



511 N. Broadway
P.O. Box 325
Knoxville, TN 37901
(865) 524-3926

www.vmcinc.org

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Ginny Weatherstone
Chief Executive Officer



Participating Agency

November 2010

Dear Friend of VMC,

It is good to take a breath this moment before the frantic activity of the holidays. It is good to share some thoughts with you. It is always good to reflect upon the year we are leaving – and to give thanks.

It has been a tumultuous year. Financial challenges have kept me up at night. The troubled economy has troubled us. Controversy over Minvilla Manor, our housing development, has been painful. The sale of our old building was not easy. It has been a difficult year.

Yet I look back at all the people who have found new life and hope through VMC programs. I remember the gentleman, homeless for 40 years, who described to me his new life and said, “I don’t have to drink anymore.” I recall the gentleman, a convicted felon, who has turned his life around; he was recently inducted into the Pellissippi State Honor Society, with his VMC case manager proudly watching the ceremony. He’ll be transferring to UT soon, a changed man with a home and job and an education.

I look back with overwhelming gratitude for the efforts of a remarkable staff. I am grateful beyond words for the dynamic, thoughtful and effective Board of Directors.

And I am grateful for you. Even as I express my gratitude, I ask that you continue and increase your support if possible. The VMC mission is a very targeted one – preventing and ending homelessness. But it is an expensive one as well. As we enter this season of thanksgiving and generosity, I ask that you make a donation to VMC in recognition of the many blessings you enjoy. Please give as generously as you can. The very life of VMC – and the very hope of those we serve – depend upon it.

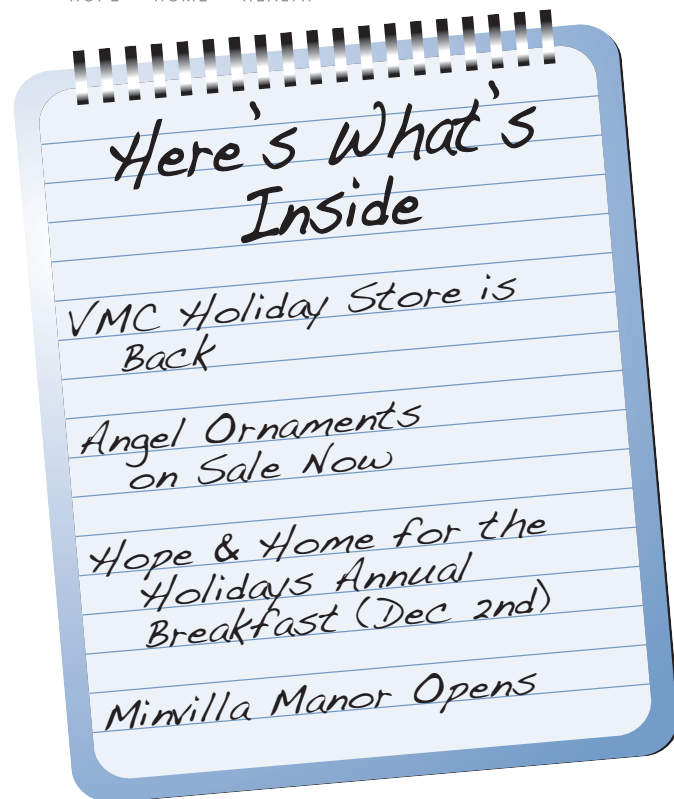
And may you and yours be showered with God’s richest blessings this holiday season.

Sincerely,

Ginny Weatherstone
Chief Executive Officer



P.O. Box 325
Knoxville, TN 37901-0325
865-524-3926



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Year-End Gifts and Tax Saving Ideas

As we approach the end of 2010, 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 might benefit by not having to pay any capital gains tax on the increase in value of the stock. Or, you might be eligible to receive an income tax charitable deduction for the fair market value of the stock when you make the gift. 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 advanced 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.



The Journey Home

November 2010
www.vmcinc.org

Moving On, Moving Up

By JJ Stambaugh

On a bitterly cold morning in February 2007, Charlie Turpin was released from jail in downtown Knoxville. He wore only shorts and a short sleeved shirt and he had no one to call and only the vaguest idea of where he could go. The good news was that the jail staff had given him medication to treat his bipolar disorder, which meant that he was at least lucid enough to follow the directions he’d been given to the nighttime emergency shelter.

“They signed me in and that’s where I slept for a little over a year,” Turpin recalls. “I got into the rhythm of being homeless back then. I worked a few odd jobs and did day work if I could get it, but this is no way to gain a stable income. You just show up and get fed.”

The root cause of Turpin’s homelessness was the same as that experienced by many others: mental illness that had gone undetected and untreated until the life he’d known was all but destroyed. Turpin, who grew up in Powell, at first followed the same self-destructive cycle followed by many men and women with bipolar disorder. He tried to medicate with alcohol and drugs, but when his marriage crumbled he fell into what he describes as a “hyper manic state where I was not rational at all.”

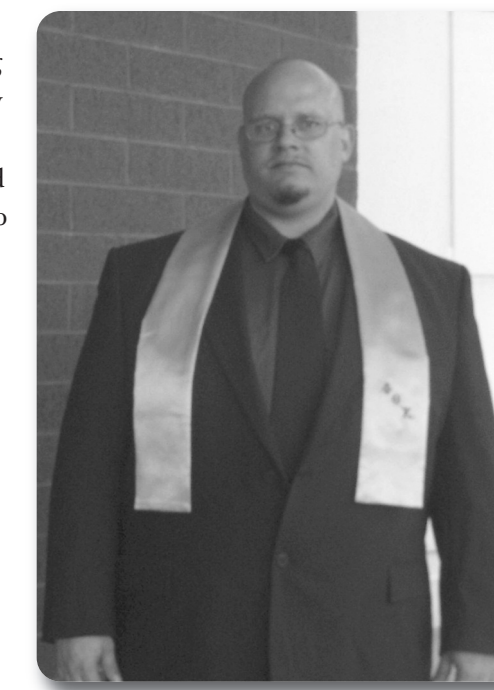
While staying at the mission at night, Turpin ran into an acquaintance he’d known before he became homeless. The man knew someone in VMC’s Self-Sufficiency Program, and within weeks Turpin had enrolled in the program. “I liked the program because you got help with your particular issues,” Turpin says. “But you had to work as well, doing the legwork to get to appointments and such. It wasn’t a hand out. I washed a lot of dishes at the old (VMC) building.” Since that fateful day in early 2007, Turpin’s life has changed in almost every way imaginable. He now has his own apartment and a new Case Manager, Gabe Cline. Of at least equal importance, however, is the fact that Gabe helped him enroll at Pellissippi State Community College and, as of this semester’s end, he will have completed 32 credit hours. He describes himself as “halfway to my associate’s degree of science” and says he hopes to enter the growing laboratory

sciences field after transferring to the University of Tennessee. “I’m flexible and driven enough to do just about whatever happens to pan out,” he says. “It’s hard to predict the future. When I was homeless I never thought I would be here now and I never really expected to be doing so well in school. But I am!”

Turpin has had a lot of time to think about the criminal justice system and the network of social services that are the almost inevitable destination for hundreds of people in Knox and surrounding counties. He wonders why there is no local “mental health court” in place, referring to an experimental legal process that’s been used in some states to keep mentally ill offenders out of jail and in treatment. He also urges those who are concerned about homelessness and the societal issues that surround it to learn about the problem firsthand. “If you don’t know what it is like to be homeless, don’t speculate,” he says. “Volunteer and look at the face of homelessness.”

When asked if he has any words of advice to those who are currently homeless, Turpin’s reply is succinct: “Don’t give up. Do what you think is right.”

On September 23, Charlie Turpin, once homeless with an untreated mental illness, was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society at Pellissippi State. His Case Manager, Gabe Cline, was in the audience, proudly watching.



Charlie Turpin at the National Honor Society Induction at Pellissippi State

Minvilla Manor Opens!



From the Director's Desk

If there is a theme to this newsletter, it is this: Home for the Holidays! You will find a good deal of information about Minvilla Manor in this issue. The facts and figures are relatively easy to capture. It is more difficult to relay the emotions that someone feels when they open the door to their new apartment for the first time. For the chronically homeless who come to reside in Minvilla Manor, their new home is a source of pride and dignity. It is also a source of comfort. They've left the long nights and pointless days of homelessness to live out a new commitment in a place that is beautiful and welcoming. They have come home! They will enjoy Thanksgiving dinner together. They will trim a tree together. And then they will return to their own apartments where they will enjoy a good night's sleep. Tomorrow will bring new challenges and

growth and they will be well rested to take them on. "Hope and Home for the Holidays" is the theme of the Annual Breakfast which VMC sponsors at this time of year. Sr. Mary Scullion, a particular heroine of mine, is coming to be our speaker on December 2. You will find the details of this event in another column in this issue. But I couldn't miss the chance to tell you how excited I am that Sr. Mary is coming. I've had a chance to visit her in Philadelphia and to see what she has accomplished there. Now it is our turn to share with her what Knoxville is all about and how we are committed to ending homelessness as we know it. I do hope you will join us. Hope! Home! What transformational power is contained in those two words! My wish for each of you is that you enjoy all the hope that this season brings, and that you do so in your very own homes! VMC is blessed to have you for a friend.

Hope & Home for the Holidays Annual Breakfast



Project H.O.M.E. co-founder Sister Mary Scullion will speak at VMC's Annual Breakfast

One of the nation's most respected advocates for the chronically homeless will speak at VMC's Annual Breakfast next month at the Crowne Plaza. Sister Mary Scullion, a nun who has been named as one of *TIME* magazine's 100 Most Influential People for her work in tackling homelessness, will discuss how her Project H.O.M.E. helped more than 8,000 people get off the streets and into their own homes in Philadelphia, PA. Sister Mary began working as a Philadelphia homeless advocate in 1976 and is the co-founder of Project H.O.M.E., which stands for "Housing, Opportunities for Employment, Medical Care, Education." Her life's work has been based on the premise that "none of us are home until all of us are home." The program – which is based on a close working relationship with local government and an effective continuum of care – has served as a blueprint for similar efforts underway in cities across the nation, including Knoxville, that are trying to solve the social problem of chronic homelessness. Project H.O.M.E., which is often touted as a model for how other cities should develop their Ten Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness, has helped channel more than \$55 million toward housing and economic development.

Officials estimate that over 95 percent of those who cycle through Project H.O.M.E. never return to the streets, saving untold millions of dollars in medical and legal costs. VMC's Annual Breakfast will be from 7:15 to 8:30 a.m. Thursday, December 2, at the Crowne Plaza, 401 W. Summit Hill Drive. Please RSVP to Susan Nance at 865-524-3926 by Wednesday, November 24. She can also be reached via e-mail at snance@vmcinc.org.

By JJ Stambaugh
On November 12, the first thirteen residents moved into Minvilla Manor, heralding both a new era for the Volunteer Ministry Center and an affirmation of our community's resolve to fully welcome the formerly homeless back into our ranks. Located at 447 North Broadway, the site of the former Fifth Avenue Motel, is now a 57-unit supportive housing complex meant to serve formerly homeless individuals with disabilities. The past few weeks have seen a frenzy of activity as the finishing touches were put on the building and VMC hosted a series of events to commemorate Minvilla's opening. More than 200 people attended our October 28 fundraiser Preview Party, and 150 more attended the October 30 ribbon cutting ceremony.

VMC purchased the old Fifth Avenue Motel in 2006 just as the joint City/County Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness was being implemented. Built in 1913 by J.W. Bondurant as three story townhouses, the apartment complex dubbed Minvilla eventually fell into disrepair. By the time the city closed the property in 2002 due to numerous codes violations, it had become a transient motel that catered to drug dealers, prostitutes and the poorest of the urban poor.

The building today bears little resemblance to the crumbling façade that once overlooked Knoxville's most notorious street corner. The renovated structure, redesigned by architect Mark Allan and developed by David Arning (Southeastern Housing Foundation), would be a graceful addition to any neighborhood and will allow its new tenants to look upon their home with pride. We paid close attention to the smallest details, working carefully to preserve or restore as much of the building's early 20th century charm as possible. The end result was so successful that Minvilla has been recommended for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places by the Tennessee Historic Commission.

The building consists of 33,600 square feet of living space, divided into 33 one bedroom and 24 efficiency apartments, each equipped with its own kitchen and bathroom. There is also a Community Room with a lounge area and a Dining Room. The residents will have on-site access to their case manager, and must pay 30% of their income toward rent with the balance of their housing costs subsidized by Section 8 vouchers issued by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Minvilla Manor would never have been built without the support and dedication of individuals and organizations too numerous to mention. It is a testament to the commitment to end the tragedy of homelessness in the Knoxville community. *Photos by Susan Nance*



Mary Frances & Guy Tucker check out a new Minvilla Manor efficiency apartment



Garden level apartments



A glance at a one bedroom apartment at Minvilla Manor

VMC Holiday Store



The Holiday Store is a unique program for the working poor and the homeless who otherwise might have to forego gifting altogether, according to VMC Chief Operating Officer Bruce Spangler. The store, located this year at 100 North Broadway, is to be stocked with donated items that are in turn purchased by the shoppers using community service credits in lieu of cash. All items are new and, where applicable in their original packaging. The goal is to provide a blessed holiday for many who would have no other way to give a gift to their loved ones. It also provides a source of pride and accomplishment for all involved. Many different types of community service work can be translated into the points necessary to shop at the store, Spangler said. "Anything from working at Old Gray Cemetery and the Friendship House at Helen Ross McNabb to picking up trash on Broadway and Gay Street," Spangler explained. "You register at the store, and your community service is your eligibility. If you're willing to do the community service then you're eligible for the program. For some folks who are physically unable, we find things for them to do." Bruce Spangler said that 2010 will mark the program's 13th year. Last year, approximately 400 people were able to purchase nearly \$10,000 worth of donated goods through the Holiday Store, and Spangler hopes that at least that many will be helped this year. If you have any questions about the program, please call Bruce Spangler at VMC at 865-524-3926. If you'd like to help by donating goods to the store, the VMC is accepting new toys and gift items for all ages. Donations may range in value from \$5 to \$30, and all items should be kept in their original packaging. Gifts for teenagers and men's cologne gift sets are especially needed this year. Please drop off your gifts for the Holiday Store at one of the following:

- All Lunchbox locations
- Butler & Bailey, 7513 Northshore Dr
- CiCi's Pizza, 2885 Tazewell Pike
- Disc Exchange, 2615 Chapman Hwy
- Robin Easter Design, 132 W. Jackson Ave.

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 "Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love!" by Hamilton Wright Mabie. 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 Selena Brewster at 524-3926 or by stopping by the VMC building at 511 North Broadway.

