



OUR
Busy
HOUSE

Living in Shelter



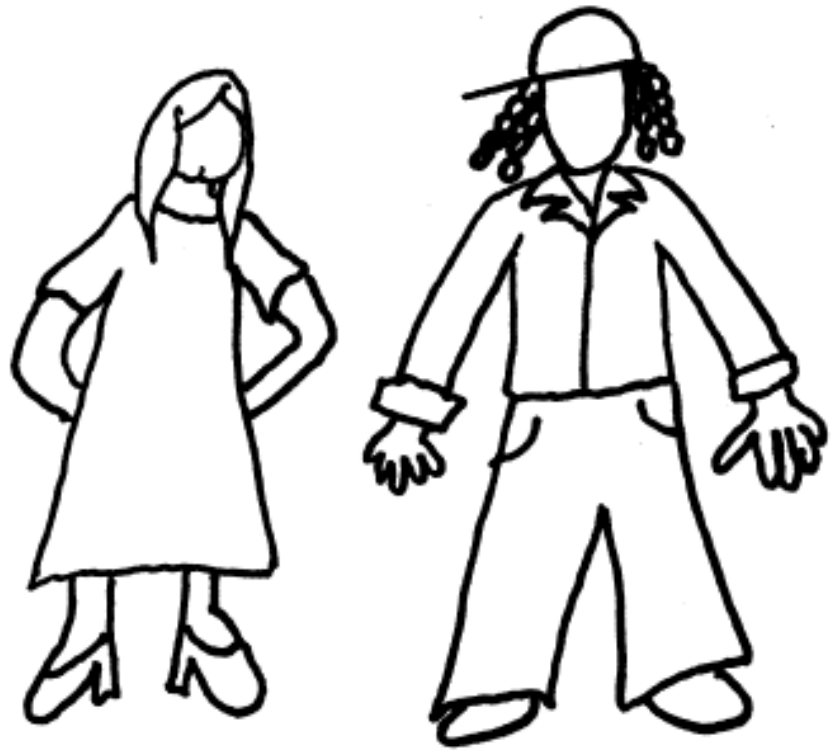
Written and Illustrated by:
CARRIE DYER

Today my family moved into a new house. It's a strange place with lots and lots of new people -- kids, babies, and grown-ups. It is loud, and everyone seems very busy.

Does anyone even know I'm here?

At first, I sit with my family in a little room with a desk and a computer. There are many strange sounds, and I don't really understand what the person behind the desk is telling us. It sounds like a lot of rules, and I'm getting a little scared.

I don't think I'm going to like this place.



Can you color the family?
What does your family look like?



After what seems like forever, we put our stuff in a little room with some beds. The room is very plain, but it has a bunk bed I can climb on. Maybe it will be OK.

The first thing we do is make our beds. I'm glad I have my favorite pillow, blanket, and my special Teddy bear. We also brought a few of my favorite books and toys, too.

Seeing these things helps me to feel a little better.

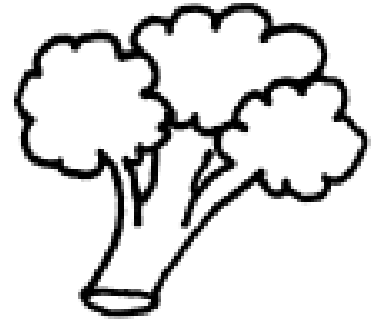
Can you draw your favorite things?



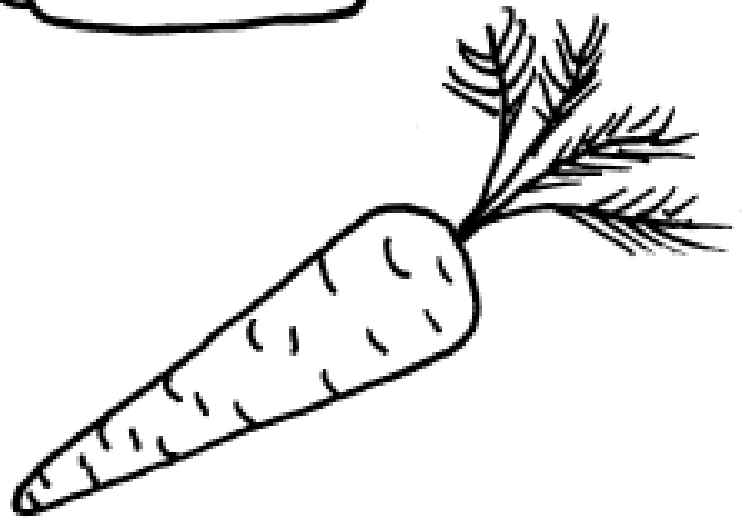
When it's time to eat, we go into the kitchen. It is a busy place. I see sinks, stoves, and many cupboards.



There are a lot of people cooking and talking. Some of the people are talking with sounds I don't think are words. I'm not sure I like all the smells in the kitchen. It's not like the food I'm used to eating. I hope I don't have to eat it!



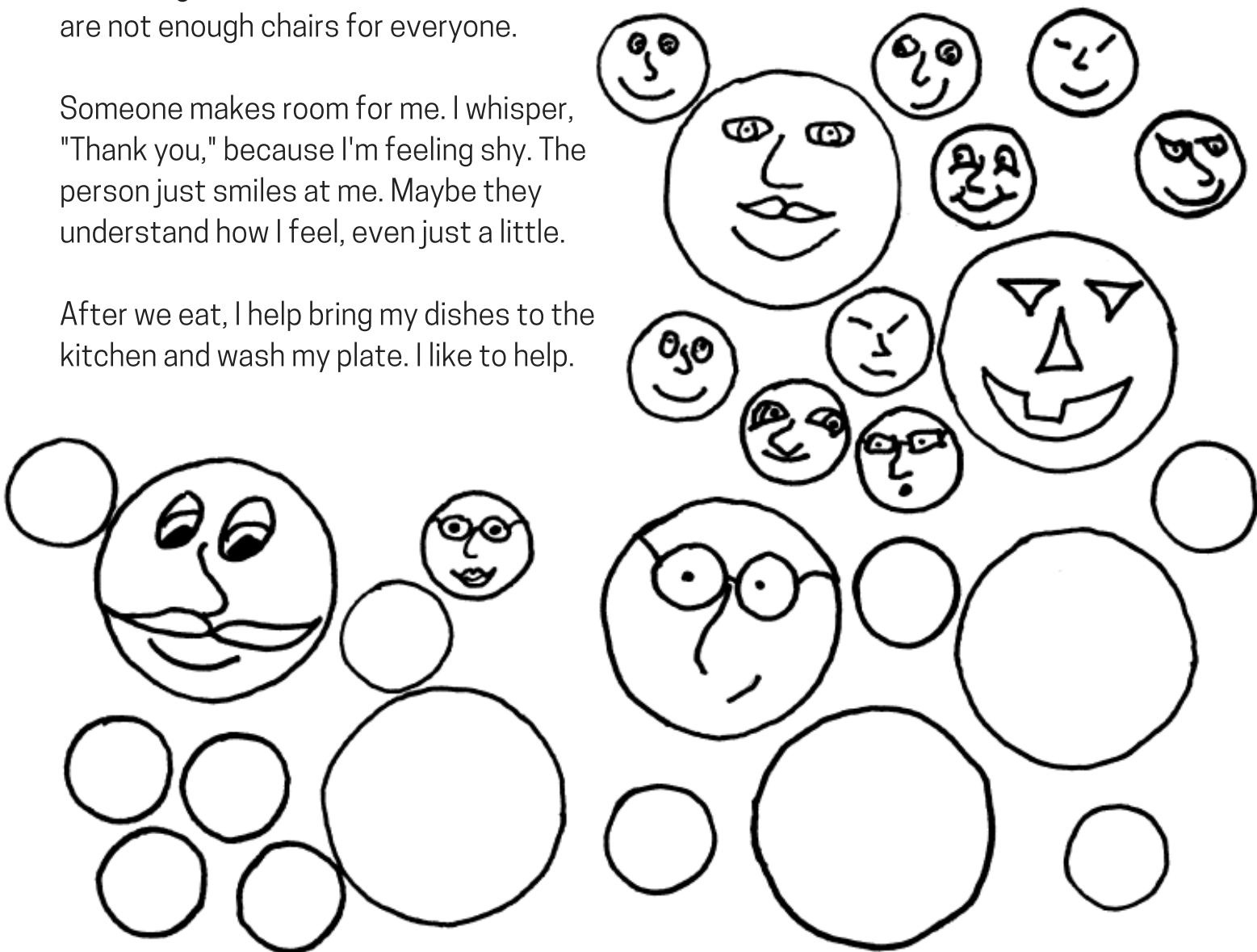
**What are your favorite foods?
Can you draw them?**



The dining room is crowded, too. There are not enough chairs for everyone.

Someone makes room for me. I whisper, "Thank you," because I'm feeling shy. The person just smiles at me. Maybe they understand how I feel, even just a little.

After we eat, I help bring my dishes to the kitchen and wash my plate. I like to help.

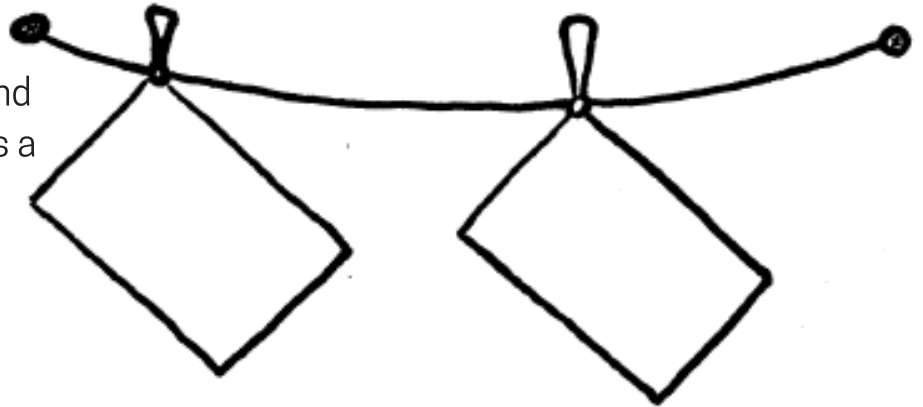


Can you draw faces of the people that you see in the circles?

After a few days, we begin to feel a little more settled. I found there is a living room. In the living room, there are some books, couches, chairs, and a TV. We can only watch movies. I will have to borrow some movies from the library if I want to watch something different.



There is also a big room full of toys and books. It is called the playroom. It has a big cabinet with all kinds of arts and crafts stuff. There are sometimes pictures on the wall drying.

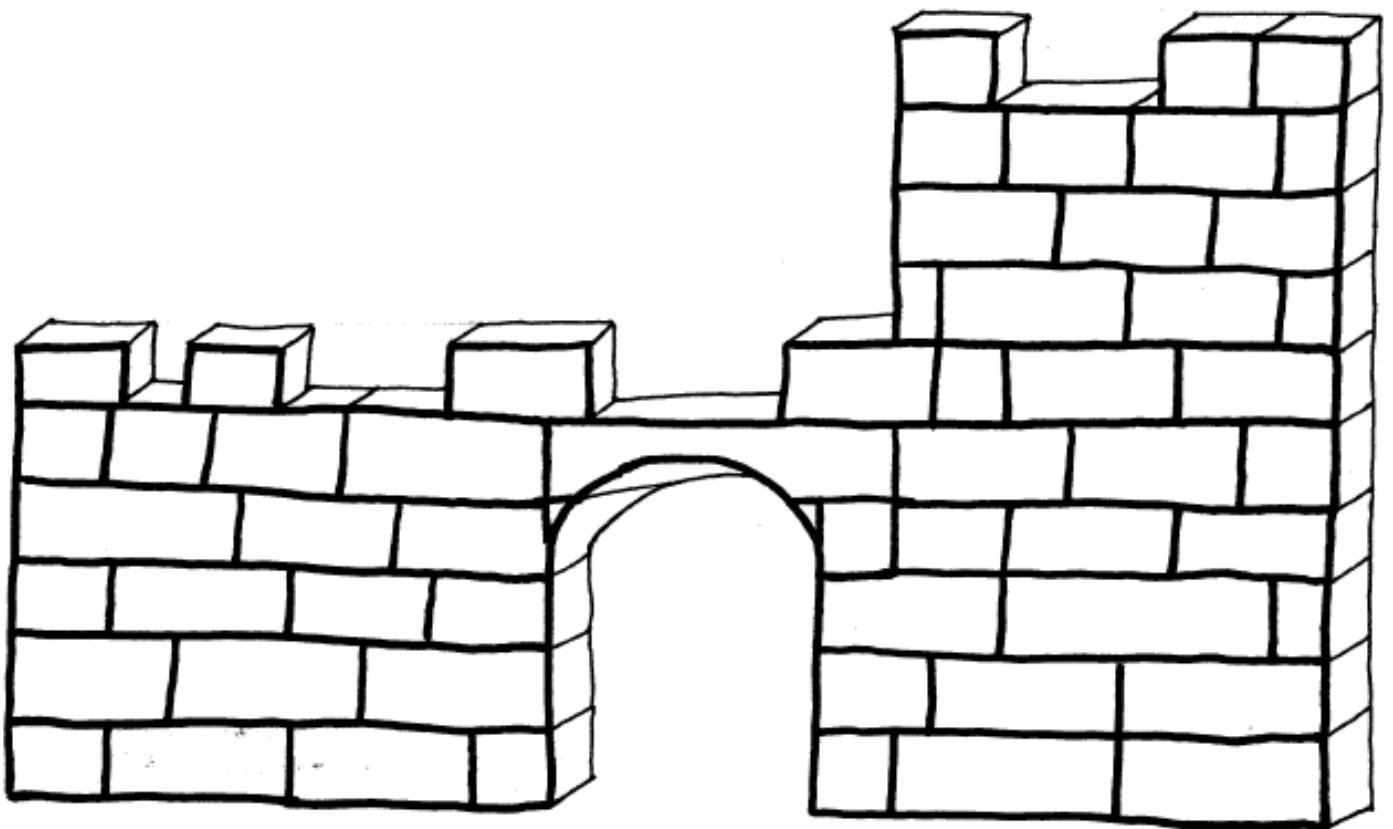


Can you draw something you want to hang on the wall?

I really hate it when other kids keep touching my stuff! Don't they know it's mine?

One day, I was playing with my blocks, and I had to go potty. When I came back, my project was all messed up and someone was throwing my blocks at another kid. My family told me that I have to share my toys. I don't always want to do that.

I also don't want to be stuck in our tiny room. I wish I could just play and be left alone. Then again, sometimes it's fun to have other kids to play with, even if we don't play the same way. It's cool to learn new things.



It seems that some days my family and I have dozens of meetings in all different places. My family says it's to help us get our own home. I might even be able to get my own room!

Sometimes I get cranky, though. The meetings are so boring and so long. Some of the offices are new and strange to me. There are even more new people. Everyone seems nice, but I wish I could just go to a playground or play at our big house. Maybe I can bring a book or a toy with me next time.

Can you draw a picture of your favorite toy?



There are still a lot of people to meet here. Some of the people are called "volunteers." Sometimes we read stories together. Other times we play games outside or do projects in the playroom. It is a lot of fun.

Moving into shelter with my family has been a big change. I'm glad we're not going to be here forever. For now, it's OK, I guess -- at least my family and I are together!

**XOXO,
Our Family**

Can you draw a picture of your family?

About the Author

Carrie Dyer



Be Well Everyone,

Carrie Dyer (Oliver)

I am a devoted mom living in the greater Burlington area. Since getting on our feet, I have dedicated my free time to helping better our community from playing a small role in establishing the Love and Blessings John 13:35 outreach program to working with Parents and Youth for Change (PYC), as well as the Winooski School District on the bus pilot program, where I continue to be involved.

In 2012, my family and I found ourselves struggling with homelessness. COTS was there to help. As we entered into shelter, we struggled to help our then 5-year-old understand all the changes she encountered on a daily basis. I observed other families sharing in that struggle.

As I watched all the kids in the shelter, I began to study them and take note of some more common topics for discussion. That led me to see the need for a book such as this. After three long years of development, this is my final product. I'm excited to be working again with the COTS team and to help families in this capacity.

About the Organization

COTS

The Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) is the largest service provider to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Vermont. COTS provides emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, services, and housing.

We believe in the value and dignity of every human life; that housing is a fundamental right; and that emergency shelter is not the solution to homelessness.

Learn more about COTS by visiting www.cotsonline.org.



Survivor's Guide to Burlington:

COTS Mailing Address:

PO Box 1616
Burlington VT 05402

COTS Physical Address:

95 North Avenue, Burlington VT 05401
(802) 864-7402
cotsonline.org

COMMUNITY SERVICES:

Age Well (802) 865-0360

76 Pearl Street., (8:00am-4:30pm Monday-Friday), agewellvt.org

Association of Africans Living in Vermont (802) 985-3106

20 Allen Street, aalv-vt.org

Burlington Police Department (802) 658-2704

1 North Avenue, burlingtonvt.gov

Chittenden Community Action (802) 863-6248

255 South Champlain Street, cvoeo.org

DCF Economic Services Division (ESD) (800) 479-6151

119 Pearl Street, dcf.vermont.gov

DCF Family Services Division (FSD) (802) 241-2131

Howard Center (802) 488-6000

208 Flynn Avenue, howardcenter.org

Joseph's House (802) 951-4290

113 Elmwood Avenue, josephshousevt.org

JUMP (802) 862-4501

38 South Winooski Avenue, 2nd Floor, (9am-noon Tuesday-Friday) jumpvt.org

Local Bus (GMT) (802) 864-2282

ridegmt.com

COUNSELING:

Act 1/Bridge Program (802) 488-6425

184 Pearl Street, howardcenter.org

Howard Center Adult Outpatient Counseling (802) 488-6100

855 Pine Street, howardcenter.org

Outright Vermont/GBLT (802) 865-9677

241 North Winooski Avenue, (Ages 13-22), outrightvt.org

National Runaway Safeline (800) 786-2929

(1-800-RUNAWAY)

Spectrum Youth & Family Services (802) 864-7423

31 Elmwood Avenue, (ages 12-30), spectrumvt.org

Vet Center (802) 862-1806

19 Gregory Drive, South Burlington. va.gov/directory

Steps to End Domestic Violence (802) 658-1996

294 North Winooski Avenue, stepsvt.org

CRISIS SERVICES:

24 hours, 7 days/week emergency services

First Call for Chittenden County (802) 488-7777

1138 Pine Street, (children, adults, and families), howardcenter.org

HOPE Works (802) 863-1236

(Sexual Violence Hotline) hopeworksvt.org.

Relief from Abuse Orders (800) 540-9990

(After 4:30pm), vermontjudiciary.org/family/relief-abuse

Steps to End Domestic Violence (802) 658-1996

294 North Winooski Avenue, stepsvt.org

FOOD:

Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf (802) 658-7939

228 North Winooski Avenue, feedingchittenden.org

Hot Meals: 6:30-9:30am Monday - Friday

10:00-11:30am Sunday

Groceries: 9am-4pm Monday - Friday

Salvation Army 802-864-6991

64 Main Street, nne.salvationarmy.org/gtburlington

Dinner: 5-6pm Monday - Saturday

Long-Distance Bus (Greyhound via BTV Airport) (802) 864-6811

1200 Airport Drive

National Human Trafficking Hotline (888) 373-7888

Pride Center of VT (802) 860-7812

255 South Champlain Street, Suite 12, pridecentervt.org

ReSOURCE (802) 857-4361

329 Harvest Lane #200, Williston VT, resourcevt.org

Social Security Administration (877) 840-5776

128 Lakeside Avenue, Suite 207

Spectrum Youth & Family Services (802) 864-7423

177 Pearl Street, (Ages 14-24), spectrumvt.org

Vermont 2-1-1 2-1-1

(help finding help)

Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (802) 655-1963

462 Hegeman Avenue, Colchester VT, refugees.org

VocRehab Vermont (802) 863-7500

110 Cherry Street, (7:45am-4:30pm Monday-Friday), vocrehab.vermont.gov

Vermont Department of Labor (802) 863-7676

(Burlington Career Resource Center), 63 Pearl Street, labor.vermont.gov

HOUSING:

Burlington Housing Authority (802) 864-0538

65 Main Street, burlingtonhousing.org

Champlain Housing Trust (802) 862-6244

88 King Street, getahome.org

COTS Housing Resource Center (802) 861-0110

95 North Avenue, (By appt: 10-11am, 1-3pm Monday-Friday)

Chittenden Community Action (802) 863-6248, Ext. 4

255 South Champlain Street, cvoeo.org

Housing Assistance Program (800) 287-7971

vsha.org

Pathways Vermont (888) 492-8218

125 College Street, pathwaysvermont.org

Winooski Housing Authority (802) 655-2360

83 Barlow Street, (8am-4:30pm Monday-Friday), winooskihousing.org

Vermont Tenants, Inc. (802) 864-0099 or

(9am-4pm) Monday-Thursday, cvoeo.org

(800) 287-7971

LEGAL SERVICES:

Vermont Legal Aid and Vermont Law Help:

Health Care Advocate (800) 747-5022

Legal (800) 889-2047

MEDICAL HELP:

Community Health Centers of Burlington (802) 864-6309

617 Riverside Avenue, chcb.org

Planned Parenthood Burlington (802) 863-6326

183 St. Paul Street, plannedparenthood.org

Poison Center (800) 222-1222

Safe Harbor Clinic (802) 860-4310

184 South Winooski Avenue, chcb.org

UVM Medical Center Urgent Care (802) 847-1170

790 College Parkway, Colchester VT., uvmhealth.org

UVM Medical Center Health Care Emergency (802) 8472424

111 Colchester Avenue, uvmhealth.org

Vermont CARES (802) 863-2437 or

(HIV Testing & Services) 187 St. Paul Street, vtcares.org

(800) 649-2437

VNA Family Services (802) 658-1900

