

## FROM THE CEO'S DESK:

### Happy 1st Quarter of 2024!



Our new CEO, Tracey Williams

endorsements from experts in the field. "Phew."

All of this requires the best team, and after a few months of transition and growth at VMC, we are proud to tell you that not only have we stabilized, we are stronger and ready to step up our quest to **prevent and end homelessness.**

Over the past few months, Bo and our Board of Directors dug in and set

VMC up for success by engaging with outside professionals. These brightest and best companies are helping us update everything from our technology and accounting to our branding and development. We have outsourced key positions (CFO, asset management, etc.) to ensure we are using best practices while allowing staff more time to dedicate to the quality and sustainability of our programs and mission.

Along those lines, we have a two-million-dollar opportunity, and we need your help. Read about this "game changing" opportunity on the cover. Thank you for staying true to VMC though our growing pains. We couldn't be more excited about the year (or 10) ahead of us. Stay tuned, get involved, and reach out to me directly if you want to discuss opportunities for collaboration and success.

Tracey Williams

Your last article "From the CEO's Desk" was authored by Interim CEO Reverend Bo Townsend. What an exciting 90 days it has been since that time!

I am proud to introduce myself as the "latest and final" CEO (for at least a decade or more--if you will have me). By now most of you have read about or met me so I don't want to use this space as a biographical introduction. I will just tell you that after 10 years in the USAF, I have spent the last 25 years growing some already amazing non-profits, like VMC.

From transitional housing for families, to people with disabilities, foster care for children and teens, and animal shelters; I have been privileged to lead some form of revitalization of organizations, their missions, and the community they serve. And so, we start **the next chapter of VMC**, built on years of faithful support from hundreds of dedicated people like you.

### How do I/we do this?

Automate processes, diversify funding sources, educate the public, review our services vs. needs, reduce redundancy, engage staff, leadership, volunteers, donors, and the community and tell our story succinctly with supporting data and

## VMC CORE VALUES

### Compassion

Meeting people where they are with genuine welcome and respect.

### Accountability

Holding people accountable in a context of dignity and respect.

### Results

Seeing people move into a better life through housing.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### "WINE AND SHINE" PRESENTED BY: SUGARLANDS DISTILLING COMPANY & THE CROWNE PLAZA KNOXVILLE

Tastings begin at 7:00 pm

Moonshine & Wine Food & Music

Live & Silent Auction

Emcee Sam Venable



Live Music

12th Annual Don Sproles Memorial Evening

Auctioneer Bear Stephenson

July 26, 2024—6:00 pm at the Crowne Plaza



Tickets are \$100 and may be purchased online



### Carry the Torch KNOXVILLE

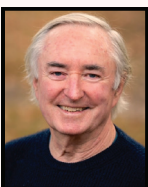
The Volunteer Ministry Center Presents Carry the Torch Knoxville



Tracy Kidder

Tracy Kidder, **Pulitzer Prize Winner** and Best-Selling Author of *Rough Sleepers*.

Featuring



James J. O'Connell, MD

Dr. Jim O'Connell, **President of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program and Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School.** Dr. Jim O'Connell is the author of *Stories from the Shadows*.



Honorary Chairs Dr. Robert and Carney Ivy

**October 24, 2024**  
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 [www.vmcinc.org](http://www.vmcinc.org)

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## ANNOUNCING THE VOLUNTEER MINISTRY CENTER ENDOWMENT

### GAME CHANGER

**Game Changer** (n) a newly introduced element or factor that changes an existing situation or activity in a significant way!



A neighbor experiencing homelessness getting dentures is a game changer! A neighbor reuniting with family is a game changer! A neighbor achieving housing is a game changer! And now VMC has a very exciting opportunity which will be a game changer. A long-time supporter, a foundation, is sunsetting and will be dispersing its remaining assets. Because the foundation believes strongly in our mission and our methods and wants to continue to fund our work even after it shuts down, its principals have pledged to give \$1million to the VMC Endowment, with the provision that we raise \$1million in matching funds. We have until the end of this year to accomplish this, and we are up to the challenge.

How are we going to get there? A small group is at work identifying

potential donors for major gifts. We have faith that many of our supporters will be willing to make a one-time contribution over and above their current annual giving. The VMC board is committed to having 100% participation from its members. We are already off to a good start with \$350,000 in hand.

What will be the impact? A \$2million endowment would add a level of financial strength that VMC has never before enjoyed. It would generate close to \$100,000 annually, providing a cushion for the ebbs and flows of government grants. Imagine if this were already in place - perhaps we might have been able to keep The Foyer open while searching for other permanent funding. Imagine adding another street outreach team so that we could extend our reach deeper into Knox County. Imagine the beginning of our next affordable housing project.

Would you like to be a game changer? Contribute to the VMC Endowment campaign and see what great things happen!

Susan Conway, VMC Board Member and Chair of the Endowment Committee

## ART FOR THE HEART, SOUL, AND MIND

Leo is a bright and talented person who uses art therapy to soothe the anxious and debilitating emotions which frequently overpower Leo's mental and physical well-being.

Leo grew up in our Knoxville community, entered college at USC in Columbia and was eager to study Marine Science, but mental health issues were a barrier to focusing on schoolwork. Childhood ADHD and autism affected Leo's ability to concentrate on class studies resulting in Leo returning home to Knoxville.

Eager to get a college degree and pursue a career, Leo entered Pellissippi State and worked various jobs from cooking at a local restaurant to being a customer service rep. for which Leo achieved top sales. But the constant battle with physical and mental health issues continued, preventing Leo from achieving the success which was so avidly desired.



Leo proudly displays a hand-painted bookcase in the community room at Caswell Manor. Pictured with Leo is Caswell Manor Case Manager, Ethan Lane.

Eventually, anxiety and mental health problems led to homelessness. Leo lived in a car with two cats for an extended period of time. Leo desperately needed the stability of housing in order to focus on getting the help needed for the debilitating health issues.

In August of 2023, Leo moved into Caswell Manor and now has a home, a stable environment within which to focus on mental and physical health issues, and a case manager to provide the needed supportive services.

Living at Caswell has opened a whole new life for Leo. The stability and peacefulness of having your own home provides a soothing environment to focus on mental and physical care. The supportive services provided by Leo's case manager, Ethan, are critical for sustaining housing. And Leo discovered a love for Art that provides a soothing respite for the persistent anxiety. From



This framed flower garden is one of many art pieces decorating Leo's apartment wall.



Another furniture piece displaying Leo's Art

colorful masterpieces on the apartment wall to bright and creative designs on furniture, Leo can see the world from a very different perspective.

Art for Leo is a way to express Leo's true self and to cope with the ever-present and often overpowering mental and physical disabilities. Having a home at Caswell Manor combined with the peacefulness of Art truly is healing for Leo's Heart, Soul and Mind.

By: Mary Beth Ramey

## WE HAVE A HOME NOW!



Bob has been in his new apartment for a few months after experiencing homelessness for over three years. He and his emotional support animal, Ruger, are thankful to have a home.



Michael is thrilled to have his own apartment after being homeless since 2020.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - CELEBRATING FIFTEEN YEARS OF VOLUNTEERISM



Marty Smith

VMC is grateful to Marty Smith for Fifteen Years of dedicated service! Marty came to VMC in March 2009 and has volunteered three days every week to assist the Development Department. Marty manages the donation software program and ensures the thank you letters are done. She is instrumental in the donation payment process for Carry the Torch and runs a variety of reports and lists for different activities and events for VMC. Her keen eye for detail and desire for perfection are attributes which have benefited VMC for so many years. Marty is a significant and valued member of the VMC Development Department. We celebrate her and the invaluable contribution she has made to VMC and the neighbors we serve. Thank You, Marty!!!!

## VMC HAPPENINGS



Members of the Lomax Temple AME Zion Church donated 110 blessing bags for our homeless neighbors. Each bag contained snacks, water, gloves, hat, hygiene and first aid supplies. Pictured here are Tiffany Rogers, Tonya Dick, Edna Ragland, and Johnnetta Fenderson.



VMC is grateful to Ameresco Knoxville for collecting winter clothing for our unsheltered neighbors. Pictured here are VMC CEO Tracey Williams, center, with Shirley Griffin (left) and Rebecca Genua (right).



Farragut Presbyterian Church has been preparing lunch for our neighbors in the VMC Resource Center for over 25 years. VMC is grateful to our volunteer meal groups who cook and serve delicious meals for our neighbors working to achieve housing.



VMC staff along with members of the Knoxville-Knox County Homeless Coalition attended this year's Day on the Hill for Housing and Homelessness in Nashville.



VMC Leadership took part in the City and County Mayors' Leadership Summit on Homelessness. VMC CEO Tracey Williams is pictured speaking with Keynote Speaker Julia Orlando. Chief Clinical Services and Operations Officer Gabe Cline and Vice Chair of the VMC Board, David Arning, also participated.



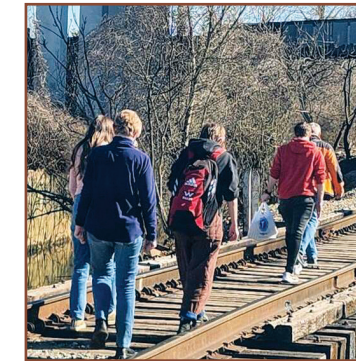
VMC's Street Outreach Team is working with Knox Street Medicine Outreach to help reach those living in encampments in need of medical care. Pictured here are VMC Street Outreach case managers Shelby Bukus (left) and Daryl Higdon (right) with KSMO's Dr. Danielle Darter.



VMC hosted its first Faith Leadership Breakfast of 2024 to connect and build partnerships within the Knoxville faith community.



Gabe Cline, Chief Clinical Services and Operations Officer, presented at the recent public hearing hosted by the City of Knoxville regarding alternative response teams and other services for our neighbors experiencing homelessness, mental health and substance misuse issues.



UT researchers from the Department of Geography & Sustainability and the College of Social Work are working together with the Volunteer Ministry Center to understand how our neighbors who sleep in tents are exposed to extreme weather. It is the first study to assess the environmental conditions inside tents where people are living. The work is funded by a University of Tennessee Student-Faculty Research Award.



A variety of classes are offered through the Resource Center program to neighbors working toward housing. Emily Purnell, pictured here, prepares to teach the Anger Management class.

## 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW



**1,493** individuals received services through the Bush Family Refuge  
**203** individuals experiencing homelessness received services in the Resource Center  
**98** individuals achieved housing; of those 83 were chronically homeless



**181** households received homeless prevention/housing stability assistance



**270** individuals experiencing homelessness engaged through Street Outreach  
**100** vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness received overnight shelter at the Foyer



**1,242** dental procedures were performed in the VMC Dental Clinic



**10,013** meals served in the Resource Center



**69** residents lived at Minvilla Manor  
**56** residents lived at Caswell Manor

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY CENTER

# VMC

Opening Doors for a Better Tomorrow

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024

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Kaleb Buckner	Ken Knight
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