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www.vmcinc.org

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Ginny Weatherstone
Chief Executive Officer



Participating Agency

Ending chronic homelessness - one person, one apartment, one job at a time.

Winter, 2009

Dear Friend of VMC,

What a lovely ring that has! "Friend of VMC." I realized lately just how many friends I have in my circle. It is a special circle made up of people who care about the homeless and the mentally ill and the disabled. At the center of that circle are the homeless people we help. And they are my friends as well.

As I write this, I can count 81 people who we have helped into housing this year. There will be many more before the year is over. We have called upon our circle of friends to make this happen. Some of you have sent money to pay our gifted case managers who will support the newly housed for as long as it takes. Some of you have contributed housewares and toiletries to help them begin to feel at home right away. Some of you have been a source of furniture. And all of you have been a source of support and encouragement.

As this year draws to a close, I thank you for all you have done to help VMC during this remarkable time. I share with you the great good news that what we are doing is effective. It works to help our homeless friends move off of the streets. The VMC approach to housing and case management works! Not one of the 81 people placed this year has moved back to the streets!

And I also write to ask you to continue the support we need to do this work. At this time of year, you may choose to give a gift in honor of someone dear to you. You may choose to give because it's what you do to help your fellow man. You may give because you believe in the VMC mission. For whatever reason, please understand that we are dependent upon your generosity to keep our doors open and our programs in service. Please understand that your gift will change the lives of people dear to us. And please understand how very grateful we are.

Happy Holidays. May you be richly blessed.

Sincerely,

Ginny Weatherstone
Chief Executive Officer



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Year-End Gifts and Tax Saving Ideas

As we approach the end of 2009, we hope you will consider making use of the income tax charitable deduction and make a year-end gift to VMC. Your generosity could reduce your income taxes and at the same time provide needed support for the continuation of VMC's programs.

Gifts of stock as well as gifts of cash are certainly appreciated. With gifts of stock you may benefit by not having to pay any capital gains tax on the increase in value of the stock. Or, you may be eligible to receive an income tax charitable deduction for the fair market value of the stock when you make the gift. And, for those of you who are at least 70½ there are provisions whereby you can give VMC a gift up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA without

incurring income taxes.

And lastly, the end of the year is also a good time to weigh the benefits of long-term tax savings. A charitable bequest in your will to benefit VMC is another way to save estate tax dollars. Careful and advance planning of your estate with your attorney may result in a significant savings to you and your heirs.

Your faithful support is vital to the continuation and success of our programs, and we sincerely appreciate your thoughtful consideration of a year-end gift to VMC. In doing so, we do suggest you consult with your tax advisor or accountant for additional information on gifts you may be considering.

Minvilla Manor Update

We are on track and on target. Good Lord willin' and the rains don' come, we will begin to help people move into Minvilla Manor in October of 2010! Every week, a group gathers for a formal walk-through of the construction site. Although you cannot see much change from the street, the inside of the former Fifth Avenue Motel is clearly a work in progress. While a little demo work continues, you can see that restoration of the building has begun in earnest. New

floorboards have been laid. Hallways have been cut where once there were none. And it is easy now to visualize what the Community Room will look like. Already we are selecting colors, light fixtures and counter tops. And already we are developing policies and procedures. Little by little, month by month, we are getting closer to bringing fifty-seven people in from the cold and into a place of their own.



The Journey Home

www.vmcinc.org

Winter 2009

The Best Time of My Life

By Ginny Weatherstone

A group meets every other week in the classroom at CAC on Western Avenue. The group is comprised of service providers from various agencies which seek to help the homeless. Under the leadership of Bruce Spangler, VMC's Chief Operating Officer, they discuss the most difficult cases in the area. They talk about those who are mentally ill and "resistant to outreach." They decide who will take on the responsibility of focusing on the most vulnerable and the sickest of the street people. They coordinate the care this community has to offer.

There was a name that came up repeatedly. Emmett Howard. Emmett was clearly mentally ill – and he had such a tendency towards violent behavior that he was frequently barred from the nighttime mission. He ran from those who attempted to engage with him.

Emmett disappeared for a while. We later learned that he had been in jail. One cold Friday, VMC Case Manager Matt Nance saw Emmett walking down the street and he chased him down. To Matt's surprise, Emmett did not run away. A conversation began. Emmett shared that he had started on medication when he had been in jail and it made him feel better. He also shared that he was running out of that medication and he was scared. Matt flew into action, calling Helen Ross McNabb to see about a prescription refill. On Saturday morning, Matt was able to have the script filled and he hit the streets to look for Emmett. He found him and delivered the meds. The relationship began.

I met with Emmett recently to ask him to share his story with me. Emmett was born in Cleveland, Tennessee but spent most of his childhood in Dalton, Georgia. He did poorly in school and could not "catch on to reading." He dropped out of high school and worked on a loading dock. At age 27, his mother died and his father sold the house. Emmett had no place to live. He was hearing voices by this time, and drinking heavily in an effort to cope. He couldn't hold a job. He lived in a motel for a while but soon could not even afford that. "I wasn't homeless all that time," Emmett tells me. "Sometimes I had a box." Emmett can tell you



Emmett Howard sits between VMC Case Managers Matt Nance (left) and Megan Lappas (right)

exactly how many blankets you need to stay warm while sleeping outside – five. Emmett drifted for years – and was jailed for criminal trespassing "so many times I can't count them." He was also jailed for the violent activities which had been directed by the voices he heard. Eventually he made his way to Knoxville, listening to the voices that told him where to go.

Life was not good for Emmett until his encounter with Matt. "If ever," Matt tells me, "someone needed help in getting off the streets, it was Emmett. His mental illness was beginning to stabilize, but it would not remain that way without a safe place to keep his meds. He needed a place of his own." So Matt made a mission out of helping Emmett into housing. Although Emmett's application to the housing authority was denied because of his criminal record, an appeal was requested. Emmett went to the appeal with his case manager and won.

On October 16, Emmett moved into a small unit at The Jackson Apartments. The transformation is remarkable. Emmett presents himself every day at the Resource Center of VMC. He talks about the evening before; he felt safe and warm. He keeps his apartment clean, sometimes washing the walls with shampoo to "make them smell good."

(continued inside)

Working to end homelessness - one person - one apartment - one job at a time.

From the Director's Desk

By Ginny Weatherstone



Gosh darn it! I've gone and done it again!

I go through this every year. Even though I vow that I will not get attached to the Chairman of the Board, I go and do it anyway! The Chairman is my direct boss, but he or she is so much more than that. This year's Chairman, Jerry Askew, is certainly much more than a boss to me!

Jerry holds a demanding job with Mercy Health Partners, but it is clear that VMC is near and dear to his heart. Jerry believes in helping people, pure and simple. Often he would come and serve as a receptionist at the VMC Clinic. He got to know our people. And he grew to love them. And so Jerry came deeper into the VMC story, until this year he served as Chairman of the Board.

And what a year it has been! Jerry led the walk from our old building on Jackson Avenue and Gay Street to our new building on the corner of Fifth and Broadway on March 7. Carrying the VMC logo, he led us down Gay Street to our new building. When

we dedicated the building, it was Jerry's poignant and grateful words that set the tone. Under Jerry's leadership, VMC hosted it's largest fundraiser ever; Jerry helped to make that happen. And on September 8, Jerry stood beside me as we wielded shovels and scooped the first bit of dirt to create Minvilla Manor, a permanent supportive housing development being created from the bones of the former Fifth Avenue Motel. Fifty-seven people will find a new hope and home there. On Tuesday, November 17, Jerry presided at a very special breakfast where the VMC community gathered to give thanks for a remarkable year.

I know, Jerry, that I am not always easy to deal with. I know that I get emotional and cranky. You have handled all of this with patience and equanimity and humor. You have been unfailingly supportive and appreciative. And you've always been fun!

So thank you. I love you, Jerry. Gosh darn it!

Volunteer Spotlight

VMC Volunteers are worth their weight in gold and in today's market that is a valuable commodity! Rev. Peter Keese and Rev. Karl Weddle are two of our volunteer gems. In addition to their commitment to The Bush Family Refuge, where families and individuals in crisis are offered limited direct assistance, counseling and referral, both Peter and Karl give their time to other areas of VMC. Peter has been actively involved with events such as the VMC 5K Race and Fun Walk and Carry the Torch Knoxville, and he has served three terms as Chairman of VMC's Board of Directors. Karl teaches GED classes every week in the VMC Resource Center. Both Peter and Karl play a vital role in the VMC ministry and we are proud to have them as part of the VMC Family.

If you are interested in learning more about The Bush Family Refuge or volunteering at VMC, please check out our website at www.vmcinc.org.



Rev. Peter Keese and Rev. Karl Weddle at work in The Bush Family Refuge.

Wish List...

- Travel Size Toothpaste
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Pocket-Sized Calendars (2010)
- Deskpad Calendars
- Reading Glasses
- Mops & Brooms
- Pots & Pans
- Cleaning Supplies
- Washcloths & Towels
- Projector

Holiday Happenings at VMC!

The Holiday Store

The VMC Holiday Store is open and there is still time for you to help others have a joyous holiday. You can participate by providing new toys and gift items. The Holiday Store is a unique program that enables those who are less fortunate to "purchase" gifts for their loved ones. Participants EARN points by engaging in community service projects. Points earned are then redeemed to "Purchase" the items they have selected at the Holiday Store. The Holiday Store provides a source of pride and accomplishment for everyone involved.

We ask that all gift items be new, in the original packaging (please do not gift wrap) and in the \$5 - \$30 price range. Suggested items are clothing for all ages, toys for children, small electronics for teenagers, housewares, and wrist watches.

You may drop off Holiday Store items at the following locations:

- The LunchBox, 800 Gay Street, 9050 Cross Park Dr., 1225 Weisgarber
- Butler and Bailey Market, 7513 Northshore Dr.
- CiCi's Pizza, 2885 Tazewell Pike
- Robin Easter, 132 Jackson Avenue
- Disc Exchange, 2615 Chapman Hwy.

For a detailed wish list or questions about providing community service projects, please contact Bruce Spangler at 524-3926 or visit our website at www.vmcinc.org.

Angel Ornaments

The traditional VMC Angel ornament is once again available this holiday season. This small foil Angel is a lovely symbol which indicates that you have given a gift to VMC in honor of the recipient. The Angel is appropriate for use as an ornament or a gift enclosure and will provide a lasting remembrance of your thoughtfulness. This year's quote is "Angels descending bring from above, echoes of mercy, whispers of love" by Fanny J. Crosby. Angels are the perfect gift for family and friends as well as neighbors, service people and anyone whom you would like to recognize in a special way. Angels can be ordered by calling Susan Nance at 524-3926 or by stopping by the new VMC building at 511 North Broadway.

The VMC Gift Guide

Stumped on that perfect gift? Are you trying to decide what to give the person who has everything they need? Well, look no further! The VMC Gift Guide has the perfect gift for every occasion. From a move in kit at \$30 to a month of case management at \$500, the answer is in the VMC Gift Guide. What better way to express your love for someone than to give them a gift from the heart – a gift that will help someone change their lives. You can find a copy of the VMC Gift Guide at our website at www.vmcinc.org or you can call Karol at 524-3926.



The Best Time of My Life *(continued from front page)*

Emmett smiles and tells me that the voices have been quieted. He has a new case manager now, Megan Lappas, who works with all the guys who live in The Jackson Apartments. Emmett told me, with a sparkle in his eye, that he can make himself a pot of coffee whenever he wants to. "You know," said Emmett, "this is the best time of my life – finding this place and moving in. Finding Matt and Megan – this is the best time."

There is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child. I would submit that it takes a village to effectively change the face of mental illness from one of fear to one of joy. And I am so grateful that a village was there. It put its arms around Emmett Howard.

The Gazebo Arrives



Ernie Shipe, longtime VMC volunteer and donor, made a very special gift to VMC recently. In remembrance of his wife Barbara, Ernie has provided us with a beautiful redwood gazebo which has been installed and which graces the backyard of our new building. Ernie understood that we wanted to provide a place for our homeless members to be able to enjoy fresh air and the view of the Old Gray Cemetery. His gift provides a quiet place for reflection, a place for the occasional group discussion and a place for peace and quiet. And his gift honors the memory of a woman who carried the homeless people she volunteered to help in her heart for years. Thank you, Ernie.

A Mission Moment from the VMC Dental Clinic

The VMC Dental Clinic is blessed to have dental providers who donate their time and talent to help the poor and homeless of our community receive much needed dental care. Dr. Carter Davis is one of those faithful dentists. Dr. Davis recently shared with the VMC Board some of his experiences in the VMC Dental Clinic. Those experiences were based on four simple precepts: to encourage, to comfort, to challenge, and to be an accountable partner with those coming to us for assistance.

Dr. Davis illustrated those precepts with several stories and one of those stories featured Joe. Joe was a middle-aged educated gentleman who used to be a medical supply salesman. He made bad decisions in his life and found himself homeless and addicted to alcohol. Through the efforts of the VMC staff and the Dental Clinic providers, Joe made the decision to change his life. He graduated from UT as a Certified Nursing Assistant and he now has a job. Joe plans to continue his education and become an LPN.

Dr. Davis concluded that he was thankful for the Volunteer Ministry Center and the staff and volunteers who work here. Perhaps you are a dental provider or you know of someone who is willing to donate their time and talents in the VMC Dental Clinic. For more information regarding the VMC Dental Clinic, please contact Bruce Spangler or Christy Howard at 524-3926.