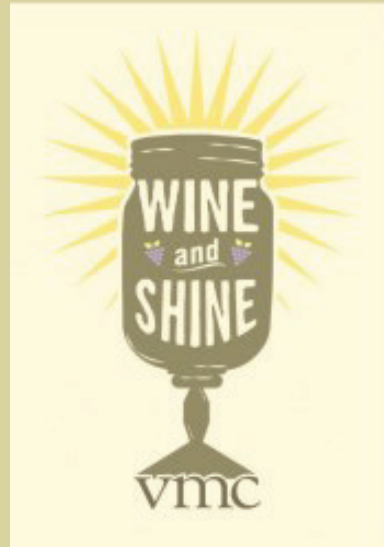


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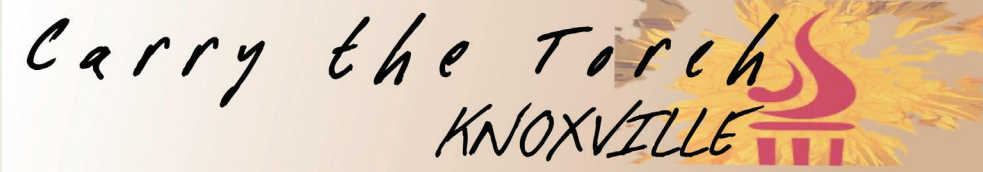
Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Crowne Plaza

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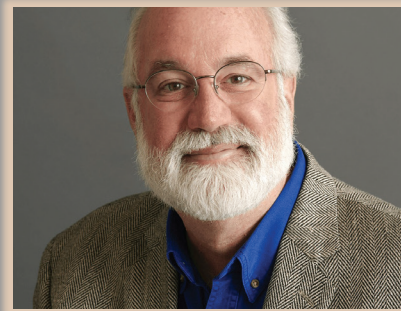
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Knoxville Convention Center**

Mission Fair 10:00 am-11:30 am

Lunch and Program 11:45 am-1:00 pm

Book Signing 1:00 pm-2:00 pm

For additional information contact Mary Beth Ramey at 524-3926 x 229 or visit
carrythetorchknoxville.com

**Inaugural Volunteer Ministry
Center Golf Tournament**

Monday, August 23, 2021

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“I AM VULNERABLE, TOO!”

He was often found near the downtown area of Knoxville sleeping on a cold, black painted, metal- frame of a bench in Krutch Park. On the other side of town was an energetic entrepreneur operating a successful business as a chiropractic specialist. Little did each know that their lives would intersect someday. They would meet, however, at the intersection that both had in common.

Daniel is a thirteen year resident in Volunteer Ministry Center’s permanent supportive housing opportunity, Minvilla Manor. His life of the past thirteen years is much different than his early childhood and teenage days. Hearing the retelling of those childhood experiences pales against words like tragic, harmful, if not horrific. Such childhood trauma makes for a very difficult adulthood.

As a young adult, Daniel was often seen wandering aimlessly through the streets of Knoxville. Led by delusional thoughts, he had difficulty navigating the world that we think we master. In turn, he became the master of his own created universe assuming alter-egos even the divine, if necessary.

Poorly clothed with ill-fitting shoes and in a universe of one, Daniel seemed destined to wander the streets with a premature death promised - at least on his side of town.

“In Jewish history, there are no

coincidences,” declares writer, Nobel laureate, and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. For Dr. Craig Hennie, there are no coincidences in explaining the intersection of his life and Daniel or as he knows him, Dan.

This is how he remembers the day he first met Dan.

“I believe there are no coincidences,” Craig confidently says recalling his first introduction to Daniel through a good friend, Ron. “Dan was delusional, aloof and would not speak directly to me at first.” Dan had been befriended by caring folks from a local church and Craig was being invited to be a part, if not take a lead role, as Ron was moving out of town.

Ron had become somewhat of a “surrogate mouthpiece” between the group and Dan. If someone spoke to Dan, his reply was directed to Ron with Ron echoing the reply. “I just didn’t know how or if being a part of Dan’s life would work,” Craig lamented. “I just didn’t know, but I believe there are no coincidences. I believe that Dan and I were meeting for a purpose.”

Since there are no coincidences for Craig, he understood that being part of Daniel’s life could only be fulfilled through a sense of “calling.” Though answering a call means relying on some divine help, it still doesn’t make the task any easier. Craig admitted, “This is going to be hard to do.”

How could they connect? What would they have in common?

For over decades Craig has had a successful practice as a chiropractor specialist. Coming from a loving and supportive family of origin that continues to mold him today, he is mindful of his blessings – a family that loves him and the “good things” of life that come with success. Such blessings have not been showered upon Dan.

Craig says, “I saw Daniel as being extremely vulnerable when we first met.

continued inside...



Dr. Craig Hennie

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



2,043 individuals received services through the Bush Family Refuge

221 individuals experiencing homelessness received services in the Resource Center

46 individuals achieved housing; of those 32 were chronically homeless



227 households received utility and/or rent assistance



420 individuals experiencing homelessness engaged through Street Outreach

145 vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness received overnight shelter at the Foyer



1,550 dental procedures were performed in the VMC Dental Clinic



10,622 meals served in the Resource Center



70 residents lived at Minvilla Manor

VMC CONTINUES TO RESPOND TO COVID-19



It has been a year now and VMC continues to be fully operational with a slightly different look. The Bush Family Refuge continues with curb-side service. Regardless of the weather, be it pouring rain or snow, gusty winds, or freezing temps, Refuge Director Christy Smith provides assistance to those in need.



And, VMC staff members Zan Schriver and Gail Mullins continue to provide oversight and management of the Guest House, a quarantine/isolation facility for those experiencing homelessness who need to be quarantined for COVID.



The Resource Center continues to provide housing case management services with a slightly different look. Masks and social distancing continue to be implemented.

"I AM VULNERABLE, TOO!" CONTINUED

Sometimes, I still do." Expecting an answer to the question of what has worked for them over the years to be somewhat cliché or rote like "be strong, hang in there, be resilient." Craig's humble acknowledgement was sincere and honest, "My vulnerability met Dan's vulnerability. That is where we connected and how it has worked for these years." In reflecting on his early life, Craig momentarily revisits his past mistakes and again winces at the consequences and the costs of each. "I am vulnerable, too."

"Dan has taught me to be patient, to 'enjoy the ride' that life brings, and to really appreciate and acknowledge the small things in life. I had always run with full steam which is part of my entrepreneurial spirit. Dan has taught me to slow down, enjoy what is in front of me."

The common ground of vulnerabilities is their connecting point and has been for the past six years. Craig and Daniel have had a relationship that is defined by ups and downs, trials and tribulations, with many moments of joy and changes in both of their lives.

Craig's blessing of life has also played a significant and stable supportive role as Dan has become an integral part of Craig's extended family. "He is part of the family. My mother and sister see Dan as family and always inquire about his well-being."

Dan has accompanied Craig on visits to family and even been part of a vacation excursion or two.

Craig wants everyone to know that "people are different. People need different things. We are accustomed to being with people who talk like us, look like us, even smell like us. But we are all different and we simply need to love at that level – we are different, but we are all human. My relationship with Dan has taught me to slow down, enjoy the pleasures of life. He has opened me to making adjustments in my life."

Maybe that is what a "calling" does for all of us. It is less about affirming of our bias but challenges us to alter or redirect our passions, our loves.

For years, Dan walked with a gait and stride that seemed to be unnatural. Craig began looking for clues and as any good health professional, he sought answers. The answer was not muscular, skeletal, nor any abnormality. Craig discovered that Daniel had always worn shoes that were too small or too tight given the extra length and width of his feet. Once a pair of right fitting shoes was secured, the natural walk returned. "Dan was thrilled. He was just as thrilled when he received a new pair of jeans! Dan delights in the small things," Craig enjoys with his own delight and a smile behind his COVID mask.

Not everyone can do what Craig is doing in relating to someone like Dan. Everyone is not expected to do so. It should not be expected that everyone like Dan would respond in a similar way. It should not be expected. But when it works, it works.

For Craig there are no coincidences, the dots of life are already connected. Vulnerability to vulnerability. Human to human. Calling to response.

In such intersections, life is lived, life is measured, and life is experienced to its fullest – making for a journey home.

When common ground is secured and a connection is made, fulfilling stories like this are apt to happen. The line between being serendipitous or providential is rather thin, it seems. Either way, a pair of good fitting shoes aids in the journey.

By: Bruce W. Spangler



Craig and Dan at the beach

A major practice as a chiropractor is in making "adjustments." Reflecting on his profession and time with Dan,

VMC HAPPENINGS



Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church and the Bearden High Boys Soccer Team provided goodie bags for the residents at Minvilla Manor. Pictured here are Kathryn Ann Holt and Alison Fleetwood from Cedar Springs along with case managers Dustin Heffner and Sid Dingman.



William is the youngest person to Sponsor A Bed at The Foyer! Rather than receive gifts for his birthday, William collected money for the Volunteer Ministry Center. Thank you, William for giving such a generous gift of love!



Remote Area Medical continues to provide eye exams and eye glasses for our homeless neighbors



VMC welcomes four new street outreach workers through funding from the City of Knoxville. Pictured here are Michelle Ahern, Sabrina Greene, and Steve Duncan. Not pictured is Cameron Juroff.

WE HAVE A HOME NOW!



Marco is excited to sign the lease to his new apartment as he has been without a home since he was 16.



Darlene moved into her new apartment after being homeless for over a year. She received her very own hair dryer as a birthday gift.



After living in her car while trying to maintain stable employment, Sandra now has her own home.



Jonathan proudly holds his key to his new apartment after being homeless since 2019.

THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING A BED AT THE FOYER IN 2020!

This placard is on the Welcome Wall at The Foyer. The support from the Foyer Bed Sponsors assures shelter and safety for the most vulnerable of our homeless neighbors. For information on the Sponsor a Bed at the Foyer program visit www.vmcinc.org or call 865-524-3926.

