

# When people have a home for good, they can heal.



**Dear Friend,**

My name is Patti. I've been a resident of Avalon for 23 years now. I want to tell you about my journey to **Avalon**.

I was born in 1953, in Oakland, California, the second of ten children. Every few years my family would move to a different state because of my dad's job with the U.S. Coast Guard. Eventually we landed in Cheboygan, Michigan, where I graduated from high school. I was a good student, and I ended up earning my bachelor's degree in laboratory animal medicine.

With my degree, I got jobs in some research labs. I even did cancer research. I moved to Southern California, where I managed a large research facility. My job was stressful, but I decided to join a women's softball team as a way to relax. During one of our games, I got hit in the face with a ball. The bones in the top of my nose and forehead were shattered.

**This was the start of many years of health problems for me.**

I was in my early thirties, but I kept getting sick. I kept missing work. After taking a new job in Northern California, I got sick and had to quit. Eventually one of my brothers drove out to pick me up and move me back to Michigan.

**I couldn't afford a place of my own,** so I stayed with my family members, moving from one sibling's home to the next. I was still dealing with health problems, so I was only able to work part-time jobs. At one point, I had an apartment near the U of M hospital.

*I was paying more than half of my income to live there!* Eventually I could not afford my apartment, and I moved in with one of my brothers again. My brother and I had an argument, so I left and went to live in the old YMCA hotel downtown.

There were fliers on the wall, advertising a place called Avalon Housing. My brother and sister helped me fill out an application to live at Avalon. My income was low enough that **I was able to get a room in one of Avalon's houses**, and later an efficiency in another one of their buildings. During my first ten years at Avalon, I spent a lot of time in and out of the emergency room because of my health.

**Avalon's case managers helped me apply for benefits and food stamps**, since I could no longer work. They helped me get to medical appointments. They also got me connected to the county's mental health services.

In 2005 I got a one-bedroom apartment at Avalon. I finally had my own place, with my own bathroom and kitchen! **To this day I still have a case manager, Caitlin**, who helps me with paperwork for my benefits. She helps me get my medications and goes with me to my appointments at the county's mental health annex. I'm still dealing with mental health issues, but Caitlin helps me stay on track.

**Avalon is my community.** I've made a lot of friends here. I'm part of a "Legacy" group at my apartment complex. We're all people over 55 who are dealing with aging. We talk about everything, from how to deal with our feelings to our favorite music and books. We look out for each other. I feel safe here.

**If it weren't for Avalon, I would not be able to live in my apartment.** If there were one thing I'd like people to know, it's this: people who've been homeless aren't lazy. They're not criminals. Sometimes people have just gotten really sick, or lost their job, or gotten pregnant at a young age, or their family's thrown them out. Being homeless is really stressful. You can't really know how it is unless you walk in another person's shoes.



With Caitlin, my case manager

I'm writing you to thank you for your past support and ask for your help. **Your gift will make it possible for people like me and my neighbors to stay in this healthy, safe community.**

Sincerely,

*Patti*

**P.S.** Over half of all adults experiencing homelessness are age 50 or older. Please help your neighbors today.

Donate online at [AvalonHousing.org/donate](https://AvalonHousing.org/donate) or use the enclosed envelope.

