

## Your Support Turned Ashley's Dream into a Degree



Ashley, four years ago, backed by her mom, signs for a scholarship she was awarded with Oasis's help.

Ashley graduated high school with 16 college credits and dreams of becoming a veterinarian. As the first person in her family to graduate high school, she had no road map to college.

There were no dinner conversations about college applications, financial aid forms, or scholarship deadlines. Harder still, her family could not possibly afford to help.

Ashley's mom, an Oasis ESL student, introduced her to the Oasis College Guidance Counselor Maria Herrera.

Ashley's future opened up.

Ms. Herrera helped Ashley complete multiple college applications, then helped her decode financial aid packages to find a best-fit college that wouldn't bury her in debt.

But Ms. Herrera went even further: She found Ashley a private scholarship to live on campus. She helped Ashley outfit her dorm room, drove her to campus, and helped her settle in.

Helping Ashley enter college was only the beginning.

The first year of college is when many first-

generation students leave—not because they're not smart enough, but because they're navigating a new environment entirely alone. "Challenges I faced were dividing my time for classes, managing my sleep, and keeping my mental health in check," Ashley remembers.

Despite these challenges, Ashley persevered: She joined campus clubs, attended study sessions, took challenging summer courses, completed an internship. She maintained a high GPA.

But she didn't have to do this alone. Ms. Herrera was a guide. Over 3 ½ years, she visited Ashley on campus, helped her make course choices, and gave Ashley her cell phone number with an invitation to call at any time. They spoke often.

This December, Ashley graduated from Ramapo College with a major in biology and a minor in Japanese. She's joined the US National Guard, where she will train as an Animal Care Specialist. Her plan is to apply to veterinary school when her guard service is complete.

Because of your support, young people like Ashley can turn their dreams into college degrees and careers. Thank you for everything you do to make success stories like Ashley's possible.

*Join us!*

**The Oasis Gala of Hope  
Friday, 4/17**

**Robert L. Pash Golf Outing  
Thursday, 6/4**

**[oasisnj.org/events](https://oasisnj.org/events)**

## A Message from Executive Director Jennifer Brady

Dear Friend,

Ashley is training to care for animals and to attend veterinary school. Janelle is planning for nursing school. Gladys has a warm room and a job on a bus route she can afford.

None of this happens without you.

What strikes me most about these women is not just the barriers they've broken. It's that they dared to imagine a future for themselves far beyond their own experience.

Ashley dreamed of college when no one in her family had finished high school. Janelle dreamed of nursing school while sleeping on a bus. And Gladys spent her last dollars to earn a certification.

It is you—Oasis donors—who funded the college and career counselors, the GED teachers, and the social workers who helped these women accomplish so much.

I'm so grateful for what you give, and for what your gifts make possible.

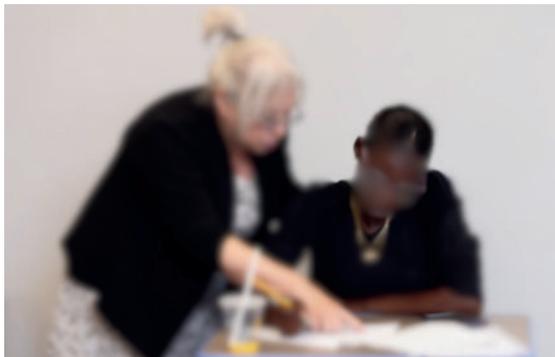
Thank you.

With my deepest gratitude,



Jennifer Brady  
Executive Director

## Homeless Teen Finds Purpose Because of You



You support a GED teacher who works intensively with individual women.

When asked how she learned about Oasis, Janelle says, “God told me about this place.”

She acknowledges that people might not believe that—but the timing was striking: She saw an advertisement for the Oasis GED program at her daughter’s school at the very same time she had decided to become a pediatric nurse.

She had one obstacle: She had no high school diploma.

When Janelle was a high school senior, her mother kicked her out. “I had nowhere to go. I was sleeping on buses, in hallways, anywhere I could find. A guidance counselor tried to help and took me to some group homes, but I was already 18. They wouldn’t take me.

“So I got a job. It didn’t make sense to stay in school.”

After many months homeless, Janelle moved in with a man 20 years her senior. They soon had a daughter and he became abusive. “Eventually, I had to leave him. I left my daughter with him, and again I was homeless.”

Through it all Janelle continued to work, mostly in fast food. After another period of homelessness, she was able to rent a space and took her daughter to live with her. With stability within reach, she began to think about the future.

“My mother worked her whole life as a supermarket cashier. I don’t want that life—making just enough money to stay alive. You can’t even send your child to school. I began thinking about becoming a nurse. But I had no high school diploma.”

And that’s when she found the advertisement for Oasis.

She’s been steadily attending classes and making plans for nursing school. All because you support Oasis.



Because of your gifts, Oasis Job Specialist, Jennifer Lindo, helps women struggling to find work.

## A License, A Job, A Future: With Your Support

Gladys, a 35-year-old single mother, lived in a rented room with her 11-year-old son. She worked as a dishwasher in a restaurant far from any public transportation route. She spent a good chunk of her meager salary on Uber rides to and from work.

Desperate to improve her situation, Gladys found Oasis in October. With Oasis's help, she enrolled in a home health aide licensing program, using whatever money she could spare from her dishwashing job to cover the tuition.

Through the fall, Gladys worked hard and held on, believing the license would offer better, more stable, employment. She passed her exams and began the licensing process in December.

Then, in the depth of winter, a new crisis emerged: The building where she and her son lived lost electricity and heat.

Oasis provided her blankets and extra clothing, but their room was unliveable. Gladys had nowhere else to go. Oasis tried to find her placement in a shelter, but found she was "unqualified." The system considered her "already housed."

By January, after weeks in a freezing room, Gladys secured a one-month shelter placement with the help of a local politician.

### A VICIOUS CYCLE: HOUSING INSTABILITY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Research shows:

- ✓ People experiencing housing instability are 2-3 times more likely to face job loss
- ✓ In Paterson, entry-level jobs are far from public transit. Workers must pay for expensive rides or remain without work.
- ✓ People are considered "housed"—disqualified from shelter assistance—even when living in dangerous, unlivable conditions

Knowing she had just one month to find a job and secure housing, Gladys came to Oasis daily to job hunt. The Oasis job counselor helped her call home health agencies across the county—focusing on locations along bus routes so she could afford the commute.

Within a week, Gladys secured a position as a home health aide, on a bus route she could afford. Within the month, she found a safe room for herself and her son and left the shelter.

Gladys is on her way to stability and a better life.

Thank you.

# She's Out There Right Now You Can Help

As you read this newsletter —stories of challenges met, problems resolved—there is a woman who could use your help.

She once had a marriage, children, connections to family and friends. All of that is gone, and today she's homeless. Winter homelessness in New Jersey is life-threatening.

She has somehow survived this brutal winter through the kindness of strangers: a shop owner who lets her sleep in the basement of his store, an apartment manager who looks the other way when she sleeps in a first-floor hallway.

The daytime hours are even harder.



## **That's where you come in.**

You can give her a hot breakfast and lunch in a warm room. You can offer her dry clothing when the snow has soaked through what she's wearing. You can smile at her when she walks through the doors.

You can, for just a few hours, make her feel seen—because out on the streets, seeking shelter in doorways, she makes herself invisible.

When you give to Oasis, you give this woman a hot meal, a respite from the cold, and something she rarely gets on the street: the sense that someone sees her.

## **Please give today.**

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## **Yes, I will give a homeless woman a hot meal, warmth, and the feeling that she is seen.**

- \$50 — gives a homeless woman a week of hot meals and a few hours of warmth.
- \$100 — gives a homeless woman two weeks of hot meals and warmth.
- \$250 — gives a homeless woman a full month of meals, warmth, and community.
- \$500 — gives five homeless women a week of hot meals, warmth, and community.
- \$1,000 — ensures that every woman who walks through the Oasis doors—hungry, cold, and feeling unseen finds a hot meal, warm room, and community waiting for her.
- \_\_\_ My best gift.

**Give securely online at [oasisnj.org/springnews](https://oasisnj.org/springnews).**

**Give by check payable to Oasis – A Haven for Women and Children.**

**Give a gift of stocks or through a Donor Advised Fund at [oasisnj.org/givebetter](https://oasisnj.org/givebetter).**