheless, Bruce, our former executive director, saw potential and took a chance on me, and I have loved every minute of it. As I look back at my time here, I have countless fond memories with many of you at our events: the galas, Oz Pearlman, the Hank Wonder concert, and golfing in the rain or blistering heat! The generosity of our corporate, foundation, and individual donors, coupled with the sense of community among all who attended, never failed to energize and inspire me. Your generosity in response to this annual appeal, including during the pandemic when we could not gather, has simply amazed me. We have changed our logo and updated our website to keep Tony's vision moving forward.

As my life transitions away from Mission of Deeds and I start a new life in New York City with my husband, Rob, I will forever be grateful to the Mission of Deeds family. My co-workers and our Board are amazing people who are dedicated to helping our neighbors in need, one person at a time. Their inspired work would truly not be possible without the generous support of our wonderful network of donors and sponsors. The compassion that MOD shows to our clients every day is what our world needs.

I am leaving Mission of Deeds in good hands. We have welcomed Sarah Kelley form Lynnfield as the new Director of Development. She will be a great addition to the team.

## VOLUNTEER TOBY WHITNEY GARNERS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

The Kraft family and the New England Patriots Foundation have been recognizing volunteers for going above and beyond to give back to their communities through the Myra Kraft Community MVP Awards program.

Toby Whitney, a long-time Mission of Deeds volunteer, was recognized as one of this year's honorees and presented with a \$10,000 donation for our organization.

**"I am accepting this award on behalf of all Mission of Deeds volunteers, a wonderful group of people who are an inspiration to work with," said Toby.**

"I enjoy using the skills I learned in many years as a contractor to help people in need, but I never expected that my volunteering would lead to anything like this."

A creative thinker, Toby has made 550 coffee tables out of excess table leaves to reduce costs. He volunteers one full day a week but will volunteer daily during major projects as if he were still running his own construction business.

"I deeply appreciate being recognized by the Patriots Foundation," said Toby. "I am especially humbled that the award is named after Myra Kraft. My thanks to everyone at the Patriots organization for the honor and for encouraging volunteerism."



*Left to right: Josh Kraft, Toby Whitney, Andre Tippett, and Kara Buckley*

## PAYING IT FORWARD

*A Client's Story*

The call started as a typical furniture donor conversation. The donor was moving and could not take several pieces of furniture to their new home. There were thoughts of selling the items before a robust wave of emotion encapsulated them. The donor was a former Mission of Deeds' client. We provided support five years earlier and now she wanted to return the favor so someone in need could benefit. It was her turn to pay it forward. She even went through the trouble of

recruiting a friend with a pickup truck to load up her furniture and deliver it to us. After unloading the truck, she relayed her strong sentimental feelings. The bureau in particular held a special place in her heart. She was reluctant to give it up as it was made out of sturdy material and exquisitely ornate. But the reluctance quickly faded as she knew we would be giving it directly back to the community. The next day, a client was thrilled to pick up the coveted bureau. And the journey begins anew.

## MIGRANT CRISIS LEADS TO HISTORIC DEMAND FOR SERVICES

The trickle-down impact of the migrant crisis has crushed the social service agencies we work with every day. Their staffing and resources were already stretched. A statewide agency caseworker relayed to us:

*"With the ongoing relocation of many migrant families to our area, there has been a major surge in the need for assistance which we weren't expecting or prepared for. We are trying to get everyone the help they need, but it is extremely difficult."*

A caseworker in Lawrence echoed this: "I am overwhelmed and cannot balance it anymore with the number of referrals for families in need." Another representative who manages Haitian, Afghan, and Hispanic families sighed, "I am underwater. I cannot handle the volume." The mental and physical toll endured

by agency workers and migrant families is palpable and bubbling.

Mission of Deeds is endeavoring to do our part to meet the moment. We are maintaining a short appointment waiting period of three weeks, squeezing in as many appointments as possible for those requesting only beds or a few items, and opening our doors for a third Saturday every month starting in January.

Our referral process is streamlined and with no red tape. The truck remains on the road for free furniture pickups three days/week to ensure our warehouse remains well stocked.

We are grateful to our neighbors for their support as we band together to provide the basics and treat migrant families with the dignity and respect they deserve.

## OUR GRATITUDE

We want to thank the businesses supporting Mission of Deeds in many ways. They hold fundraisers, sponsor events, champion Buy-a-Bed, and make more affordable (or even donate) needed services and more. Here are a few members of our Business Hall of Fame. We plan to highlight more of you in each newsletter.



## THESE ARE SOME OF THE ITEMS WE CAN PURCHASE FOR OUR CLIENTS BASED ON DONATION LEVELS

\$25	Set of Kitchenware for a Family
\$50	8 Sets of Towels
\$100	10 Sheet Sets
\$150	42 Pillows
\$250	12 Pot and Pan Sets
\$500	25 Toasters and 25 Coffee Makers
\$1000	3 Sets of Bunk Beds with Mattresses
\$1500	150 Blankets
\$2000	9 Bed Sets (Mattress, Box Spring, Pillow, Sheet Set, and Comforter)
\$5000	19 Cribs with Mattresses



At Mission of Deeds we strive to always put our clients first. We are proud that 88.8% of our budget goes directly to client care. In pairing with GuideStar, we are giving our donors a look at where their donation goes and how they have a direct effect on our clients' lives. We hope this information helps you feel great about your decision to donate to Mission of Deeds. GuideStar is the world's largest

source of information on nonprofit organizations. GuideStar's Nonprofit Profiles provide donors with the information they need to make smart decisions, build connections, and learn from each other to achieve their missions. We are proud to have received GuideStar's Platinum Seal of Transparency—their newest and highest level of recognition.

## MOD EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

■ Programs — 88.8%
■ Administration — 8.4%
■ Fundraising — 2.8%



WINTER 2023

## A MESSAGE from our PRESIDENT

It was a year of transition. That is the best way to describe 2023 at Mission of Deeds.

Two factors contributed to the transformative nature of our 30th anniversary year. First and foremost, it was the initial full year for our new executive director. David McIsaac spent his early months learning about the organization, meeting staff and volunteers, and performing all duties to gain an understanding of the operations, donors, directors, and all things MOD. David was ready to jump in at the start of the new year.

The second was MOD finding steady and new footing due to the effects of the Covid virus. The pandemic forced us to discover new ways of delivering our goods to clients. While the virus limited the operation and constraints altered our business model, new opportunities were discovered.

These two influences converged at the beginning of the new year. The MOD crew initiated modifications to meet the moment.

The entire warehouse was transformed into an open-concept showroom to maximize space and enhance the client experience. Beds were the hallmark of founder Tony Triglione's charge: "Get them off the floor." The bed storage area was

expanded by 50%. We introduced volunteer personal hosts who walk clients through the warehouse and make them feel at ease as they select their furnishings.

The nation's migrant crisis that unfolded over the spring and summer found its way to the door of Mission of Deeds in a very real way. The demand for our wares increased dramatically. Through effort and strategy, the need was met.

As the supply of beds, furniture, and kitchen items are always a need, MOD expanded the pickup area to include Lexington. As always, every change in operations and every decision has been inspired by Tony's vision – helping people in need, free of charge, with dignity and respect.

All of this could not have been possible without our supporters, friends, and volunteers. We thank you for all you have done and continue to do for Mission of Deeds and wish you the very best during the holiday season.

Christopher J. Barrett

## TAKE NOTE!



**CASINO NIGHT**  
March 23, 2024  
*at Café Escadrille*



**YARD SALE**  
Saturday, April 27, 2024  
*(Rain date: Sunday, April 28)*



Check out our 30th Anniversary Video!

## A MESSAGE *from our* EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The phone desk operates as the central nervous system at Mission of Deeds. All activities are orchestrated through it. A donor coordinates a free furniture pickup to pass on family heirlooms. A client schedules an appointment to pick out furnishings for their home. A volunteer relays their availability for the week.

When I started at Mission of Deeds over one year ago, I was determined to experience all aspects of the organization. I packed boxes constructed to serve as kitchen starter sets. I carefully paired brand-new comforters, sheets, and towels to make customized linen bags. I hopped on the truck, hauled furniture, and listened to backstories from donors. I walked clients through the warehouse and served as their personal host. I also answered calls at the phone desk. One of those calls has stuck with me as it epitomizes our simple, yet transformative impact.

A mother called in a frenzy. She already had two children under her care and was six months pregnant with twin boys on the way.

It was full-on scramble mode to find appropriate beds for the growing family. Anxiety was at a peak level. Her voice strained with concern over accepting used beds for fear of bed bugs. As I explained our process and reassured her we only provide brand-new beds, her worries dissipated. She was stunned that we existed and were willing to provide high-quality furnishings at no cost. Overcome with emotion, she broke down with a heavy dichotomous mixture of tears and unbridled joy. After we hung up, I had to take a moment to collect myself.

Mission of Deeds is a simple concept. We are a volunteer-supported nonprofit that gives new beds and gently used donated furniture, kitchen essentials, and household goods, free of charge, to people leaving homelessness and others in great need. It is heartwarming to work at an organization that transforms lives every day. The brand-new beds we provided to the woman made her home functional, livable, and safe. Her twin boys now curl up on a warm mattress in a secure crib.

The older children enjoy a peaceful night's rest that leaves them refreshed for the school day ahead.

The basics – including a bed, bureau, kitchen table, vacuum, couch, microwave, lamps, and dishes – are powerful instruments to launch a fresh start. Research vigorously defends the concept that a furnished home leads to stable housing, gainful employment, and a host of other positive outcomes. A couch alters an empty living room into a social gathering space. A kitchen starter set lends itself to cooking healthy and nutritious meals at home. A lamp illuminates a bedroom so a child can read their favorite book. The basics matter.

Clients arrive at our warehouse at their lowest point. They leave with a bounce in their step and a truck full of hope. Their lives are forever changed.

*David McIsaac*

David McIsaac

## WAYS TO GIVE TO MISSION OF DEEDS

Our work is not possible without you. Financial contributions, event sponsorships, in-kind donations, and volunteerism have sustained our organization for thirty years.

From a financial viewpoint, our monthly giving program is the easiest way to provide consistent support for the ongoing work of Mission of Deeds. By donating monthly, you can spread your gift throughout the year and make an even more significant impact in the lives of our clients. With just \$18 a month, over the course of the 12 months, your gift enables us to purchase a complete bed set plus linens for a child in need. A reoccurring gift of \$84 a month allows Mission of Deeds to furnish an entire apartment for a family.

There are also alternative ways to financially support our work. Mission of Deeds gratefully accepts gifts in these forms:

- IRA distributions
- Appreciated stock and other securities
- Donor-advised fund grants
- Private foundation grants
- Charitable gift of a life insurance policy

Please consult with your financial planner to determine the best option for you. For more information, you can contact David at [david.mcisaac@missionofdeeds.org](mailto:david.mcisaac@missionofdeeds.org).

As of January 1, 2023, Massachusetts taxpayers can deduct charitable donations on their state tax returns.

NOW YOU CAN  
DONATE VIA VENMO  
BY SCANNING  
THIS CODE.



@MISSIONOFDEEDS93

*Whatever way you support Mission of Deeds, please know that you are helping those in need build and sustain better lives for themselves and their families.*

## A VIEW FROM THE WAREHOUSE

*By Bruce Murison*

The primary purpose of our facility, of course, is to enable Mission of Deeds to provide the people we help with everything they need to furnish their new apartments and for them to have a respectful and happy experience while they are here.

Consistent with that, our space must attractively display your generously donated furniture and also be a safe and inviting place for our incredible volunteers to perform their crucial service.

With these objectives in mind, about a year ago we began to reimagine every inch of our 10,000-square-foot warehouse. While MOD had always maintained a service-oriented facility, we knew we could do better.

We worked section by section. We moved the beds and winter coats storage rooms, expanding and modernizing both, and giving every component of our all-important beds program a unified area for the first time.

We then went through every part of the main warehouse, reconfiguring the storage racks and greatly improving the display of each kind of furniture. Along the way, we built new shelving to house lamps and small appliances, improved our woodwork repair shop, and created a streamlined area to sort donated items.

The result is that clients now choose the things they need in a facility that has been transformed from a warehouse into a

furniture showroom that is triple the size of the area that clients could access before.

Many people have contributed to the renovation. We especially thank Toby Whitney, a retired general contractor who performed the buildout gratis and with incredible skill. Because of his efforts, Toby was recognized by the New England Patriots Foundation as one of the most outstanding volunteers in the six-state area.

We have more improvements in mind, so stay tuned. Everything we do has a single purpose: to make each client's visit to Mission of Deeds the best experience possible.



*Left to right: The new show room, the new mattress room, and a client's fully-stocked kitchen*

## MOD NEEDS YOU!

### DO YOU KNOW:

- HOW TO REUPHOLSTER?
- DRIVE A 20-FOOT TRUCK?
- REFRESH A BUREAU BY SANDING AND STAINING?

WE ARE ACTIVELY LOOKING  
FOR VOLUNTEERS TO FILL  
THE FOLLOWING ROLES:

We need volunteers to offer their time to bring used furniture back to life. Workshop volunteers enable us to take in furniture that needs work. If you know how to repair, woodwork, or reupholster, we would be delighted to have you join our crew. This is a self-guided activity. Must have prior experience.

*“Volunteering in the workshop is a rewarding experience. We refurbish furniture to a show room state which provides dignity and respect to the people we assist.”*

— Howie Sepowitz

### TRUCK PICKUP CREW

Hit the road to pick up furniture from local homes in the MOD-branded truck. If you have a CDL, we would be delighted for you to drive. But you do not need to drive to be part of the pickup crew. Mission of Deeds requires items to be outside to make pickups safe and efficient. You need the ability to lift 50 lbs+.

*“Giving back is very satisfying. The workshop and truck crew are critical elements in the process as we divert items destined for a landfill. We give furniture a second life.”*

— Tom Hirschfeld



*The Bill Mulrenan family at the 2023 Golf Tournament (top), Bruce Murison passes the “torch” to David McIsaac at the 2023 Gala (bottom)*



## WHO IS MISSION OF DEEDS?

Mission of Deeds is a volunteer-supported nonprofit that gives new beds and gently used furniture, kitchen items, and household goods, free of charge, to people leaving homelessness and others in great need.

The organization was founded by Tony Triglione 30 years ago. Tony never lost his compassion for those without as he grew up in a similar circumstance. His vision was that Mission of Deeds would be a place where people would receive the items they need while being treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

We pick up furniture for FREE in 11 towns, including Burlington, Lexington (new starting in 2023), Lynnfield, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Stoneham, Wakefield, Wilmington, Winchester, and Woburn. For a complete list of the items we can accept, please visit our website or call 781-944-9797. The furniture we pick up is given directly to our clients. We work with social service agencies, housing authorities, schools, and hospitals who refer people in need to us.

**Helping people in need is a team effort.  
It is all about neighbors helping neighbors.**

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*A single mother with two young boys coming out of a shelter wrote:*

“I had my appointment yesterday and woke up this morning to a full house of not only necessary furniture but plates and pans, bedding and a grocery store gift card that filled the fridge in our new home. I can actually get up and cook breakfast for my little guys and then read books that we were given on our new couch. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! What you do changes lives.”

*A formerly unboxed family wrote:*

“My family and I cannot begin to thank Mission of Deeds. You were there when we had no one to help us! Without your help my family and I would be without beds and furniture in an empty house. Thanks to Mission of Deeds you have made our house become a home!!!”

*A client escaping domestic violence wrote:*

“You helped me in the next stop in my journey. Thank you so much.”

*A Veteran's Services Officer wrote:*

“I would like to thank everyone for their assistance in providing a completely outfitted apartment for my client. This is his first apartment in many, many years. He was not living in a safe environment. It is comforting to know he is now in a nice community. Thank you for all the wonderful assistance you provide to all those in need.”

*The caseworker for refugees wrote:*

“I want to thank you for all your hard work. We couldn't have wished for better service – both efficient and caring. The smiles on our clients' faces testify to their joy after now receiving what they have not had during their 17 years in a Nepalese refugee camp.”

*A client wrote:*

“Thank you very much for the wonderful things your organization does to make life easier.”