



*Opening Doors for  
a Better Tomorrow!*

# **Volunteer Ministry Center**

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**2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer



As identical twins, it has been somewhat challenging to identify the difference between the years 2020 and 2021. COVID-19 made a seamless transition from one year to the next. Despite its DNA imprint of those two years, Volunteer Ministry Center continued its efforts to end and prevent homelessness - as this Annual Report will demonstrate.

As you see the numbers of neighbors served, it may be easy to forget the names, faces, and stories behind each number. Less we forget, let me introduce Lisa to you.

“Once you get your place, what will be the first meal you prepare?”

Lisa had an answer ready with no need to think about it. The menu constantly circulated in her mind.

Lisa retells a conversation she had with several other participants in our low-barrier, housing-focused emergency shelter, The Foyer. They sat around the table, sharing, dreaming about a meal of their choosing and making.

Lisa spent nearly a year at The Foyer before signing a lease to an apartment. But her experience of homelessness stretches over the previous four years.

After her marriage of 20 years ended, she moved into a rental townhouse which the owner later sold. She then began a three-year journey living in motels and hotels until her money was exhausted and finally living in her car.

She admitted that the shadow of depression was always a step ahead or behind her. “Some days, I just did not know what to do next. I did tell myself that I needed to get out of bed (the seat of her car) to feed my cat.”

After a series of leg infections, possibly due to extended periods of sitting in her car, she found herself at UT Medical Center. While at the hospital and sharing her experience of homelessness, a social worker reached out to one of VMC’s Street Outreach workers. That referral led to Lisa’s stay at The Foyer.

“Many nights, we would sit around the table and share our dreams of that first meal,” Lisa said, pausing with melancholy as she recalls her time at The Foyer. “Let me tell you about the menu for my first meal at my apartment.”

“My apartment complex has outside grills. I brought some charcoal briquettes, and I grilled a prime-rib steak. I could not believe how expensive the steak is now versus five years ago. But I forced myself to buy it,” Lisa says. Adding to the happy note that her grin implied, she continues, “To complement the steak, I prepared a baked potato and poured myself a glass of Merlot wine. No, make that two – I had two glasses of wine!”

This Annual Report is about the journey to the “taste” of home!

Bruce Spangler



Lisa is grateful to have her own apartment and no longer be living in her car.

## A Message from the Chairman of the Board



Two women, very similar in their hopes and dreams, but different in that one has a home, and the other does not.

I am Nancy. Yes, I have a house, but I have more than that. I have a family, faith, education, interests, and dreams. I have a story. I am more than “housed.”

The other woman is Cheryl (not her real name). She does not have a home; she is not “housed”.

Yes, Cheryl is currently unhoused, but she is more than that. Cheryl has a family, faith, education, interests, and dreams. Cheryl has a story. She is a neighbor experiencing homelessness, but please don’t let that define her. There is so much more to Cheryl.

One of the many things I love about VMC is how our compassionate, professional staff listens to stories. Since 1987, VMC has been listening to stories and providing the support needed to achieve lasting, housing-focused solutions. Even with the challenges of 2021 and the ongoing pandemic, VMC kept its hearts and doors open - and thrived. We hosted our first ever VMC Golf Tournament, Carry the Torch and Wine & Shine came back in-person after a COVID hiatus, shower trailer and laundry services were introduced, we broke ground on Caswell Manor, the Billy Currier Legacy Foundation was created, and more. Daily programs and case management continued in the Refuge, Resource Center, the Foyer, Dental Clinic, Street Outreach, and Minvilla Manor. In every instance, VMC’s dedicated staff listens to stories and works cooperatively and mutually with each neighbor to achieve the best possible long-term results. None of these programs would happen, none of these stories would be heard, without your ongoing support. Your gifts of time, talent and treasure allow VMC to continue its meaningful, important, and faithful work to all of our neighbors.

Last week, as I walked across the street from VMC to my church, St. John’s Lutheran, I heard lively music. A group of friends had gathered on the sidewalk, people were dancing, singing, snacks were shared, a balloon bounced in the breeze. Cheryl joyfully called out to me, “It’s my birthday!”

Yes, it is. Cheryl: the birthday girl, the dancer, the singer, the friend. I see you, Cheryl, and VMC is prepared to hear your story, build a relationship and guide you toward housing. Again, thank you to everyone who supports VMC and its mission of ending and preventing homelessness through compassion, accountability and results.

Nancy Friedrich



### 2022 Board of Directors

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## The Resource Center

Utilizing the “Housing First” model, the Resource Center is an evidence-based transitional day program utilizing case management services to assist people experiencing homelessness to attain affordable, permanent housing and to receive the additional skills and supportive services required to maintain that housing. It provides a safe and supportive daytime environment in which clients can access meals, showers, laundry, telephone, mail, computers, and classes on a variety of topics such as anger management, personal responsibility, alcohol and drug education, self-esteem, and basic life skills.



Continuing through 2021 with Covid procedures, participants in the Resource Center continued to meet to celebrate milestones on the path to housing.

### 2021 Resource Center Statistics

**51** People achieved housing... They joined the **1,125** who have been previously housed since 2007 for a total of **1,176**. Our housing retention rate is **95.5%** measured after one year of housing. The national average is **85%**.

## The Bush Family Refuge

Staffed primarily by trained volunteers, the Refuge (preventing homelessness) is the portal for assistance to individuals and families who may be at risk of losing their housing and for those who have fallen into homelessness. Services provided include financial assistance with rent and utilities, prescription medication, transportation assistance, procuring birth certificates and state-issued identification. Referrals to other services and agencies are made as appropriate. In 2021 and in partnership with the Knox Housing Assistance Program, the Refuge expanded to include housing stability services.

### 2021 Bush Family Refuge Statistics

- **98** households assisted with utilities.
- **72** households assisted with rent.
- **690** households assisted and referred to the Knox Housing Assistance Program.
- **1,294** total individuals served.



With Covid continuing through 2021, Refuge services were provided via curbside service.

## The VMC Dental Clinic

Located at our main campus, the VMC Dental Clinic has been providing oral health care to individuals experiencing homelessness and other impoverished individuals since 1998. Staffed by volunteer dental professionals, the VMC Dental

Clinic provides comprehensive dental services at no charge to a segment of our community who would otherwise not receive dental care.



Darrell has a big smile after receiving dentures from the VMC Dental Clinic.

### 2021 Dental Clinic Statistics

- **691** patient visits
- **1,129** procedures performed
- **50** sets of dentures were provided

## Minvilla Manor

Providing a moderate supportive environment to former chronically homeless and disabled individuals, Minvilla Manor has 57 apartment units for single residents. The

supportive services are “in-house” to assist and empower every resident with the objective of long term tenancy and to secure appropriate medical/behavioral services. Minvilla offers case management services on-site and twenty-four hour staffing. This ensures a high level of security for the residents. Social activities are also provided. Created from the remains of the former Fifth Avenue Motel, the rehabilitated Minvilla Manor has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Board member Darrell Murrell cooks up plenty of hot dogs for the Minvilla Manor birthday celebration. Due to Covid, resident activities were held outdoors.

### 2021 Minvilla Manor Statistics

**64** residents lived in Minvilla Manor in 2021.

## Street Outreach Services & The Foyer

Street outreach workers engage the most service resistant of our homeless neighbors with the intent of connecting them to housing case management services. They also make referrals to the Foyer, a low-barrier housing-focused emergency overnight shelter for the most vulnerable homeless who, for

multiple reasons, are not accessing a traditional shelter. As an entrée to housing, the Foyer provides overnight accommodations for 30 people, paired with direct and indirect access to social services. Accommodations for companion pets are also provided at the Foyer.



Street Outreach Caseworker Megan Lappas engages a neighbor sleeping on the streets.

### 2021 Street Outreach & Foyer Statistics

**602** individuals engaged through Street Outreach. **134** individuals in overnight shelter at the Foyer.

## Our Mission

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

## Three big words...

**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.

“In 1981 I started a restaurant in downtown Knoxville. Being a resident of West Knoxville, it was a different demographic. Our homeless population was very prevalent.

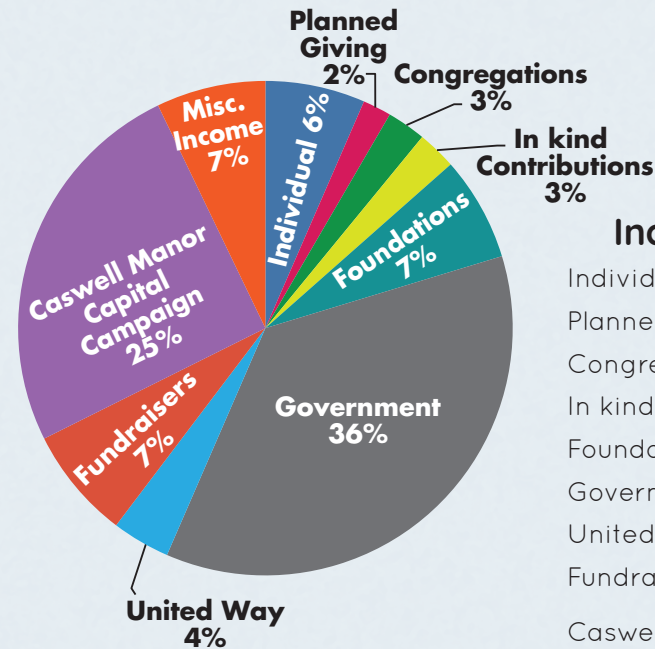
As the years went by these folks became our neighbors and at times friends and employees. We began providing and serving monthly dinners at the VMC facility on the corner of Gay and Jackson. We got to know the regular folks we served, to know their stories and share their journeys. We realized what a fine line existed between where they were in their lives and where we were blessed to be. In 1991, to celebrate our 10th year in business we began a yearly VMC Day, when all the profit from our sales went to help with VMC programs.

My late husband Don became very involved with the fundraising initiative to build the new VMC facility, moving it from the corner of Gay and Jackson to its current location on Broadway. Then came the Minvilla apartments. We were so grateful our lives gave us the opportunity to help our neighbors who were unable to help themselves at that time, offering a “Hand up”.

Through the years, it’s been an honor to work with the amazing staff at VMC who have changed so many lives, preventing and ending homelessness.” - Board Member Karen Sproles



## Our Financial Year in Review

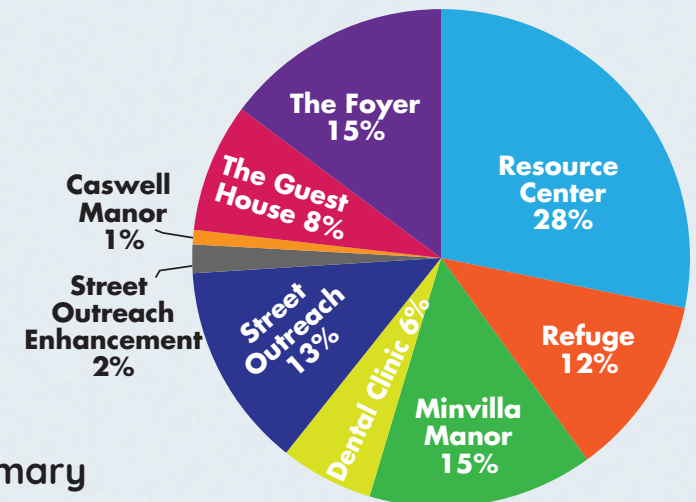


### Income Summary

|                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Individual                     | 296,121.20   |
| Planned Giving                 | 84,534.90    |
| Congregations                  | 115,136.75   |
| In kind                        | 115,584.00   |
| Foundations                    | 309,089.25   |
| Government                     | 1,162,456.48 |
| United Way                     | 172,255.36   |
| Fundraisers                    | 331,740.37   |
| Caswell Manor Capital Campaign | 1,143,766.77 |
| Miscellaneous Income           | 324,130.00   |

**Total Income \$4,534,815.08**

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



### Expense Summary

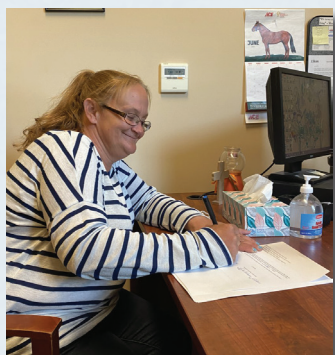
|                           |              |     |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----|
| Program                   | 2,627,360.00 | 87% |
| Administrative            | 248,481.00   | 8%  |
| Fundraising & Development | 138,206.00   | 5%  |

**Total \$3,014,047.00**

# 2021 Highlights

Although the pandemic continued through 2021 and altered VMC operations, there were successes in all program areas. **207** individuals experiencing homelessness were engaged in a case management relationship through the Resource Center. **170** households received assistance with rent/utilities through the Bush Family Refuge with an additional **690** households assisted with referrals to the Knox Housing Assistance Program. There were **1,129** dental procedures performed in the Dental Clinic. Street Outreach case workers engaged **602** individuals throughout the City of Knoxville. **134** of the most vulnerable homeless received nightly shelter at the Foyer. **64** residents at Minvilla Manor received housing support services. And, **51** individuals experiencing homelessness at the beginning of 2021 had a home at the end of 2021!

## We have a home now!



Marcy experienced homelessness for 22 years. She was connected to the VMC Foyer and Resource Center through street outreach. She wears a big smile as she signs the lease to her apartment!



William lost his long-term housing when rents escalated and he could no longer pay the rent. William lived in his truck for a significant period of time before entering VMC's housing program. He now has an apartment and is thankful to have a home.



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



Michael, Janelle, and their emotional support dog, Ms. Piggy are thankful for the housing support services VMC provided to assist them in achieving housing and in navigating the disability process for Michael and his declining health.



After losing his brother and then being homeless for 10 years, Donald is happy to have a home and a safe place to be with his daughter, DaShawana.



Having been without a home since he was 16, Marco was excited to sign the lease to his new apartment.

# Amidst a Pandemic, New Ventures Began!

## Caswell Manor - Opening in Fall 2022

The transformation of 1501 E. Fifth Ave. began in 2021 and will be open in fall 2022. The construction consists of two wings with 24 one-bedroom apartments each connected by a center building for community space, dining, laundry, and support staff offices. Caswell Manor will provide 48 more units of permanent supportive housing with on-site case management for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.



Rendering of proposed Caswell Manor facility.



City and County Officials and Financial Partners break ground for the new Caswell Manor development.



Aerial view of Caswell Manor under construction.

## Billy Currier Legacy Society

VMC is proud to announce the establishment of the Billy Currier Legacy Society in 2021 with 30 founding members who have committed to a Legacy Gift for the Volunteer Ministry Center. Through a Planned Gift, generous and forward thinking donors support the long term success of VMC. The Legacy Society provides a way for VMC to recognize and thank donors during their lifetimes for their legacy gifts.

Billy was a long-time resident with VMC. A few years before his passing in September 2020, Billy decided he needed a Will. He said he didn't have much, but what he did have he wanted to go to VMC. Billy was a kind and generous soul. To that point, he designated his remaining financial assets through his Last Will and Testament to come to VMC.



### 2021 Founding Members

- Carole and Joe Ayres
- Pat and Jane Armstrong
- Susan Conway
- Jim and Nancy Friedrich
- Phillip and Jinny Furlong
- Robert and Carney Ivy
- Rick and Becky Jenkins
- Peter Keese
- Todd and Sarah Mason
- Tom McCarley and Denise Moretz
- J. Norman and Ann Naylor
- Mary Rayson
- John and Liz Rea
- Frank and Judy Rothermel
- John and Laura Seymour
- Marty Smith
- Neill Albers Townsend
- Ginny Weatherstone
- Anonymous (1)

## With Gratitude — Our Donors

“ Since first learning about VMC’s mission to end and prevent homelessness almost 15 years ago, our family has been honored to support VMC and witness the many ways in which it quite literally saves lives. VMC’s work is critical to the health and welfare not only of our most vulnerable neighbors experiencing homelessness, but the greater community as well. We support VMC because it is a compassionate organization founded on accountability and evidence-based practices like Housing First that are proven to produce positive outcomes for individuals and communities alike.”



*VMC Board Member David Arning and his family*

### \$25,000 & Over

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Bank of America Foundation, Inc.  
Bill and Crissy Haslam Foundation  
David and Maureen Bounds  
City of Knoxville  
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State of Tennessee Dept of Health  
The Aslan Foundation  
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## With Gratitude — Our Donors

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Nicholas and Candyce Goschy



*In 2021 Jimmy celebrated two years in housing after many years of homelessness and living on the streets. He is grateful to VMC for the assistance provided for him to achieve housing. The artwork he holds shares his sentiment that Home is Where the Heart is!*

“To whom much is given, much is required. Just a brief moment ago, I was helpless and without a place to call home - The VMC Program was a source of strength for me. Supporting an organization that once supported me, and continues to serve a higher calling, keeps me grounded.”



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The **Sponsor A Bed at The Foyer** program began in 2019 providing an avenue for supporters to annually provide a bed and shelter for the most difficult to reach of Knoxville's homeless neighbors.

The photo on the front cover features Emmett Howard, a long-time resident of Minvilla Manor.



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**The Volunteer Ministry Center is grateful for the financial support provided by the Board of Directors and donors and supporters who are committed to ending and preventing homelessness!**

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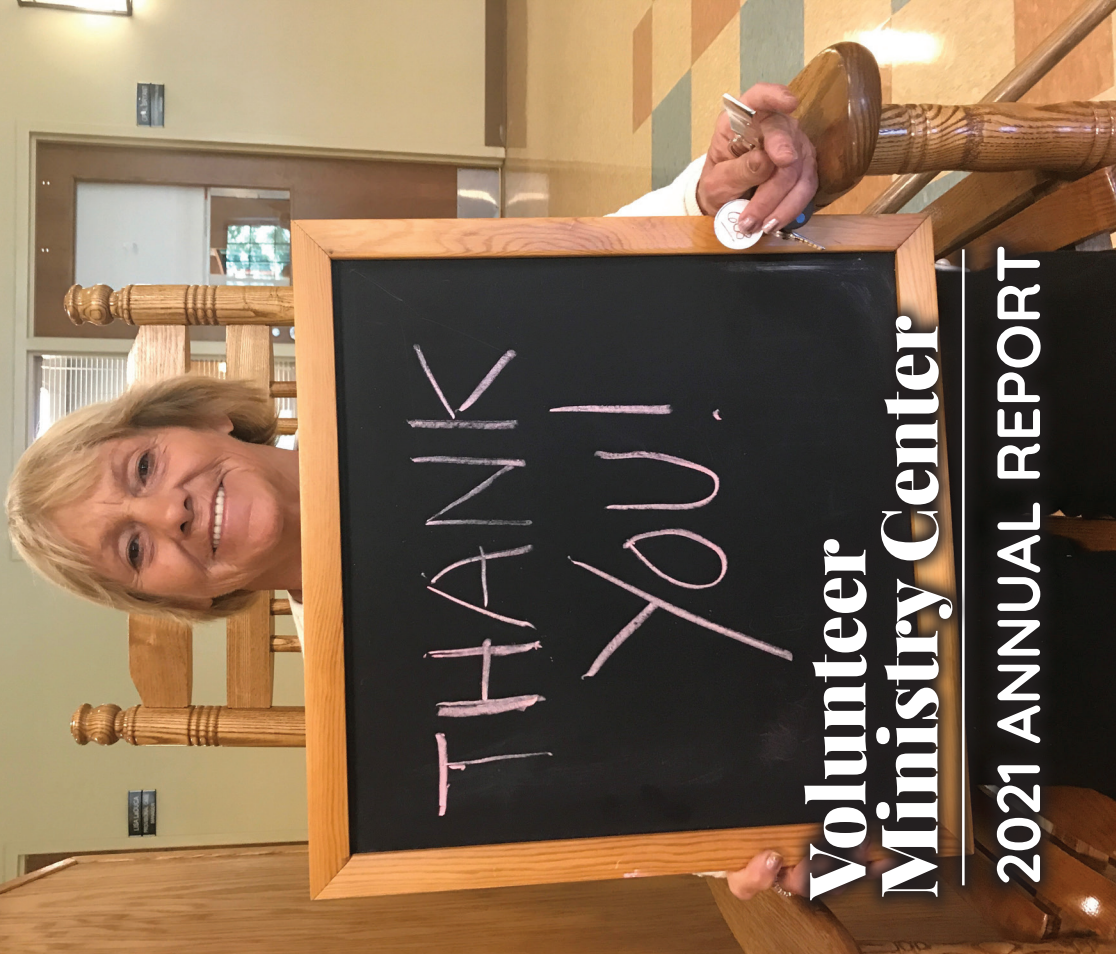
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