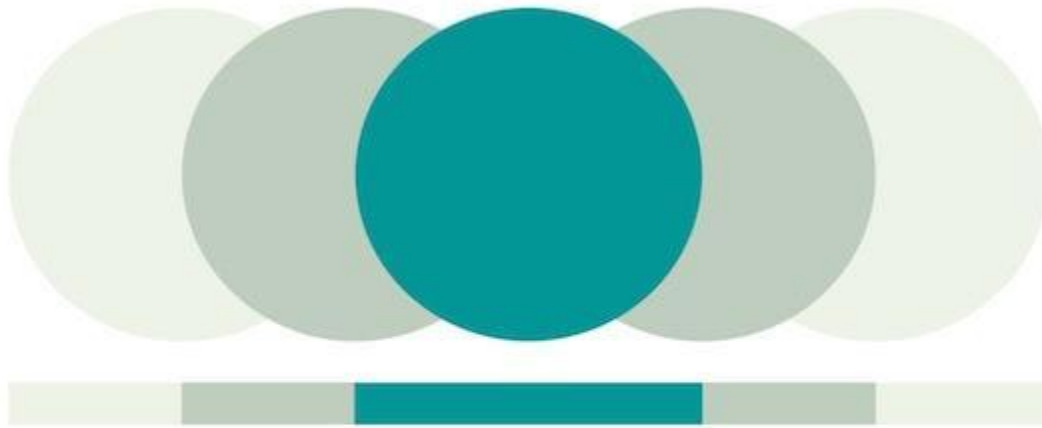


# **Dedicated for a decade: Riverbend Family Ministries celebrates 10 year anniversary**

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**Riverbend Family Ministries**

*Providing strength and support  
to those in crisis*

WOOD RIVER - On August 7, 2007, Riverbend Family Ministries (RFM) opened its doors for the first time in downtown Wood River at 131 East Ferguson Avenue. Before opening the doors, Executive Director, Tammy Iskarous had a vision to serve families in the Riverbend area who were being affected by crisis from violence, homelessness, addiction or poverty. Today, they provide services to everyone living in Madison County.

“We call everyone that walks through our doors family,” said Iskarous. “We do that because a family is always there for you, in good times, and bad without judgment.”

When they first opened their doors in 2007 they served 51 families. Last year RFM helped more than 1,700 local families, and currently, the mid-year report shows they’ve helped more than 950 families.

“The thing each of our families has in common is they’ve reached a point in their lives where they need a little extra support,” said Iskarous. “Whether it may be help paying for their utility bills, rent, mortgage, working on their resume and finding a new job, or just having someone to talk to and pray with; we’re happy to be that safety net.”

Under one roof, they house other non-profit programs such as: CASA, Pathways Counseling, Refuge, Youth Development and Group Intervention. They also teach anger management and parenting classes at their location.

Recently, Madison County Community Development and United Way asked Iskarous to expand her services into the Eastern part of Madison County. Their second office location is inside the Madison County Community Development building at 130 Hillsboro Avenue.

“We asked Tammy if she would open an office in Edwardsville since we’ve seen such an increase in demand and appreciate all that they’re doing at their Wood River office,” said Madison County Homeless Services Coordinator, David Harrison. “Having their help has made such a difference, we’re now able to help more families in our community.”

Currently, their Wood River office is getting a new therapy room, office spaces and a new client service area. Construction for this project is wrapping up and they’re looking forward to hosting an open house once it’s completed.

“In ten years Riverbend Family Ministries has developed from an idea that God planted in Tammy’s mind into a vital part of the Riverbend community,” said RFM Board President, Wiley Davis. “Through the hard work of the volunteers, the staff, and board of directors; RFM provides a safe place for individuals and families to get the resources necessary to become self-sufficient.”

One event their board is working hard to organize is their first annual ask dinner on November 2 at the Best Western Premier hotel in Alton.

“Our space and programs may have changed over the past ten years, but one thing will never change, and that’s our dedication to giving our families a path of sustainably,” said Iskarous.

### **About Riverbend Family Ministries:**

Riverbend Family Ministries provides resources and training for smaller non-profit organizations in the Madison County area. They work together under one roof, providing families and individuals the tools they need to be self-sufficient. Their collaborative method focuses on holistic efforts for children, youth and families who’ve experienced trauma, most often due to violence, addiction, poverty and homelessness.