VMC | VOLUNTEER MINISTRY CENTER

November 17, 2026

Dear Supporter of VMC and Carry the Torch,

One week ago, 600 of us gathered together with the goal of raising critical funds to prevent and end homelessness in Knoxville. On behalf of the VMC staff, Board, and Carry the Torch Planning Committee, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who sponsored, volunteered, attended, and donated to this important effort. Thank you for choosing to be part of the 18th Annual Carry the Torch Fundraising Luncheon!

It is important to all of us that everyone who participated in any capacity has the opportunity to celebrate with us as we announce the results. If you were a table host or sponsor, please share this communication with your guests so they can learn about the outcomes and impact of which they were also a part.

As you may know, our goal was to gross $250,000 for our Neighbors. But you helped us surpass that goal! Through sponsorships purchased before the event, donations and pledges made during the luncheon, and gifts received in the days following, we are thrilled to announce that we have raised over $298,482 for Carry the Torch 2026! And the gifts are still coming in! (It's not too late to be part of the impact. See page 2.)

Together, you have helped make this event the second-highest-grossing Carry the Torch on record! THANK YOU! (Last year's event holds the record at $307,922. We are only $9,500 away!)

The excitement among our team is real because we get to take these tremendous gifts and put them to work for our Neighbors - whether by providing housing, resources, and housing services or helping Neighbors remain secure in their current housing. This IS important work, and we can do it because of the wonderful people in our community who care enough to pause, pay attention to the needs around them, and give freely.

If you attended the event, you had the opportunity to see and hear from one of our Neighbors, John "Si" Beene, as he shared his personal journey from homelessness to housing. Many of you have requested access to his moving story of heartache, homelessness, and overcoming challenges with the help of the VMC team. We are incredibly grateful to our partners at Citizen Advertising, who helped us so beautifully capture the vulnerability and inspiring transformation that John generously shared with us.

You can view his story here: Watch Now

Citizen Advertising also helped us capture some wonderful photos from the event. **View Now**

We also want to once again recognize and express our gratitude to our wonderful Honorary Chair, Lori Tucker, and our Keynote Speaker, Jeannette Walls. If you missed the event and would like an opportunity to watch a recording of the speeches, please email me for a special link.

CARRY THE TORCH 2026

We are so grateful to all of our amazing sponsors, vendors, volunteers, mission fair partners, and community friends who made this event possible. Please take a moment to review the businesses, individuals, and organizations listed below and join us in celebrating their support.

A special final shout-out to our Torchbearer Sponsor, The Boyd Foundation; our Beacon Sponsors, Clayton, Axiome Advisory Group/Greg Ward, and Steve and Ann Bailey; and our Book Signing Sponsor, Home Federal Bank.

And finally, THANK YOU for your support and for giving your attention to this important event and the critical need it represents. We could not do this work without you.

With gratitude,

Shalee Allen
Director of Development and Marketing

A FINAL THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS EVENT SPONSORS

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Westminster Presbyterian Church

If you were not able to join us, you can still make an impact! Use this secure and convenient QR Code to donate.

865.524.3926 x258 sallen@vmcinc.org Give to CTT Now

IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR FEEDBACK ABOUT THIS YEAR'S EVENT, PLEASE EMAIL US AT DEVELOPMENTDEPT@VMCINC.ORG. WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!