A Princess in Waiting –

A princess should never have to wonder where she will sleep, or if she'll be cold, or if she'll have to go potty outside. This princess is six.

"Do you know when my mommy will be back," she asked, politely tugging her purple skirt over the hole in her pink tights and pulling the fraying hem of her "royal cape" across her shoulders. "I don't know, but I imagine anytime now," I replied hoping that the interview in the other room would finish, favorably, soon. I noticed the remains of a small, sparkling, tiara sticker on the back of her hand and asked her name. "Daisy," she answered. "Hello Princess Daisy," I said with a respectful genuflect. Her eyes lit up, "That's what Mommy calls me", she whispered breathlessly and then got a bit sullen as she added, "my daddy did too before he went to heaven." I followed her gaze up and smiled at the man who'd fathered this precocious child.

"[The guy] who says we have to live with him now tries to call me princess, too, but mommy won't let him. He says he is a prince, but he's not a nice one," she looked away. "Ewww, I don't like that kind," I said making a face and crinkling my nose, adding, "Like that prince in the movie Frozen. " Again her eyes lit up. "That's what mommy says**. That's why we are on this ad-ven-ture.**" She said wrapping her little voice around that big new word. **"We're looking for a new castle,"** she added glancing around as if looking for spies. **"Last night we slept in a car, it was kind of cold, and," she lowered her voice and looked around, "I had to go potty outside."** And then, sitting up tall added, "Mommy said we'd find a nice castle to stay in for a while until we find our for- real one." Princess Daisy was positively certain of the plan. I glanced at the intake office door and said a prayer of thanks for her wise and creative mother.

In what was undoubtedly the most frightening night of her life, this exceptional mom had transformed fleeing for their lives into an enchanting adventure for her daughter; two princesses on the run.

Soon the door opened and Princess Daisy ran to greet her mother, a princess, too, who had long ago, once upon a time, misplaced her crown.

Later that night, beneath the twinkling stars, Princess Daisy and her mommy would be safe and warm at an undisclosed location in a **Community Homeless Solutions' Women's Emergency Shelter** where the little princess would open a cozy purple and pink blanket, donated to the facility just the day before, and, as her mother wrapped it ceremoniously around her, turn to me and whisper, "I've never had a brand new one before."

There is a plan for these two princesses. While the steps are not yet clear, the path points to a good future and it started with today's gifts of compassionate safe harbor and an empowering crown of hope.

With a nod from the agency counselor and the handoff of some paperwork, I looked at Princess Daisy and her weary, but satisfied, mother and announced, "Your carriage awaits."

Never has the shelter bus looked more regal.