



Lisa's Story

I fell in love when I was 16 and got married at 19. Two years later we had our first child. My husband and I have been married for 28 years and have 5 kids, ages 7 to 25.

My husband had a great job in construction when the company he had worked for for 16 years suddenly closed. In the blink of an eye, we went from being independent and supporting our family on a good income to not being able to pay our bills or feed our children. We went from living on \$40,000 a year to no income.

When my husband couldn't find work he became depressed. It was tough. He did what he could, earning money any way he could, from grass cutting to small construction jobs.

I was scared but I was too embarrassed and ashamed at first to ask for help. I remember going to a food pantry with my mother when I was growing up. I hated it and I didn't want that for my family.

We live in an older 2-bedroom home. The rent, \$300 per month, is reasonable but the furnace is old and expensive to run. Even with oil and electric space heaters, it's cold in the winter and sometimes the pipes freeze. Then we have no running water.

There have been times that we did not have enough food to feed the entire family. Many nights my husband and I would not eat so the kids could have food for dinner.

The change in circumstances was hard for them. They couldn't go on school field trips or to the movies or get new clothes for school. When my oldest daughter graduated from high school we couldn't afford to rent the cap and gown. I was so upset.

Family and friends helped but it wasn't enough. I felt desperate. I didn't know where to go or what to do. I finally went to Goochland Social Services to ask for help. They suggested that I come to Goochland Free Clinic and Family Services. If it wasn't for this organization, I don't know what we would have done. They have helped the entire family.

With food from the Food Pantry, we can all sit down and eat dinner together. The clinic has helped with our medical and dental care. I recently got sick and thought it was a cold due to stress. I went to the clinic and they discovered I suffer from Graves Disease, high blood pressure, and borderline diabetes. Dr. Richardson at the Clinic suggested dietary changes which have helped me lose weight and keep the diabetes in check. My Graves disease is in remission. I still have to take medicine but through GFCFS it is only \$5.00 at the local pharmacy.

It is still tight but we manage. The credits I receive monthly for the Clothes Closet help me get warm coats, school clothes and household items. The ladies at the Clothes Closet are so nice to everyone. They are like counselors. You see, I volunteer at the Clothes Closet and I have seen clients come in and talk to the staff and volunteers about everything. They listen, they understand. They have caring hearts and are supportive.

I would just like to say thank you Goochland Free Clinic and Family Services for all you do, not only for my family but for our community.