

# DISMAS House

## Ho Ho Holiday Cheer at Dismas

### From the Directors

Around Dismas, we have a saying “Dismas is family.” Never have these words been truer than this past year, when Dismas residents and staff have had to rely on one another throughout the pandemic for connection, community and support.

During these challenging times, Dismas programs have continued to be a beacon for those who need it most. Across our three programs—Dismas House, the Dismas Family Farm, and the Father John Brooks House—we have offered hope, understanding, and opportunity for the recovering and formerly incarcerated men who call Dismas home.

You can learn more about Dismas by visiting our website at [www.dismasisfamily.org](http://www.dismasisfamily.org). We look forward to reconnecting with our friends and supporters in the coming year—please stay in touch to find out ways you can support us. Thank you!

*Colleen and Dave*



**Our miniature horses Thelma and Louise were stars at Dismas Christmas**

This year, Dismas got to celebrate Christmas a little early with our second annual winter event, Dismas Christmas! We were glad to see so much of our extended Dismas family—the community members, church groups, friends, and volunteers who make our Dismas programs

possible. Many enjoyed hay rides up the hill, petting the sheep, and giving lots of treats to our mini-horses Thelma and Louise! We are so grateful to everyone who picked out their Christmas trees from Dismas or purchased some of our crafts. While it might have seemed like just a fun weekend activity, the support from all of our community members at Dismas Christmas



**Residents and staff helped families find perfect trees**



**Farm residents participated in all aspects of our festive holiday event**

will help us to keep doing the restorative work in our homes, allowing men to heal after years of prison, incarceration, and addiction. Thank you for this gift to all of us!

**Donate online at [www.dismasisfamily.org](http://www.dismasisfamily.org)**

# Dismas Expands Hunger Efforts



**Farm fellow Anna delivers a box of fresh veggies to our friends at Jeremiah's**

D i s m a s  
H o u s e ' s  
R e c o v e r y  
G r o w s  
W o r c e s t e r  
p r o g r a m  
a n n u a l l y  
d i s t r i b u t e s  
p r o d u c e  
t o  
l o w - i n c o m e  
f a m i l i e s  
f a c i n g  
f o o d

insecurity in Worcester. This past year, we delivered 320 boxes of fresh, local produce to our community partners—that's 2,500 pounds of delicious vegetables! Next year, we hope to grow even more. Through a generous grant from Shaw's Supermarkets/Albertsons Companies, the Dismas Family Farm will be able to expand our Recovery Grows Worcester program next summer and help even more local families without easy access to healthy food get sustainable produce. However, as its name suggests, the Recovery Grows Worcester program is two-fold. Our residents at the Dismas Family Farm are former prisoners recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, so growing food for the hungry is an important means by which our residents reconcile themselves with the community and find fulfillment and purpose. We are so grateful for this support and for the opportunity it brings to help more Worcester families in need!

## SAVE THE DATES!

**OCT. 2, 2021**

12th Annual Dismas Family Farm  
Fall Festival

**NOV. 27, and DEC. 4 and 11, 2021**

3rd Annual Dismas Christmas  
Tree Sale

# Spotlight on Advocacy

In the past year, the Dismas Community Organizing Initiative under Dismas graduate Mike Earielo's leadership has worked with a group of Dismas residents and family members on policy initiatives to improve the lives of former prisoners. This work has included convening a group of stakeholders to advocate to improve access at the local Social Security office. Additionally, Mike and his team have represented Dismas at housing and other city forums to ensure the needs of former prisoners are being met during the pandemic, while also working on statewide decarceration efforts to lower the prison census safely. The team is continuing to work on these efforts as well as building partnerships to address housing needs for returning prisoners.



**Dismas graduate Mike Earielo leads our advocacy efforts**

## Dismas Board of Directors

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Paul Gallagher  
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Jay Sullivan





# Heard Around Dismas...

As a college student, I talked so much about "solidarity with the marginalized" - that, theoretically, it is best practice for any efforts toward social change to be centered around and grounded by those actually affected. At Dismas, that very principle is enacted: our organization only functions alongside, never above or without, folks who have gone through incarceration and homelessness, who have felt and still feel the ill effects of racism and addiction, who know poverty firsthand. Very simply, we're family. All that we do is done together.

**-Raechel Kiesel, Fellow at the Dismas Family Farm**

The farm saved my life. It's different than other programs. It offers a different type of lifestyle, the farming and taking care of the animals. It's peaceful in the country. It's like a family, a community. During the pandemic, we have become close-knit, depending on each other.

**-Resident at the Dismas Family Farm**



## Dismas is Family!



## By the Numbers

- # Dismas House, the Dismas Family Farm and the Father John Brooks House are home each year to 65 homeless and former prisoners trying to rebuild their lives.
- # Over 300 volunteers, from families, churches, and local schools, help out at Dismas programs each year.
- # Dismas piloted a new family program, helping to reunite 1 family, a father and son, who now live in one of our programs.
- # The Dismas Family Farm grows over 20,000 pounds of vegetables each year!
- # The Dismas Family Farm has 13 sheep, 2 cats, 2 dogs, and 2 adorable miniature horses, Thelma and Louise.

**Dismas House of Massachusetts**  
**Post Office Box 30125**  
**Worcester, MA 01603**  
**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

### **Dismas Wish List**

- ✓ New twin-sized sheets and blankets. New pillows and bath towels.
- ✓ Laundry detergent, toilet paper, paper towels, and other cleaning supplies.
- ✓ New men's work boots, sneakers, and gloves.
- ✓ New men's sweatshirts, sweatpants, t-shirt (sizes large-XXXL).
- ✓ Fuel gift cards to help with transportation costs.

Please contact us (see contact info at right) to arrange drop-off or pick-up of donations. Thank you!

## **Ways to Connect**

- ✓ On our website at [www.dismasisfamily.org](http://www.dismasisfamily.org)
- ✓ On Facebook at 'Dismas House'
- ✓ On Instagram at '@dismashouseofma'
- ✓ By email at [cmdismashouse@aol.com](mailto:cmdismashouse@aol.com)
- ✓ By phone at (508) 799-9389 or at the farm at (508) 882-0000



**Donate online at [www.dismasisfamily.org](http://www.dismasisfamily.org)**  
**Thank you for your support!**