

# Volunteer Ministry Center

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

*Celebrating  
30 Years  
of Service!*



# A Message *from the Chief Executive Officer*



## **Sweating the Small Things**

Every Friday morning, we gather for a community meeting to celebrate the efforts, accomplishments, and successes of those experiencing homelessness and who are on the path towards permanent housing.

Meeting in the Resource Center, participants and staff clap for the smallest of achievements. Given that the average length of homelessness for a participant is nearly twelve months prior to joining, it is worth a clap for someone who just started the program.

Achieving housing does not happen overnight; in fact and on average, it takes over 120 nights (four months) for a participant from start to finish when they move into housing.

The journey home requires many steps, including sweating the small things, e.g., securing a birth certificate, acquiring a state ID, obtaining a Social Security card. That is just the beginning. There are many, many steps along the way.

Sweating the small things is not so much about fretting, obsessiveness, or worrying. Each step requires an intentional commitment, attentiveness and diligence. Skipping or ignoring steps is not a possibility. All steps are required towards the achievement of housing. Sweating is about “stringing” the small things together.

Mary Anne Evans, known by her pen name George Eliot, was an English novelist, poet, journalist during the Victorian period who reminds us that, “Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together.”

The weekly community meetings provide the essential encouragement, reliable support, and markers of hope for our neighbors as they sweat the small things. In so doing, the small things become great things: housing, improved health, and securer lives.

Within this report, you will see that great things were accomplished in 2017. Our program objectives continue to be met by prudent spending thus making an impact on our community and those served as doors are opened for a better tomorrow.

VMC is making a difference! VMC is making a difference through its Resource Center, Bush Family Refuge, Dental Clinic and Minvilla Manor. This report provides a summary on how those little and small things came together fulfilling our mission of ending and preventing homelessness.

Thanks for being a partner in sweating the small things!

Sincerely and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Spangler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce Spangler, CEO

2018  
Board of  
Directors

# A Message from the Chairman of the Board



## Good news abounds:

I can honestly and happily report that 2017 was a very good year at the VMC.

Previous letters from Board Chairs typically note specific people who deserve thanks—and rightly so.

We have an excellent staff, from our CEO Bruce Spangler all the way through every employee, all are hard working and very competent! A big and deserved thanks to them.

And there are two categories of volunteers: Board members who make their time and talents available; and volunteers who work in the Refuge and who serve meals, and who do a variety of other tasks. Thanks also to them.

And those who are donors to our important work. We continue to be very grateful to you, as well.

So thanks to every member of this great team: donors (big and small), volunteers, paid staff; every team member is crucial to our success.

And I have more good news:

The opportunities ahead of us are wide open and exciting. I am currently reading Matthew Desmond's *Evicted*. In narrative style, Desmond describes how people living at or below poverty level manage to find apartments to rent; it is well-written. It could be read as discouraging, but I think we can read it, instead, as describing an exciting opportunity that is adjunct to the work we already do so well. While we continue to do our good work, we can become advocates for discovering new ways to provide decent low-cost housing to the many who need it. Knoxville could become a model for the nation.

Dag Hammarskjöld said it much better and more succinctly: "For all that has been, 'thanks'; for all that shall be, 'yes'."

So, thanks to you all, and yes to our exciting future.

Sincerely,

Reverend Peter Keese

David Arning	Carney Ivy	Martin Roberson
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## Our Mission

“Our mission is to facilitate permanent supportive housing for those who are homeless and to provide services to prevent homelessness.”

## The Bush Family Refuge

Staffed primarily by trained volunteers, the Refuge sees individuals and families who are at risk of losing their housing. It provides counseling and case management that can lead to housing sustainability. Additionally, the Refuge can help with procuring birth certificates and state-issued identification, prescription medications, clothing, furniture, etc. It also makes referrals to other agencies and services as appropriate. Each individual is seen in a private interview setting and confidentiality is maintained.



*Refuge volunteers provide assistance to prevent homelessness.*

### 2017 Bush Family Refuge Statistics

- **399** individuals and families helped with utilities
- **115** individuals and families helped with rent
- Total of **2,813** individuals and families served

## The VMC Dental Clinic

Housed in our building, the VMC Dental Clinic uses professional dental clinicians to provide dental care and treatment to the homeless and very low income residents of Knox County. Comprehensive dental services are provided at no cost to the patient. The VMC Dental Clinic is open two days a week.

### 2017 Dental Clinic Statistics

- **1,501** patient visits
- **2,423** procedures performed
- **178** sets of dentures were provided



*Dr. Carter Davis has provided more than ten years of dedicated service in the VMC Dental Clinic.*

## The Resource Center

Offering a transitional day program for the homeless, the Resource Center is a case management program which assists people in their efforts to work their way out of homelessness. Every member is assigned a case manager who works with them to overcome barriers to housing and self-sufficiency. When housing is achieved, the case manager remains involved until true



*Donnie, Kevin, and Steve receive Certificates of Completion for classes through the Resource Center.*

### 2017 Resource Center Statistics

**87** people experiencing homelessness achieved housing during the course of the year. They join the **879** who have been previously placed for a total of **966**. Our housing retention rate is **93.8%** measured after one year of housing. (The national average is **85%**)

independence is achieved. Various classes, a meal program, showers, laundry facilities and social activities are also offered as part of the programming. All members are held accountable to their plan and are expected to complete a portion of the janitorial work required to keep the Resource Center area clean and organized.

## Minvilla Manor

VMC's housing development, Minvilla Manor, accepts project based vouchers which insures a high level of occupancy. The 57 apartments are each inhabited by a former chronically homeless and disabled individual. Minvilla is unique in that it offers case management services

### 2017 Minvilla Manor Statistics

Minvilla Manor maintains a **93%** daily utilization rate.



on-site, and twenty-four hour staffing is in place as well. This ensures a high level of security for the residents. Social activities are also provided. The goal is for each tenant to reach his or her highest level of self-sufficiency. It should also be noted that Minvilla Manor has won numerous awards for historic preservation.

*Longtime volunteer, Linda Eberle, third from left, enjoys "coffee time" with Minvilla Manor residents.*

## The VMC Holiday Store

### 2017 Holiday Store Statistics

**186** shoppers participated in this program. They earned points to buy holiday gifts for over **563** people.

In an effort to help low or no income individuals earn gifts for holiday giving, the VMC Holiday Store provides opportunities to perform community service work for which they receive "points." They may then spend these "points" at the store which is set up seasonally and which offers a wide variety of new gift items for the shopping pleasure of the participants. This store allows individuals to preserve pride; it does not offer a handout. The store is staffed completely by volunteers and is stocked with donated merchandise.

# Three little words...

Actually, they are big words. And they are words that have come to mean a lot to us over the past several years as our programming has matured beyond the simple shelter approach to the provision of life-changing services that require the participation of the client. You will see VMC using these words in our brochures, speeches, and written material about our work. These three words are: **Compassion, Accountability, Results!** We feel strongly that these words capture the essence of what VMC does and how we do it.

Here is what these words mean to us:

**Compassion:** meeting people where they are in their hour of greatest need, holding them in positive regard even as we see the possibility of a higher level of functioning and self-sufficiency.

**Accountability:** expecting those we serve to be an active part of their own recovery, expecting them to do what they agree to do as part of their plan.

**Results:** seeing those we serve move into a better life as people with housing and a plan for the future, seeing them maintain their housing with a long-term plan for sustainability.



“I’ve had the opportunity and blessing to volunteer at VMC working closely with our VMC neighbors, staff, and Board of Directors. This experience has provided me with better appreciation of the humanitarian nature of Knoxville from volunteers to generous donors. The “Housing First” approach makes so much sense! When I was an Adult Education Literacy instructor, so many of our students couldn’t focus or persist in getting their GED education for lack of a stable home or affordable housing. What VMC has accomplished is truly remarkable and is a best-practice of excellence. The really cool part is I get to teach line dancing and on a weekly basis, dance with my VMC neighbors and staff.”



*VMC Board Member Jim Ford*

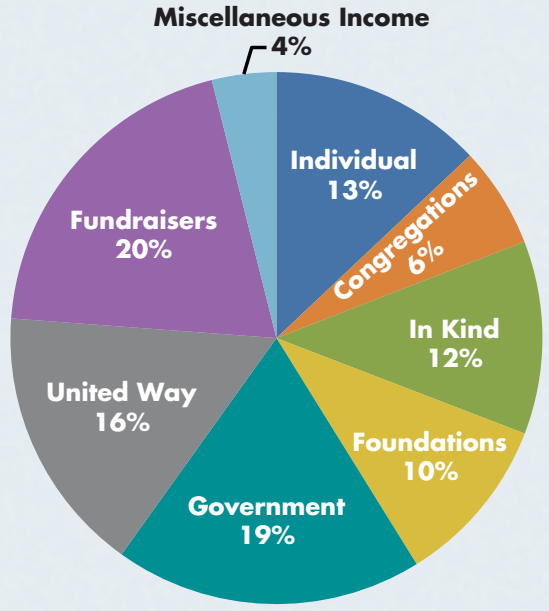
# Our Financial Year in Review

## Income Summary

Individual	233,265.00
Congregations	110,358.00
In kind Contributions	211,267.00
Foundations	185,700.00
Government	336,968.00
United Way	293,042.00
Fundraisers	358,320.00
Miscellaneous Income	70,324.00

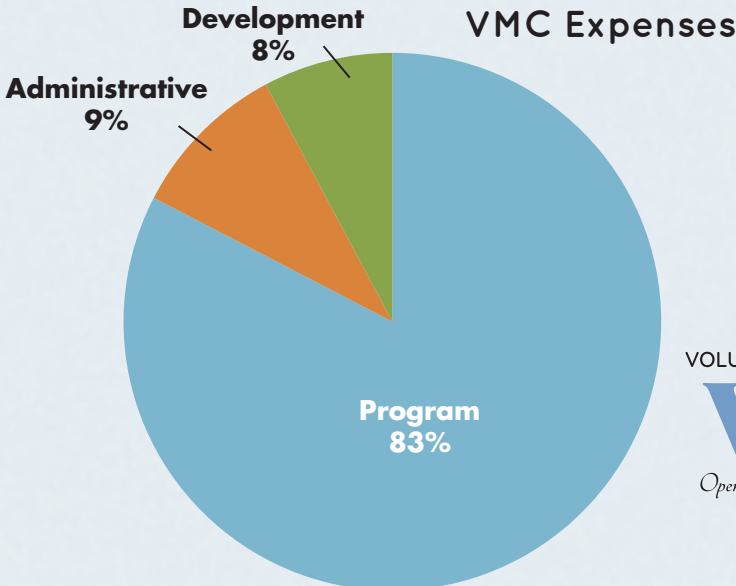
**Total Income \$1,799,244.00**

\*Many corporate gifts are counted in fundraisers because they are given as event sponsorships.



Mark Walker, VMC Board Member and Finance Committee Chair

“The many contributions received in 2017 from our generous donors has helped VMC further its mission of preventing homelessness and improved the lives of some of our most vulnerable neighbors.”



VOLUNTEER MINISTRY CENTER

# VMC

*Opening Doors for a Better Tomorrow*

# Thanks to You — We Now Have a Home!



*Elizabeth now feels safe and secure in her apartment at Minvilla Manor.*



*Pamela receives the key to her apartment from case manager Craig Ahern.*



*Frederick is happy to have a place of his own after many years on the streets.*



*Move in day always brings smiles when you are no longer homeless.*



*Patricia is thankful to now have a home.*



*Tommy is relieved and happy to no longer be on the streets.*



# Thanks to You – Lives have changed!



For more stories and information on VMC's programs and services, please visit our website at [www.vmcinc.org](http://www.vmcinc.org) and our Corner Perspective Video-Blog on You Tube.

# Thanks to You—Thirty Years of Service!

As a result of the “Housing First” approach, over 966 individuals experiencing homelessness have achieved housing with 93.8% of those maintaining housing for a year or longer. VMC will celebrate the 1000th person overcoming homelessness and moving from the streets to a home of their own in 2018!



*The first Refuge located on Hinton Ave.*



*VMC's old building on Gay Street.*



*VMC's current location on Broadway.*



*The old 5th Avenue Motel (now Minvilla Manor) at the corner of Broadway and 5th Avenue.*



*Minvilla Manor (formerly the 5th Ave. Motel) which is on the National Historic Register.*

## With Gratitude — Our Donors

“I have been associated with the Volunteer Ministry Center for over 16 years as a community volunteer and as a board member. I frequently credit the VMC for helping me raise my children. That true combination of love and accountability expressed in every action by both staff and volunteers speaks volumes as it helps to lift our neighbors up and give them a new life. A new life with a roof over their heads. Please take a moment to look over this annual report and examine what has been accomplished this past year. I am proud to be associated with the VMC and I am grateful for all our supporters. We could not do our work without your help! Thank you!”



*Carney Ivy, VMC Board Member and Development Committee Chair*

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# With Gratitude — Our Donors



*VMC Case Manager Dyrll Higdon engaging a neighbor through the VMC Outreach Program.*

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Tucker and Claire Gentry



VMC Board Member Beth Townsend and her husband Bo Townsend who is a dedicated VMC volunteer.

“We are so grateful to be back in Knoxville where people have always taken care of one another. We wanted to find a place to where we could give back to our community. VMC provides such a wonderful and compassionate service to our neighbors in need and we enjoy working with such a caring community of people.”

# With Gratitude — Our Donors

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*Erin Gruwell, featured speaker for the 2017 Carry the Torch event, spent time with VMC staff and Resource Center members.*

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