

# ISABELLA'S STORY



**Isabella was about eleven when everything changed. Her family had been living in a quiet farmhouse in rural New Hampshire—with a red barn, chickens, and a strong sense of home. But when their landlord passed away and the house was sold, they had to leave. That was the start of a long, hard stretch without a stable place to live.**

They tried renting, but nothing stuck. Every place they found seemed to fall through. One night, out of options, they drove from town to town looking for a hotel room.

What followed was months of bouncing from motel to motel. Their car broke down. Work became harder to keep. Things snowballed. Eventually, they ended up at a motel—first in a cabin with no bathroom, then in a moldy room where they had to leave every 20 weeks for an “inspection.”

*“We did everything they asked. But it was like they were just looking for an excuse to get rid of us. It felt like they hated us.”*

Through all the judgment and rejection, one person stood by them.

Lore DeForest at Southwestern Community Services first connected with Isabella’s family in October 2024. They were stuck, trying to figure out their next move.

*“They were looking for more stability while working toward housing,” Lore said. “We were able to place them in one of our motel rooms through the Winter Warming Shelter.”*

It wasn’t permanent housing, but it gave the family a safe place to stay through the winter—and a chance to catch their breath.

They stayed there until January of 2025 and left to go into permanent housing.

All the while, Lore stayed in touch. She checked in, offered resources, and provided encouragement. Isabella’s mom kept going—

filling out paperwork, following through, and doing the work.

*“She didn’t judge us. She didn’t forget about us. She believed we deserved a safe place to live. We wish we had found her sooner.”*

Today, Isabella has graduated from high school. She’s working and living in Keene with her cat. Her mom is waiting for a transplant, and her dad might need another hip replacement—but they finally have a roof over their heads and a place to call home.

They have stability. And they’re not facing it all alone.

This story isn’t just about housing. It’s about kindness—and what can happen when someone takes the time to care.

*“We have such a great need for more housing support in the Monadnock Region,” Lore said. “Working with this family reminded me why we do this work.”*

Lore didn’t just help them find a place to stay. She helped them feel seen. And that made all the difference.