

# FRONTLINE PROFILES



## DSS Frontline Profile: Claudine Sajous

“I’ve come to realize when you are an essential worker it means that you’re part of a service that is indispensable. The work that we do is absolutely necessary for the functioning of the City. It matters. It’s valuable. We have to be there for each other, and at PATH, we have to continue to remain open to help those that need shelter,” said Claudine Sajous, a Homeless Intake Assessment Manager at PATH.

Claudine has worked at the Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing, or PATH Intake Center, for the last 20 years. PATH is where families apply for services if they are homeless.

“At first, this was just a regular job. I was very happy, you know, to have a job. I just graduated from school, it was a stable income. And then, it kind of grew on me to serve people and nothing feels better than to have this great satisfaction that you are able to make a difference in somebody’s life.”

“At the beginning of the pandemic, it was one of those challenging days for me in the workplace. And we were still trying to work day by day with all the unknown and uncertainty. And I received this phone call from a woman who had just given birth to triplets in the hospital. She gave birth to two boys and a girl, and she was telling me she’s homeless. She needed a place to stay.”

The woman told Claudine that she had never applied for shelter before. Claudine explained to her “...you have to come in person to apply. Cause you’ve never been here, but your children don’t have to come because during the pandemic, we are making an exception for children not to come to PATH and apply.

“And she started crying and said ‘I don’t have a place to leave my children. I cannot leave them in the hospital.’ And a human element in me kicked in. I mean, of course, I feel sympathetic towards her and what can we do to assist somebody like this? Then I asked her to speak to the social worker at the hospital. The social worker got on the phone and told me this was not just a homeless case. She also has a domestic violence history.

“And then I told the social worker, let me have all her information. So, within an hour we called the social worker back to let her know we got a placement for this applicant and this is where she was going. And I think for me, the fact that I was having such a challenging day, and still was able to make a difference in somebody’s life that day, made me feel better. It reminded me why I was here as an essential worker, why what we do matters and is for people like her and others that found themselves homeless and need a place to stay.

“You get to put a smile on someone’s face. You get to let them know we are here for you. We are here to help you, and you’re going to get through this. And it’s more evident now, more than ever, especially during this pandemic.”

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