

Season 2 Episode 3: Housing Part 2
[intro music Sun Through Shade]

Abby: In our first episode of the two part series on housing, we spoke with Lou Weissert, a patient navigator working on a housing and social determinants of health project at 16th Street Community Clinics. In this episode, we will speak with Jazi Foreman, the Program Director at Solid Ground. Solid Ground is a non-profit organization in the Twin Cities metro area committed to families experiencing housing instability. We hope you enjoy our interview with this incredible housing professional, advocate, and activist. Also, be sure to listen to our answer to the quiz question from our first episode in the series afterwards.

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00:06:29.100 --> 00:06:36.150

Abby: Um, our first question for you is, can you tell listeners. Your name position and the work that your organization does

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00:06:37.050 --> 00:06:38.040

Jazi: I am

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00:06:38.130 --> 00:06:39.180

Abby: Jazi Foreman

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00:06:39.810 --> 00:06:55.920

Jazi: I am the Program Director here at Solid Ground and we work with homeless families, our goal is to stabilize families who have been homeless. It could be short term or long term we have five different programs for homeless families.

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00:06:57.390 --> 00:07:01.170

Jazi: Our newest program is Homework Starts With Home, which is

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00:07:02.880 --> 00:07:09.600

Jazi: A program that we collaborate with the school district and the Ramsey County Collaborative

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00:07:10.860 --> 00:07:32.340

Jazi: As well as St. Andrew's church and we work with families of students who are homeless, who are referred to us by the community social workers, and then I'm I my I'm office at a site based program that has 34 units of housing 17 are which are

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00:07:33.600 --> 00:07:40.170

Jazi: I'm sorry 14 of which are permanent supportive in 20 of which are transitional housing.

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00:07:41.820 --> 00:07:42.690

Jazi: And so

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00:07:43.830 --> 00:07:44.760

Jazi: We have

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00:07:45.780 --> 00:07:54.780

Jazi: Long term housing which is a year or more of homelessness or we have transitional housing which

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00:07:56.610 --> 00:08:10.650

Jazi: folks come in for two years date. Our permanent housing is for unlimited amount of time here at Solid Ground East Metroplace and then we have a Veterans program, which is located in Maplewood

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00:08:11.280 --> 00:08:31.650

Jazi: Our Home Front program and we have 10 units of housing in a 50 unit building there and we have scattered sites in suburban Ramsey, and Washington County we have up to 24 units that we work with community landlords to house our families so

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00:08:32.670 --> 00:08:53.130

Jazi: At any given time. We work with 80 to 90 families and I have staff of social workers, employment and coordinators youth and parenting coordinators property managers and then housing specialists that are staffed to serve our families.

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00:08:56.490 --> 00:09:09.120

Hannah T Kinzer: Very nice. Thank you so much for telling us a little bit more about your work. I know that Abby was really excited to interview you. And it sounds like a lot of a lot of great programs. So thank you. I'm excited to learn more.

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00:09:10.260 --> 00:09:13.410

Hannah T Kinzer: So how did you become interested in your current work.

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00:09:13.920 --> 00:09:14.400

You know,

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00:09:15.510 --> 00:09:29.190

Jazi: I have a 23 year history and telecommunications and I moved here from Seattle and worked it with US West, which is now CenturyLink and

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00:09:30.720 --> 00:09:35.130

Jazi: Took the early buyout went back to school and got my degree in

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00:09:36.240 --> 00:09:48.450

Jazi: The law. So a theological seminary and then a guy at my church just kept telling me I need to come work with them. I knew nothing about the nonprofit sector at all.

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00:09:49.020 --> 00:10:01.530

Jazi: He said, But you just always you meet people right where they're at, you know, I want I watch you minister to people and you just meet people right where they're at. We need books like you in our industry and so

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00:10:02.550 --> 00:10:17.010

Jazi: And I became homeless during this process, because I ran out of money going back to school. So me and my boys became homeless and one of my best girlfriends. We stayed with her for about three months and

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00:10:18.330 --> 00:10:25.230

Jazi: During that time I ran into someone who I was on the Hennepin County Leadership Academy and he

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00:10:26.970 --> 00:10:34.020

Jazi: I hope this ongoing about this because it's kind of my life history that brought me here and he

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00:10:35.280 --> 00:10:37.290

Jazi: shared with me that he had changed.

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00:10:39.600 --> 00:10:50.730

Jazi: His job too and he was a property manager and I told him. You know what I had come out of US West and I lost my house because I kind of ran out of money. So I needed.

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00:10:51.150 --> 00:11:08.730

Jazi: I'm, I'm looking for a place to stay. So he gave me his card told me who to call and I ended up getting a place through him, and the experience of being homeless is something that I never thought that would happen to me and my children and I think

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00:11:09.840 --> 00:11:16.980

Jazi: Being a divorced single mom is the worst thing that could ever happen to you. And so I

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00:11:18.300 --> 00:11:19.230

Jazi: I always

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00:11:20.340 --> 00:11:25.050

Jazi: Wanted to help be that person to help facilitate

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00:11:26.400 --> 00:11:47.130

Jazi: Someone's life to to either help them out of homelessness or prevent them from becoming homeless that experience taught me a lot about myself and it taught me a lot about the importance of knowing and networking knowing people who can help you knowing

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00:11:48.720 --> 00:11:57.810

Jazi: Just being able to navigate the system. And at that time I knew nothing about social services or anything like that. So I learned the hard way.

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00:11:58.740 --> 00:12:19.230

Jazi: How to navigate and become a housed again. And now I own my home. I outright. I don't have a mortgage or anything. So it was a goal of mine, never to be homeless again. So I work towards that. And I achieve that. So I just believe that I have

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00:12:20.970 --> 00:12:36.330

Jazi: The, the right attitude to help people who need that type of support because it's the worst place to be in. And it's, I mean, at that time, my baby boy was 13 or 14

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00:12:37.590 --> 00:12:44.520

Jazi: In my oldest son was going on 17 so for them. It was really difficult high school and junior high.

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00:12:45.030 --> 00:12:56.040

Jazi: It was a difficult time because their stability was ripped from them. And so I saw the impact that it has on your family. It's just

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00:12:57.000 --> 00:13:05.850

Jazi: Nothing that you can explain to anyone unless you've been there. You know what I'm saying. I mean, you can empathize and you can be in awareness.

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00:13:06.390 --> 00:13:21.930

Jazi: And you but but my homelessness came because of economics. It didn't come because of anything that I was doing to myself or any inabilities even at that time when I would try to

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00:13:23.280 --> 00:13:25.170

Jazi: Apply for different positions.

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00:13:26.280 --> 00:13:45.270

Jazi: They tell me I was overqualified or they don't you know it was like, I'd be interviewed by folks as young as you and they say this woman knows more than me, she could do my job, kind of thing. You don't want to say, so it was just an awkward time in my life, but I managed to

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00:13:47.580 --> 00:13:49.590

Jazi: Come into a place where

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00:13:51.840 --> 00:14:00.240

Jazi: Whatever job became available. That's what I was going to take and so at that time I

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00:14:01.290 --> 00:14:03.210

Jazi: Took a position at

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00:14:04.620 --> 00:14:17.700

Jazi: It's called Resource, Inc. And it was like a probably a quarter of what I made in corporate America. And the woman said she wasn't gonna even interview me because she saw where I came from.

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00:14:18.570 --> 00:14:30.240

Jazi: But I told him from zero to whatever is it is a race and I need to pay bills and feed my kids, you know, and so I ended up getting that job and

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00:14:31.380 --> 00:14:37.350

Jazi: Progressed. It was a brand new program and that and that was working with youth and so

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00:14:38.310 --> 00:14:48.750

Jazi: It just seemed like things just started falling into place as far as where I'm at now from where I came from in the nonprofit sector, I worked with

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00:14:49.680 --> 00:15:02.100

Jazi: The youth for about a year and then I moved on to a chemical health and mental health, working with turning point, which is an African American culturally specific treatment program. I was

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00:15:02.850 --> 00:15:14.640

Jazi: Work with the men in employment and then became the program manager for the mothers and children program and and that's how I got involved in housing.

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00:15:15.420 --> 00:15:27.240

Jazi: And then an opportunity became came forth for me to go to Model Cities in Model Cities was... and I was going to become the housing advocate there.

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00:15:27.720 --> 00:15:42.900

Jazi: And then I became the housing coordinator, and then I got the opportunity to become the program director at Perspectives, which is another big housing program in in Minnesota for women coming out of recovery and then

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00:15:44.070 --> 00:15:57.480

Jazi: I worked there for about five years. I learned so much between Model Cities and Perspectives about housing about trauma about the impacts of homelessness on families and

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00:15:58.620 --> 00:16:08.940

Jazi: That, you know, sometimes you're going to be successful with that family and sometimes not. Sometimes you just plant the seed and they move on and someone else.

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00:16:09.690 --> 00:16:24.960

Jazi: Brings them to a different level. So it's just so much that I learned in that process. And then I did a little bit of work at Lutheran Social Service and then now and then I came here to Solid Ground and I've been here for nine years.

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00:16:25.500 --> 00:16:35.430

Jazi: And I love what I do, I can honestly say that every day I get up to go to work. I enjoy what I do and I don't know how many people can say that in their life.

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00:16:35.850 --> 00:16:59.100

Jazi: But I'm fortunate that I can do that. And I can watch families grow and develop and watch even new staff grow and develop and help motivate and encourage folks to be self sufficient and stabilized. So that's how I got into housing. Yeah.

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00:17:00.870 --> 00:17:04.200

Jazi: It was a long journey. But that was my journey.

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00:17:08.310 --> 00:17:10.530

Abby: Thank you so much for sharing your story with us.

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00:17:13.140 --> 00:17:28.020

Abby: Our next question. I didn't know you talked a little bit about this already, but we are wondering if you could tell us a little bit more about why housing is something we should be particularly concerned about and what are the potential consequences of ignoring that issue.

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00:17:28.770 --> 00:17:34.650

Jazi: One thing about housing. It brings stability to your life. It

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00:17:39.480 --> 00:17:45.570

Jazi: It gives you when you go home and should be your sanctuary is your place to be able to be you.

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00:17:46.050 --> 00:18:00.570

Jazi: And be free in and be developed in and be able to fellowship with other folks within your own home. And when you don't have that you have no stability, you're in what we, what I call a survival mode.

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00:18:02.130 --> 00:18:07.290

Jazi: And when you're always trying to figure out where your next meal is coming from where I'm going to lay my head.

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00:18:07.800 --> 00:18:29.700

Jazi: Where my kids are going to get clothes from when it starts getting cold outside winter clothes boots, things like that. It's, it's, you are traumatized. You you have one focus and that is to survive to the next day and that is no way to live. You are emotionally challenged

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00:18:31.140 --> 00:18:40.290

Jazi: You can even create up the mental your emotional emotional instability, where you become depressed.

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00:18:40.740 --> 00:18:50.280

Jazi: Or anxious, you know, it can cause stress because some of the things you might go through at a shelter or some of the things that you might go through on the street.

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00:18:50.940 --> 00:19:08.670

Jazi: Living in your car, it's traumatizing. You know, and I watched some of our families who come in and sometimes it takes them a few months just to unpack the little bit of things that they have because they're not sure if somebody's going to knock on the door and say, You gotta go.

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00:19:09.810 --> 00:19:19.530

Jazi: It really challenges, who you are, and takes every fiber of your being to survive when you're homeless.

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00:19:20.280 --> 00:19:32.910

Jazi: Those are the consequences. You have mental health issues you some people chemical health, they can't survive a day without smoking they' weed because they can't they can't function.

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00:19:33.810 --> 00:19:47.190

Jazi: On just some people drink, you know, they can't function in that realm of life, and it is a hard way to go when you don't have a key to call your own

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00:19:47.730 --> 00:20:00.450

Jazi: When you don't have a lease with your name on it. You are homeless and that is no no no place for anyone to be. And what does it do? It impacts our generations.

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00:20:01.380 --> 00:20:12.990

Jazi: To the mom the dad that generation, it impacts and it impacts the generation that they're bringing up when they have children, because our children are traumatized.

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00:20:14.280 --> 00:20:16.440

Jazi: A child needs a home.

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00:20:17.880 --> 00:20:19.590

Jazi: Everyone deserves a home.

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00:20:20.850 --> 00:20:32.400

Jazi: You know, and sometimes we have these preconceived notions that homelessness comes from people not doing right doing things that they shouldn't be doing. But that's not true.

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00:20:33.360 --> 00:20:52.050

Jazi: Economically, it can, if you're economically challenged you can lose your home because the price of housing is expensive. If your income doesn't match you can you can be one paycheck away from being homeless.

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00:20:53.520 --> 00:21:03.510

Jazi: In the consequences, it's, it, it just impacts. It just doesn't impact the person who's homeless homeless, it impacts the

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00:21:04.170 --> 00:21:17.400

Jazi: Taxes, it impacts communities, it impacts other relatives. You know what I'm saying. Because you're someone's trying to help their people and then sometimes they're not in a position to be helped.

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00:21:18.600 --> 00:21:27.870

Jazi: We have folks that we house here and they have relatives that are still homeless, possibly, and then they try to help them.

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00:21:28.500 --> 00:21:38.940

Jazi: Well, they can't because there's there's only so much time that they can be take that outside guests can live here with them. You know what I'm saying. So it's

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00:21:39.240 --> 00:21:47.940

Jazi: It's just a domino effect because sometimes what will happen is a family will take in another family, and then they end up losing their housing.

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00:21:49.020 --> 00:21:57.660

Jazi: Because they tried to help another family because that property manager says, you got to go this too many people in this home. There's overcrowding.

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00:21:58.530 --> 00:22:18.090

Jazi: So it's just a... it...there's so many impacts to our community in our society that homelessness greens. I could go on and on and on, but it's really something that people need to really educate themselves on what homelessness is and how they can help.

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00:22:23.280 --> 00:22:25.620

Jazi: I hope that answers the question.

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00:22:26.550 --> 00:22:28.290

Hannah T Kinzer: Absolutely, absolutely.

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00:22:28.350 --> 00:22:47.700

Hannah T Kinzer: answers the question we really appreciate like hearing your insights on this and you know it's it's such an important issue that it's so it's so maybe not represented well in in like media and not represented well in the news. So getting like a firsthand.

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00:22:48.810 --> 00:22:52.410

Hannah T Kinzer: Like insight on that it's it's absolutely incredible.

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00:22:52.950 --> 00:23:00.120

Jazi: Well, think about our veterans who are homeless. I mean, it's so, so I mean they

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00:23:00.630 --> 00:23:02.070

They served our country.

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00:23:03.540 --> 00:23:06.270

Jazi: And it's it's it's almost like

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00:23:07.320 --> 00:23:22.860

Jazi: No one cares. And that and until the I can say the Obama administration came in. There was a definite change in the veteran process to getting housing.

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00:23:24.360 --> 00:23:35.820

Jazi: And I just I think about some of our veterans that have come in our program and have a have thrived and moved on with their families. You know, I think about

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00:23:36.450 --> 00:23:45.810

Jazi: Some of the veterans that don't want to move. They're in a permanent housing position and we set them up with the appropriate resources. So now they have a stable place to live.

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00:23:46.500 --> 00:23:57.150

Jazi: In their children have a stable place to live. The imagine, and I'll use my own family as an example because my oldest son.

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00:23:57.870 --> 00:24:09.240

Jazi: What he went through my divorce with me, even though my baby boy was a baby. He didn't know his dad. The same way that is my oldest son did

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00:24:09.900 --> 00:24:23.730

Jazi: And so he went through a lot of trauma with that and I had, I bought a home after my divorce in Seattle. I lived in Seattle and moved here. And so when when

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00:24:24.270 --> 00:24:35.250

Jazi: I moved here my oldest son was in the fifth grade, and he was not because he was a first grader when we went through the divorce.

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00:24:36.030 --> 00:24:46.980

Jazi: And he kind of got behind in school and it affected him emotionally. And so we went through a children's therapy and all of that. But when I moved here I got him a tutor.

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00:24:47.520 --> 00:24:55.770

Jazi: So that by the time he went through sixth grade. By the time he got to seventh grade, which is junior high. He was at reading level.

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00:24:56.400 --> 00:25:10.800

Jazi: And so I had the ability to do that for my job to help him through his trauma and then my youngest son, all the way from the first grade, all the way through junior high.

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00:25:11.460 --> 00:25:22.680

Jazi: He we had the same we lived in the same home. We had the same teachers, you know, he had the same friends they those friends or their

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00:25:23.220 --> 00:25:35.820

Jazi: Friends today as adults. So the stability in in their lives is... shows because they've been in the same environment.

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00:25:36.720 --> 00:25:52.710

Jazi: When you uproot your children and dont and dont have the ability to put the resources in place to help them through that trauma, they become possibly those same homeless adults.

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00:25:53.760 --> 00:25:55.950

Jazi: Because they haven't been developed.

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00:25:57.180 --> 00:26:07.320

Jazi: They haven't been given the tools to overcome those hurts and those pains that they've experienced in

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00:26:09.360 --> 00:26:18.330

Jazi: In that's not everyone, but that's how sometimes folks become homeless again because they did not get that stability.

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00:26:18.720 --> 00:26:32.460

Jazi: They did not get that reinforcement. They didn't get that person in their life saying how much they're loved, how talented, they are how beautiful they are. There's so many possibilities and opportunities for

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00:26:33.180 --> 00:26:56.100

Jazi: Them. They didn't get those things because when you have generational poverty, it just perpetuates that homeless homelessness, it just continues to cycle. And when I watched families come through our program here and they break that cycle. I watched

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00:26:57.390 --> 00:27:08.880

Jazi: two women in particular that the first couple of years. I was here and they both broke the cycle of education. They were the first in their family to ever get a

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00:27:10.410 --> 00:27:12.750

Jazi: GED or diploma.

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00:27:13.800 --> 00:27:19.290

Jazi: And there was three generations of moms that came and watched

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00:27:20.460 --> 00:27:22.830

Jazi: Like there was three rows of that family

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00:27:24.210 --> 00:27:36.420

Jazi: celebrating the possibilities for their life. Do you understand? when you when you put those efforts in into even adults.

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00:27:37.380 --> 00:27:52.560

Jazi: And it may open up to you and you present opportunities change can come and that's what we're really about here. At Solid Ground hopefully presenting the opportunity for change.

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00:27:54.390 --> 00:27:54.630

Yeah.

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00:27:58.830 --> 00:28:07.860

Hannah T Kinzer: Thank you so much. Um, yeah, it's, it's so interesting how housing and education and like mental health are also interconnected.

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00:28:08.130 --> 00:28:18.060

Hannah T Kinzer: Yes. And yeah, and illustrating the stories you know it's it's so much more powerful than just reading statistics and things like that.

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00:28:19.170 --> 00:28:28.320

Hannah T Kinzer: Can you share a story about how the housing situation has changed, maybe with the community that you work with.

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00:28:29.460 --> 00:28:29.940

Jazi: So,

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00:28:30.510 --> 00:28:31.740

Jazi: I think over

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00:28:32.070 --> 00:28:38.250

Jazi: The last probably nine years because I've been here, nine years we've seen more trauma.

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00:28:39.240 --> 00:28:50.730

Jazi: In families because we're, you know, there was the crack addiction that came to the community. Right. Then there's the meth addiction and now the opiate addiction, so

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00:28:51.210 --> 00:29:13.890

Jazi: Some of these folks were raised by people in those addictions. So they're the value systems of family aren't the same. So you're teaching families, how to live again how to be responsive, how to be accountable.

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00:29:15.210 --> 00:29:24.690

Jazi: They and the thing. The sweet part about it is, is that there's a desire for better. There's a desire for more

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00:29:25.140 --> 00:29:33.360

Jazi: Folks know that there's more to life than what they've seen and been through, you know, they don't want that anymore. They want something different.

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00:29:33.990 --> 00:29:44.790

Jazi: So that's what I've seen over the last nine years more trauma. So we've been we've changed the way we provide and becoming more trauma informed.

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00:29:45.510 --> 00:30:04.650

Jazi: And and using the the housing first model, which means with mental health issues with chemical health issues. We're not going to deny you the ability to have housing. We're going to bring in the services to help you be able to

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00:30:06.270 --> 00:30:26.370

Jazi: Move forward in your life. However, that's going to look to you becoming more person centered in meeting folks right where they're at and not mandating services but coaching through life skills and presenting opportunities for families to be able to

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00:30:27.420 --> 00:30:34.080

Jazi: Get those resources, whether it's a mental health therapist, whether it's parenting classes, whether it's budgeting.

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00:30:34.470 --> 00:30:51.510

Jazi: And we want all of our families to go through tenet training so they can learn how to read build a relationship with the landlord and pay their rent on time building those skills of life that are going to help them remain stable. So that's really

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00:30:52.710 --> 00:31:00.840

Jazi: How I see that it's affected our community in that we we have to, we're more clinical driven

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00:31:01.920 --> 00:31:14.550

Jazi: In that we bring in clinicians that even help us through our case reviews, at times, because there's some some families. There's layers and layers of issues.

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00:31:15.360 --> 00:31:32.010

Jazi: Historically, and then you have families, just like I say, life hit them the hard way, economically and they they're motivated and they can do their thing. But there's some families. We have to pull those layers off and help them realize

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00:31:33.240 --> 00:31:34.920

Jazi: A different type of lifestyle.

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00:31:36.000 --> 00:31:44.550

Jazi: So there's a lot of different challenges, but there's also the great rewards, you know, knowing that

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00:31:45.060 --> 00:31:52.350

Jazi: Change has come. I mean, we've had families in the last year because every family at East Metroplace that moves out

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00:31:52.980 --> 00:32:04.440

Jazi: They if Section eight vouchers are available, there's a possibility. They get those vouchers and we've had, I think, three families in the last year that incomed out

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00:32:04.920 --> 00:32:28.170

Jazi: So they don't need the voucher. You know what I'm saying. So it's just amazing to watch people grow and change and be able to pursue their goals and feel comfortable in doing that. And so it's it's exciting, but it's also challenging

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00:32:33.690 --> 00:32:46.650

Abby: Thank you so much for sharing your insights on that. It's really wonderful to hear more about the housing first model and how Solid Ground is person centered in the way that they work with housing.

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00:33:02.040 --> 00:33:10.770

Abby: I guess maybe this ties into the last question a little bit, but what are some things that that give you hope about the future of housing. Yeah.

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00:33:11.760 --> 00:33:12.360

Jazi: I think

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00:33:12.690 --> 00:33:13.560

Jazi: What what I

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00:33:14.400 --> 00:33:23.760

Jazi: Right now for us. We're looking at master leasing because sometimes people's credit is is not or they may have a

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00:33:24.810 --> 00:33:25.410

Jazi: Criminal

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00:33:26.730 --> 00:33:38.340

Jazi: History, Background and so their housing ready, but they've had some flaws in their history. So we we're we're working right now to work with landlords

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00:33:38.850 --> 00:33:50.130

Jazi: To master lease. And that's where we pay the landlord, and then the participant pays us the their portion of the rent, which

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00:33:50.640 --> 00:34:02.880

Jazi: we help build a relationship with that landlord and that participant so that after that years lease is up, they're able to take over their own leads

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00:34:03.720 --> 00:34:23.010

Jazi: Those are some exciting things that we're doing. We also have partnered with different folks in the community, as I said earlier, what like our homework starts with home program we partner with St. Andrew's church. The Ramsey County Collaborative and then it's

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00:34:24.570 --> 00:34:38.220

Jazi: The 621 622 23 and 24 school districts, working with them to help house a children who who are in those school districts who have been

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00:34:39.120 --> 00:34:55.920

Jazi: Identified as homeless, as well as prevention dollars which putting dollars into to prevent people from being evicted. So those are all different types of ways that we're working to

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00:34:57.600 --> 00:35:09.960

Jazi: Help prevent and bring folks into housing. So we're recruiting landlords right now I have a volunteer that's working with my housing specialist

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00:35:10.380 --> 00:35:18.840

Jazi: That that's all she does is recruit landlords. We've updated our website with our whole landlord page.

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00:35:19.650 --> 00:35:27.510

Jazi: This month we're actually going to be doing a zoom presentation to a group of landlords about 15 landlords about our

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00:35:27.990 --> 00:35:42.780

Jazi: this opportunity of master leasing so we're looking forward to making that happen. We partnered with a metro HRA with our Homework Starts With Home program. So we'll be able to

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00:35:44.010 --> 00:36:02.640

Jazi: Give Section eight vouchers out to 15 of those 32 families. So we have to come up with a criteria to make sure that it's going to be beneficial for the for the families that maybe long term, they're not going to be able to

212

00:36:03.690 --> 00:36:11.010

Jazi: There. I'll just say it this way. They may be economically challenged to be able to pay full market rate rent

213

00:36:11.670 --> 00:36:26.760

Jazi: So we're, we're looking at that. So we're one of the our hopes is to partner with folks that want the same things that we want. And that's to keep folks in housing to have a stable place to live.

214

00:36:30.360 --> 00:36:46.980

Hannah T Kinzer: I think you almost, I think. You kind of answered our next question, but I'll ask it anyway, just in case you have any follow ups. So how can people who work to address housing partner with other areas of public health. So you mentioned the

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00:36:48.660 --> 00:36:56.220

Hannah T Kinzer: The education aspect of it. You mentioned kind of the clinicians, and then you also mentioned like public health, people who are working at the county and then of course landlords. Do you see any other areas that like might be also included, I guess I'm thinking like arts nutrition even like dentistry. Yeah.

218

00:37:24.930 --> 00:37:36.630

Jazi: Would we have chemical health folks that are that that I can lean towards and they'll actually come in and do assessments, I have a partnership in that way.

219

00:37:37.110 --> 00:37:46.530

Jazi: The food self three times a week, we have we have volunteers that volunteer for us and they go pick, especially during COVID they go pick up food.

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00:37:46.950 --> 00:38:01.080

Jazi: Three times a week and bring it to our families were so the food shelf is really connected to helping feed our families and will new families move in. They do a special

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00:38:01.800 --> 00:38:12.870

Jazi: Box for the families that are coming into our housing. So yes, there's so many different partnerships that are important.

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00:38:13.590 --> 00:38:21.780

Jazi: Because we can't do it all by ourselves. And if it wasn't for the volunteers that we have, like, we have a tutoring program and that tutoring program.

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00:38:22.110 --> 00:38:40.050

Jazi: Is a lot of folks who from the community that come in, and tutor their kids. So it's every when I think about how people can help. Um, what I mean. What is your skill. Do you know how to type the, you know, technical

224

00:38:41.160 --> 00:39:03.690

Jazi: Services like Computer Services and things like that. You can go. You can volunteer at any shelter and teach classes teach resume building take interview skills, all those kinds of things. If you as a professional. Have a great have heart for helping people.

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00:39:05.100 --> 00:39:16.560

Jazi: to move forward in their lives. What skill, can you bring to the table, it can be used, you know, to help someone else.

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00:39:17.430 --> 00:39:24.840

Jazi: We have folks that come in before COVID we can't do it so much. Now, because of the social distancing

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00:39:25.140 --> 00:39:43.710

Jazi: But we every month we add a group in the community that will come in and prepare a community meal for our families, so then all the families would come down and eat and things like that. A lot of our churches. They do coat drives, for us, they, you know, things like that that

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00:39:45.750 --> 00:39:51.960

Jazi: This year we didn't we. We didn't get as many coats, as we normally get. So we

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00:39:52.710 --> 00:40:00.270

Jazi: We partnered with Goodwill and bought some gift cards or gift certificates for those families that we weren't able to

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00:40:00.690 --> 00:40:20.970

Jazi: To get coats for so because a lot of people because of the social distancing, they're not able to get out and do like they normally would do for us. So this is a season to me with this pandemic for people to reflect on how

231

00:40:22.110 --> 00:40:31.620

Jazi: Can I give back to my community in ways that you don't even think of. And then we we normally have a whole clinic that comes in.

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00:40:32.820 --> 00:40:35.100

Jazi: We also have had dentistry.

233

00:40:36.810 --> 00:40:52.350

Jazi: Services come in and do the basics of cleaning the teeth and things like that, or for our kid kiddos. And so I think there's so many different connections in our community that can help.

234

00:40:52.800 --> 00:41:00.390

Jazi: Us through our shelters through our transitional housing and all of that people who need transportation, you know,

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00:41:01.590 --> 00:41:11.640

Jazi: Giving just donating gift cards for Cub donating donating gift cards for Walmart donating gift cards for gas.

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00:41:12.060 --> 00:41:32.250

Jazi: Things like that. Those are things that our families can use when they start working. They got to get on the bus or they got to have gas for the car if they if they're fortunate to have a vehicle, you know. So those are all different ways that folks can contribute to to

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00:41:33.600 --> 00:41:48.840

Jazi: homeless families. And again, I'm going to say just educate oneself on homelessness, because sometimes we have preconceived notions on why people are homeless and it's not always the truth.

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00:41:49.830 --> 00:42:02.190

Jazi: It's not. And the other piece that impacts and I didn't say this earlier is that a lot of homeless families. They don't have

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00:42:02.700 --> 00:42:13.830

Jazi: Their clinic that they go to emergency becomes or Urgent Care becomes their doctor, you know, like they don't have the same health history.

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00:42:14.460 --> 00:42:34.440

Jazi: Because they're going to urgent care. You know what I'm saying that the preventative care is not there. So helping families establish a health clinic, establish a doctor, those kinds of things are important because when, when you're homeless, your, your health conditions.

241

00:42:36.330 --> 00:42:48.870

Jazi: Are higher in comparison to the general population, you know, you have your diabetes, the hypertension, depression, you can have substance use disorders, even

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00:42:49.980 --> 00:42:59.580

Jazi: heart conditions, hepatitis,, all of those things, but all of those things are are

243

00:43:01.110 --> 00:43:09.390

Jazi: If you have a regular preventative care schedule with the clinic. Those are things that can be prevented.

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00:43:10.680 --> 00:43:23.700

Jazi: But if you're not in a system, a health system and you're just going when you feel sick. That's that is what happens sometimes. You become diseased

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00:43:24.780 --> 00:43:29.310

Jazi: Versus not having that wellness plan in place.

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00:43:50.970 --> 00:43:55.770

Abby: It looks like you already touched on quite a bit, but we're wondering if maybe you have something to add.

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00:43:56.850 --> 00:43:57.690

Abby: Additional about how can people become involved and support work in addressing housing. I know that you mentioned about self education and volunteering. I'm making a donation some kind of what professional services folks can offer, but I'm

251

00:44:16.020 --> 00:44:28.080

Abby: wondering, is there anything that folks could do like maybe in like the policy realm that any any initiatives that they could support or that things are going on right now. Yep.

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00:44:28.500 --> 00:44:30.960

Jazi: Every year, there's a Homeless Day on the Hill.

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00:44:31.770 --> 00:44:35.580

Jazi: And it's usually a March I want to say, March or May.

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00:44:36.690 --> 00:44:38.280

Jazi: It's one of them "M" months.

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00:44:40.080 --> 00:44:52.140

Jazi: But we have homeless day on the hill and you can whatever your zip code is whoever your councilman or your senator or whoever you can go speak to them in regards to homelessness.

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00:44:52.530 --> 00:45:03.660

Jazi: And and how important that is. And the, the other piece and this is off of the political piece of it, but

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00:45:05.580 --> 00:45:08.880

Jazi: Don't treat homeless people like they're invisible.

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00:45:13.320 --> 00:45:16.500

Jazi: If you see someone say good morning. You could be their light.

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00:45:17.580 --> 00:45:25.200

Jazi: You could bring them out. It just a good morning and a smile can could help someone in that depressed state.

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00:45:26.610 --> 00:45:29.910

Jazi: Realizing that they're, they are a person

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00:45:31.980 --> 00:45:43.410

Jazi: You know, sometimes you're in the park or whatever and the homeless people hang out in the part you know and and sometimes we we become fearful.

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00:45:44.580 --> 00:45:48.750

Jazi: When when they're not. They're not there to attack anyone

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00:45:50.190 --> 00:46:10.350

Jazi: they're they're not invisible, it shows, in other words, it's showing respect and giving someone dignity, and I think that's the most important piece of of not the most important, but it's a very important piece of helping folks out of homelessness, but it advocate, you can call your local shelters, to find out what items are needed.

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00:46:24.570 --> 00:46:34.590

Jazi: And then contact your local scout troops or civic organizations to organize like food drives or other fundraising events to pull those items together.

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00:46:35.100 --> 00:46:53.940

Jazi: You know, and follow local politics and speak up at Town Council meetings on issues of homelessness and programs for the homeless. You know, sometimes you can even well we don't newspapers aren't as popular as they used to be. But some people can blog or they can

269

00:46:55.560 --> 00:47:04.320

Jazi: write articles to about your community and how people can help you know to get involved. I think

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00:47:05.550 --> 00:47:11.910

Jazi: It's important that everyone consider what can I do to help

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00:47:13.260 --> 00:47:28.770

Jazi: What, what can I do every day when I wake up I always part of my prayer is is how can I help someone today. Put people across my pathway that I can just speak a word of encouragement to

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00:47:30.780 --> 00:47:36.420

Jazi: sometimes we're we have so much clothes. We don't know what to do with

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00:47:37.560 --> 00:47:49.620

Jazi: You know, sometimes you call and especially if you're a professional, people need in our being close you know they need shoes. They need things that

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00:47:51.330 --> 00:48:00.600

Jazi: That we don't think about we just, we may donate them to Goodwill, or we may, but there may be a shelter that could use those things, call them and ask them.

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00:48:01.350 --> 00:48:11.730

Jazi: there's a lot of clothes closets that need good professional clothes donated to them, you know, it's important that

276

00:48:12.990 --> 00:48:22.110

Jazi: We just not think about ourselves that we be more selfless and realize the needs of our community go bigger than our house.

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00:48:23.190 --> 00:48:30.870

Jazi: Bigger than our household. Yeah, I mean the holidays are coming up, you know, we're talking about

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00:48:33.390 --> 00:48:41.190

Jazi: The half year of school is almost up. And even though some of the kids are distance learning, they still they they grow.

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00:48:41.580 --> 00:49:02.280

Jazi: So people need socks, people need teachers, kids need underwear. You know, they need those kinds of things. And if you choose not to buy them get a gift card from Target or Walmart, you know, those are the things that people need just the everyday basic needs is what folks really really

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00:49:04.230 --> 00:49:08.280

Jazi: Want and then bigger than that is mentorship.

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00:49:09.450 --> 00:49:12.600

Jazi: You know, have you ever just thought about

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00:49:13.710 --> 00:49:17.130

Jazi: putting yourself out there to mentor someone you know

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00:49:18.570 --> 00:49:26.820

Jazi: maybe there's some somebody out there that's in cosmetology and we have people who want to go to cosmetology

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00:49:27.900 --> 00:49:44.370

Jazi: Maybe you shadow them. Maybe you let them shadow you, you know different ways that you can encourage folks to to develop themselves, you know, there's all there's so many, many opportunities that we can help.

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00:49:45.000 --> 00:49:55.590

Jazi: You and we need that help so just reach out to to to two different shelters or transitional housing and say, How can I help?

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00:49:57.330 --> 00:49:58.440

Jazi: We have a

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00:50:01.170 --> 00:50:10.860

Jazi: Breakfast in the in the April every year. And then we do a fundraiser an additional fundraising. We just did one our first

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00:50:11.460 --> 00:50:28.560

Jazi: Virtual gala this past October so, and there's so many ways that people give we there's auction items that people give and they're used in our own action piece and then there's just plain and simple donating money.

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00:50:30.450 --> 00:50:31.080

Jazi: So,

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00:50:32.100 --> 00:50:41.670

Jazi: To keep our operations continuously going and growing and given us more opportunity to provide housing for families.

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00:50:45.480 --> 00:50:53.910

Hannah T Kinzer: Wow, they are your list of like ways that anyone can help just in small and big ways I think is, it's so encompassing and also very specific to housing and helping out the specific families that you're working on. So we really appreciate that. Your mantra of like how can I help.

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00:51:24.720 --> 00:51:34.230

Hannah T Kinzer: So last question for you is, how have you seen discussion around housing change in recent years, and how do you see it changing in the future?

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00:51:37.350 --> 00:51:54.900

Jazi: I think people are becoming more and more aware and what I what as people become just like today as having this conversation with you. You know, I think people are more and more becoming aware of

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00:51:56.670 --> 00:52:07.050

Jazi: Of people's conditions and especially with the pandemic and right now we have a housing moratorium where there's people who can't even pay their rent.

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00:52:07.590 --> 00:52:18.180

Jazi: You know there's there's resources out there for them. But some. I mean, you can get caught up. But if you're if you don't have income. How do you stay caught up.

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00:52:18.570 --> 00:52:25.650

Jazi: You know there's there's so there's a lot of discussion going on. There's a lot of talk how

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00:52:26.220 --> 00:52:33.360

Jazi: I mean it's impacting the landlords, the property managers, because they have their bills to pay

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00:52:33.810 --> 00:52:43.650

Jazi: and then that you have folks that are fearful because they've never lived in a or never ever thought they would not have employment.

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00:52:44.280 --> 00:52:56.970

Jazi: They never thought they'd be in this condition. So it's kind of like I tell my staff. We're fortunate that we're able to continue to do our work, but there's folks out there that are not

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00:52:57.930 --> 00:53:09.300

Jazi: And even with us, continuing to do our work, we had to re design and do a reset on how we do our work. And so that's caused

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00:53:10.260 --> 00:53:22.830

Jazi: Additional stress on us and we are the providers. So we have to be extra careful to take care of ourselves to be in that right attitude, that right mindset.

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00:53:23.310 --> 00:53:33.870

Jazi: To be able to help and serve our folks and every day when you even when I get out in my car and I go somewhere coming to work people drive crazy. They're like,

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00:53:34.290 --> 00:53:45.150

Jazi: The whole attitude of life has changed. You go to the store. There's, there's a whole attitude, that's different. There's some people in my neighborhood.

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00:53:45.600 --> 00:53:52.020

Jazi: It's really kind of cool because people who are around more so you know your neighbors more

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00:53:52.410 --> 00:54:03.360

Jazi: There's that good side. But then there's that other side when people become anxious, because they're not able to provide and do like they they have in the past they

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00:54:04.080 --> 00:54:16.830

Jazi: feel discouraged. So it's up to all of us to encourage one another to move forward in whatever condition. We're in because it takes all of us.

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00:54:17.370 --> 00:54:24.720

Jazi: To make a community. And if I'm discouraged. This shouldn't be someone that's encouraging me

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00:54:25.470 --> 00:54:38.100

Jazi: If I'm encouraged I should be encouraging someone, it's got to continue the same way with the discussions on homelessness. We have to continue talking about it. It's not a secret. It's not invisible.

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00:54:38.700 --> 00:54:49.140

Jazi: We have to continue to want more for our communities of people who have lost their jobs, who have fallen.

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00:54:49.590 --> 00:55:02.550

Jazi: To mental health issues, who have fallen to chemical health issues, who have fallen to physical health issues that have caused them to not be able to be stable so

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00:55:03.240 --> 00:55:17.070

Jazi: Things like this like these podcasts like blogs like Homeless Day on the Hill, you know, going to our town council meetings when we know that things need to be on the agenda.

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00:55:17.580 --> 00:55:30.780

Jazi: To make sure that people are understanding what how and how can we help as taxpaying people, we should be able to tell folks how they spend our money.

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00:55:31.350 --> 00:55:42.840

Jazi: You know, when it comes to housing, when it comes to any of it, our infrastructure, even our bus systems impact homelessness. We're located out in White Bear Lake

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00:55:44.190 --> 00:55:55.080

Jazi: And we've gone to the Council meetings regarding the bus system because on the weekends folks can't catch a bus after a certain time.

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00:55:56.250 --> 00:56:07.350

Jazi: You know, and retail restaurants they don't close at five o'clock or six o'clock. You know what I'm saying. So it's it folks don't have transportation

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00:56:08.250 --> 00:56:21.330

Jazi: Then they can't work. So there's just those kinds of issues that are even beyond having a home, you don't have the resources of transportation.

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00:56:22.230 --> 00:56:28.860

Jazi: Giving you I mean a woman with children. She has to ride the bus to the childcare then ride the bus to

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00:56:29.190 --> 00:56:39.900

Jazi: Her work ride back to the childcare right back home. You know, so it's, there's just all those challenges that no one thinks of you know

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00:56:40.230 --> 00:56:50.820

Jazi: And when it's what 20 below in January, you know you're out there with your little ones. It's difficult. It's really difficult. So

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00:56:51.690 --> 00:57:06.600

Jazi: There's just so much to homelessness that we could go on for hours and never really resolve the issue, but we can become aware and what you as an individual can do

332

00:57:26.940 --> 00:57:37.320

Jazi: My granddaughter was watching football on Sunday, and her guy, and they were talking about how much these football players make

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00:57:38.340 --> 00:57:44.070

Jazi: 84,000 or something like that. And I said, Do you have any homes we can build?

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00:57:45.660 --> 00:57:48.420

Jazi: Do you know how many people we can feed?

335

00:57:50.250 --> 00:57:53.040

Jazi: I mean, how many bedrooms in a house do you need?

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00:57:58.590 --> 00:58:07.890

Jazi: How many cars? I mean, I even have me a little summer car. Do I really need that? No, I want it, though. You know what I'm saying.

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00:58:10.950 --> 00:58:22.590

Jazi: Sometimes we we we don't look at what we're doing. It's all about our own self. You know, it's so inequitable

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00:58:23.850 --> 00:58:24.420

Jazi: You know,

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00:58:26.040 --> 00:58:30.930

Jazi: You have folks that you have the haves and the have nots, you know,

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00:58:33.450 --> 00:58:35.970

Jazi: I just, it just, it's just

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00:58:38.070 --> 00:58:43.260

Jazi: disheartening to think about. I said, How much money? 84 thousand

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00:58:49.260 --> 00:58:53.010

Jazi: Or million whatever they make. I don't get it.

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00:58:55.140 --> 00:58:56.040

Jazi: That much

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00:58:59.640 --> 00:59:03.270

Jazi: Is it me thinking that way am I in this by myself.

347

00:59:07.980 --> 00:59:09.870

Jazi: Boy, anyway.

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00:59:20.670 --> 00:59:30.810

Abby: I really like what you said about, about thinking outside of just yourself and how everyone. Everybody has a part to play really like that. Yeah, we do.

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00:59:32.580 --> 00:59:33.330

Jazi: We do, we really do.

[outro music Night Air]

Hannah: Back in our first episode of the housing series, we asked how many evictions there are on average each year. According to a study by the Eviction Lab at Princeton University in 2016, there are approximately 3.6 million evictions annually in the US. In August 2020, the Aspen Institute estimated that 30 to 40 million people in the US were at risk of eviction over the next several months. Note that this was before the CDC order halting removal of tenants due to nonpayment of rent or COVID-19 financial or health hardships. The CDC order has prevented numerous evictions, but as of the date this episode was recorded, the order is only extended through March 31st, 2021.

Abby: Thank you so much, Jazi, for taking the time to speak with us. We hope that this episode has helped our listeners better understand the topic of housing and the incredible work being done in this area of public health. Thank you so much for listening to this episode of Perspectives. We would love to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. Please connect with us on Twitter or Facebook with the tag @pubhealthreview.

[outro music Night Air]

Resources:

Solid Ground - <https://www.solidgroundmn.org/>

Evictions in the US Report -

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/the-covid-19-eviction-crisis-an-estimated-30-40-million-people-in-america-are-at-risk/>

CDC Eviction Moratorium -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/pdf/CDC-Eviction-Moratorium-01292021.pdf>

Eviction Lab at Princeton - <https://evictionlab.org/>