

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY CENTER



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Volunteer Ministry Center
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Journalist and New York Times Best Selling Author of *The Glass Castle*, Jeannette Walls, returns to Knoxville to promote VMC's Mission for Preventing and Ending Homelessness

As the keynote speaker for Volunteer Ministry Center's 18th Annual Carry the Torch fundraising luncheon, Jeannette Walls will share her inspiring journey from poverty to the best seller list.

Knoxville, TN - November 10, 2026, Volunteer Ministry Center (VMC) will host its 18th Annual Carry the Torch fundraising luncheon at the Knoxville Convention Center, featuring Jeannette Walls as the keynote speaker with WATE Anchor, Lori Tucker, as Honorary Chair. This signature annual event boasts 700-800 attendees and raises funds towards preventing and ending homelessness in Knoxville. Funds are raised to support the mission of VMC through sponsorships, ticket purchases, and donations. Attendees will enjoy a program, lunch, and book signing from 11:45 AM – 2:00 PM. There will also be a Mission Fair to highlight other community organizations and their services beginning at 10:00 AM. Save the date for an afternoon of community collaboration and hope. Get involved and learn more at www.vmcinc.org/carry-the-torch.

Carry the Torch has been a premier event in Knoxville for more than 17 years. Past guest speakers have included Darryl Strawberry, Father Greg Boyle, Chamique Holdsclaw, John Quiñones, Pat Conroy, and many other notable inspirational thinkers and agents of social change. The 2026 *Carry the Torch* Co-Chairs are VMC Board Members Nancy Friedrich and Beth Ann Carter. **ENDS**

The poster for the 2026 Carry the Torch fundraising luncheon is set against a white background with orange and blue geometric borders. At the top, it says "NOVEMBER 10, 2026 | KNOXVILLE CONVENTION CENTER" and "SPONSOR OR DONATE NOW". The title "CARRY THE TORCH 2026" is prominently displayed with a stylized orange flame logo. Below this, it features "featuring keynote speaker JEANNETTE WALLS" with a photo of her and a list of her credentials: "Author of 'The Glass Castle'", "New York Times Best Seller", and "Journalist and Author". To the right, it introduces "with honorary chair LORI TUCKER, WATE ANCHOR" with a circular photo of her. The "event schedule" lists: "10:00 a.m. Mission Fair*", "11:45 a.m. Keynote Speaker & Lunch", and "1:00 p.m. Speaker/Author Book Signing". At the bottom left, it says "Raising awareness and funds to benefit VMC" with the VMC logo. At the bottom right, a QR code is provided, and a small note states: "*Mission Fair Booths are available for nonprofits that focus on addressing poverty, housing, & homelessness. For more information please contact us at developmentdept@vmcinc.org or 865-524-3926 ext. 230".

For Further Information

Please contact Shalee Allen, Volunteer Ministry Center Director of Development and Marketing, 865-524-3926 ext. 258 | sallen@vmcinc.org

Notes to Editors

About Volunteer Ministry Center

Volunteer Ministry Center (VMC) has been helping people move from homelessness to housing in Knoxville since 1987. Located in the heart of the city, VMC provides compassionate, personalized support through programs like the Resource Center, Street Outreach, and the Bush Family Refuge. With housing as the goal, VMC's expert case managers connect neighbors with the resources, services, and solutions they need to achieve lasting stability. To date, *VMC has helped more than 1,500 neighbors achieve housing*. Learn more about VMC's life-changing work at vmcinc.org.

About Jeannette Walls

Jeannette Walls was born in Phoenix, Arizona and grew up in the American Southwest and Welch, West Virginia. She graduated from Barnard College and was a journalist in New York for twenty-five years, writing for New York Magazine, Esquire, and MSNBC. Her memoir, *The Glass Castle*, has been a New York Times bestseller for more than eight years, has been translated into more than thirty languages and was made into a film starring Brie Larson. She is also the author of the best-selling novels *The Silver Star* and *Half Broke Horses*, which was named one of the ten best books of 2009 by the editors of the New York Times Book Review. Her newest novel, *Hang the Moon*, published in March 2023 was also an instant best seller.