







THE DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER WAS FOUNDED IN 1978 BY JILL HALVERSON. JILL MET ROSA, A MENTALLY ILL WOMAN WHOSE HOME WAS TWO SHOPPING CARTS IN A DOWNTOWN PARKING LOT. HALVERSON LEARNED FROM ROSA THAT THERE WERE NO FACILITIES WHERE HOMELESS WOMEN COULD BATHE, EAT A GOOD MEAL, OR GET OFF THE STREETS. IN FACT, THE CLOSURE OF MENTAL HOSPITALS IN THE EARLY 1970S DIRECTLY CAUSED A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF WOMEN TO BECOME HOMELESS. AT THAT TIME, DOWNTOWN MISSION FACILITIES PROVIDED MEALS TO WOMEN BUT DID NOT OFFER SHELTER. WOMEN THEREFORE SPENT THEIR DAYS AND NIGHTS ON UNSAFE STREETS OR IN RUNDOWN HOTELS. SINCE 1978, THE DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO PROVIDING PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AND A SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY FOSTERING DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND PERSONAL STABILITY, AND TO ADVOCATE ENDING HOMELESSNESS FOR WOMEN.





