

FROM THE CEO'S DESK:

"If you were told to get one, you better get a good one," my mother says in recounting a childhood experience. Though she does not recall what precipitated the directive, she followed it as instructed. Given a behavior warranting a "whipping" she went outside to get an appropriate switch.

As she continues telling the story, she points her finger at me, saying, "You better get a good one because you didn't want momma to get the switch. It is foolish to poke the bear!"

As a child, I was never spanked by my mother or father, as I think their childhood experiences played a big part for them in not doing so. I was no angel, for sure. I did receive the appropriate amount of scolding through the years. No whippings, though, just disapproving words.

More than ever, I cherish and treasure every conversation with my mother. She is in memory care, so the only authentic way to connect with her is to tap into her long-term memory. Amazed by the level of detail from so long ago, I hurt for her as she struggles to recall what she had eaten for supper just a few minutes earlier or even remember the names of her children.

My mother quit high school in her junior year. I have always known that she did as she studied and worked diligently to get her GED nearly forty years ago. However, I never understood why she left.

My mother was four of ten children. "We didn't have much," she recalls. "My clothes were handed down from my mother and older sister. When they became threadbare, my mother would sew up the holes." Times were hard, and it showed on my mother's face. She once advised me that it was important to finish school, but if I needed to quit at some point, it would be okay. I am unsure why she told me this, but later I understood.

My mother was a sophomore in high school when her mother committed suicide. "She didn't leave a note, but we all knew why," my mother laments. "Life was hard. It was too hard for her to continue. We didn't like what she did, but we understood. With her death, we were left to fend for ourselves and watch out for the little ones. It was then that I quit high school.

"I had no money. I didn't have any good clothes to wear to school, so I quit." Pausing for a moment, she continues, "Momma gave me permission to quit."

My parents came from humble beginnings filled with stories of violence, abandonment, and premature deaths. As parents, however, they worked hard to ensure that my siblings and I experienced a different upbringing. Daily, that upbringing informs my work here at Volunteer Ministry Center.



Bruce W. Spangler, CEO

As I approach retirement, I reflect on the names, faces, and events from the past twenty-plus years of working on Broadway and the nearly seventeen years with VMC.

I see patterns of my mother's appreciation for small things in the world of neighbors whose lives are wrought by the hard times of homelessness.

I see my father's patience when a case manager is tirelessly present with a drunk neighbor.

I feel my mother's urge and desire in our volunteers' efforts to fill the gap between a need and a resource – the desire to make a difference.

My 5:15 am alarm comes from a father's habit of getting to work early to prepare for the day.

My life began cradled in the arms of two young people searching for a better world. A similar search is what I love about VMC. It seeks a better world, a better tomorrow. Beholden to my colleagues of staff and volunteers, I have enjoyed a slice of that better world on the corner of N. Broadway and E. Fifth Avenue for many years.

So, I thank you for the opportunity to live out a calling seemingly destined from the cradle. Here's to the journey that continues to search to make those better tomorrows into a better today!

I wish you the best in this holiday season. Pay attention to the stories you may hear. Please remember, however, do not poke the bear!

Until our paths cross again,

Bruce W. Spangler
Bruce

ANGEL ORNAMENTS

The traditional VMC Angel ornament is once again available this holiday season. This small foil Angel is a lovely symbol which indicates that you have given a gift to VMC in honor of the recipient. The Angel is appropriate for use as an ornament or a gift enclosure and will provide a lasting remembrance of your thoughtfulness. This year's quote is:

"Friends are the angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly."
– Unknown



Angels are the perfect gift for family and friends, as well as neighbors, service providers, and anyone whom you would like to recognize in a special way. Angels are also a touching way to honor the memory of a loved one. Angels are available for any donation amount of \$5.00 or more and can be ordered by calling Katlyn Moore at 865-524-3926 x230 or by stopping by the VMC offices at 511 North Broadway, Knoxville, TN 37917.

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THE FOYER CELEBRATES ITS THIRD ANNIVERSARY ON DECEMBER 19TH!

The Foyer is the only housing-focused emergency overnight low-barrier shelter in our community. Since its official opening on December 19, 2019, 326 of our most vulnerable homeless neighbors have received overnight shelter with housing focused case management services. Of those, 23 had companion pets and 45 achieved permanent housing.



In addition, for those living in camps and who are extremely ambivalent about staying inside, 50% of those remained in shelter for a month or longer. The Foyer is definitely a success in ending the experience of homelessness for the most vulnerable and hard to reach of our community's homeless neighbors.

SPONSOR A BED AT THE FOYER

Sponsor a Bed at The Foyer for \$250.00 and be a part of the vision to provide safety and shelter to the most vulnerable of our homeless neighbors.

P.O. Box 27406
Knoxville, TN 37927-7406
865-524-3926



www.vmcinc.org

"I MOVE INTO MY OWN PLACE NEXT MONTH"



Every so often, the Resource Center Art Class participants display their works in the dining room. Each artist reflects not only their imaginative and creative selves, but often the art pieces are windows into their hopes and dreams.

There was one picture that caught and retained my attention. It is a picture of a house with cool blue colors mixed with mature trees and green vegetation. The image greets the viewer with a soothing welcome and assumed hospitality.

I inquired with the staff about the identity of the artist. I met him one morning, standing in the breakfast line with the smell of freshly made pancakes and grilled sausages floating in the air.

After exchanging introductions, he told me he had been a participant for the past six months.

"That takes some patience, does it not, Mr. C." I inquired. (To respect his identity in this article, I will call him Mr. C.)

"Yes, but I move into my place next month."

"That's great news!" I acknowledged sharing his enthusiasm. "May I ask where?"

"Someplace on E. Fifth Avenue," he replied.

"Could that be Caswell Manor?"

"Yes, that is the name. That is the place. That is where I will be home."

Mr. C will join 47 other residents very soon. Caswell Manor is a permanent supportive

housing opportunity located on the corner of E. Fifth Avenue and Winona Street.

Each resident will have access to and support from "in-house" housing case management to promote long-term tenancy. Case management services will include the direct provision and coordination of services for rental counseling, income management, employment or vocational training, access to medical and dental care, referrals for substance abuse treatment, life skills coaching, housekeeping skills instruction, food security, adult education, mobility, field trips, and on-site community events.

Informing the layout and décor of trauma-informed design, Caswell Manor seeks to promote a sense of calm, safety, dignity, empowerment, and well-being within a caring community.

The campus includes two residential structures, each with 24 one-bedroom units (620+ sq. ft) providing a kitchen, living space, and full-size bathroom. The residential structures are connected by breezeways to the office and community building. With a "punched opening," the exterior buildings have materials and rooflines, street façade entrances consistent with the Magnolia Corridor, and meet the Green Communities criteria. Amenities for each resident include a furnished one-bedroom apartment, a private mailbox, an on-site laundry facility, public telephone, a TV lounge area, community, and activity rooms.

Property attendance is in place 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Affordability is made possible through Knoxville's Community Development Corporation's (KCDC) Section 8 Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program.

Caswell Manor becomes home for Mr. C. in December this year, just in time for the holidays. Mr. C's painting is a vision of home as it should be. The design of Caswell Manor is to do just that!

Welcome home, Mr. C!

By: Bruce W. Spangler

A TIME TO GIVE THANKS

Throughout 2022 VMC has continued to assist those experiencing homelessness into housing and to provide much needed assistance for those in crisis to maintain their housing. Our dedicated staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to help the most vulnerable of our community. Despite the challenges lingering from the pandemic and the imminent strain posed by rising costs and inflation, our blessings have been many and for that, we give THANKS!!

THANK YOU - WE NOW HAVE A HOME



Charlie is all smiles showing the key to his new apartment and the beautiful view of Knoxville he can enjoy from his home. Charlie is thankful that he is no longer living in shelters or on the streets. **Welcome Home, Charlie!**



A picture speaks a thousand words as does the huge smile on Maurice's face as he looks out over Knoxville from his new apartment. Home is where the heart is and Home is where Maurice is so grateful to be. **Welcome Home, Maurice!**



Janet and Bill are filled with joy to have their own apartment after experiencing homelessness. Having a home provides a warm and safe place to recover from health issues. **Welcome Home, Janet and Bill!**



Glena happily stands in front of her apartment door as she now has a home to call her own - a safe place with doors that lock where she can heal and recover from the hardships of living on the streets. **Welcome Home, Glena!**



Troy gives a "thumbs up" to his new apartment. After losing his housing several years ago and living on the streets, in shelters, and most recently in his car, Troy is on the way to "a better tomorrow". **Welcome Home, Troy!**

BILLY CURRIER LEGACY SOCIETY FOUNDING MEMBERS

Leaving a legacy is the desire to be remembered for what you have contributed during your lifetime. Our inner nature drives us to have a significant meaning or purpose to fulfill. For most, our legacy is modest, as we haven't single-handedly changed the world. However, that doesn't mean that you can't make a lasting impact on someone's or several persons' lives.

The Billy Currier Legacy Society was founded in 2021 to provide a platform for sustainability of VMC's programs and services for years to come. This ensures that those individuals who are experiencing homelessness have the opportunity for a home for years to come; and those in crisis will be spared from falling into homelessness.

The Founding Members of the Billy Currier Legacy Society have invested in the future of the Volunteer Ministry Center. Their financial commitment through their legacy gift leads the way for others to leave a legacy and become members of the Billy Currier Legacy Society.

If you want to be a part of ensuring a sustainable future for VMC, we ask you to consider making a legacy gift and becoming a member of the Billy Currier Legacy Society.



The Billy Currier Legacy Society Founding Members
Nancy Friedrich, Jim Friedrich, Ann Naylor, Norm Naylor, Laura Seymour, John Seymour, Judy Rothermel, Frank Rothermel, Peter Keese, Sue Wisberg, Craig Wisberg, Marty Smith, Phillip Furlong, Jane Armstrong, Pat Armstrong, Linda Van Beke. Not pictured: Jinny Furlong, Susan Conway, Mary Rayson, Todd Mason, Sarah Mason, Rick Jenkins, Becky Jenkins, Neill Townsend, Carney Ivy, Robert Ivy, Carole Ayres, Joe Ayres, Tom McCarley, Denise Moretz, Liz Rea, Ginny Weatherstone

Those receiving services from the Volunteer Ministry Center in the future will be thankful you made that decision.

For more information on ways you can leave a legacy to VMC, please call the Development Department at 865-524-3926 or visit our website, www.vmcinc.org.

HELP SOMEONE HOME WITH A YEAR END GIFT!

THOUGHTFUL GIVING BENEFITS EVERYONE and provides a future for the programs and services offered at the Volunteer Ministry Center.

As we approach the end of 2022, we hope you will consider making a year-end gift to VMC.

Whether your gift is made through a bank account, stock, IRA, or trust fund, you can be assured that your gift will have an impact on the lives of the poor and homeless of our community. Your faithful support is vital to the continuation and success of our programs, and we sincerely appreciate your thoughtful consideration of a year-end gift to VMC.

THANK YOU - FOR CARING AND SHARING



Every month, Remote Area Medical operates a Vision Clinic at VMC providing eye exams and glasses for our neighbors experiencing homelessness. What better gift to give than the gift of sight!



Volunteer meal groups purchase, cook, and serve meals for our neighbors in the Resource Center program. Pictured here are staff from BMI who prepared and served a delicious lunch. VMC is thankful for all of our meal groups who regularly give of their time and talents to serve those on the path to housing.



Raising much needed funds for VMC programs is an ongoing project. These UT students are raising money for the Bush Family Refuge in conjunction with a class they are taking. VMC appreciates the fundraising efforts of these students as well as others who work to raise funds for VMC programs and services.

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY CENTER

VMC

Opening Doors for a Better Tomorrow

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CASWELL MANOR OPENING SOON!

After a few delays due to supply chain issues, Caswell Manor is close to completion. VMC is excited to provide 48 permanent supportive housing homes for those individuals in our community who are experiencing chronic homelessness and have a moderate disability. There is no place like Home!



Caswell Manor



2022 GINNY WEATHERSTONE SERVICE AWARDS

Every year at our Carry the Torch fundraising event, VMC highlights a staff member and volunteer for their dedication and exemplary service to the Volunteer Ministry Center. This year the Ginny Weatherstone Service Awards were presented at the October 19th Carry the Torch event to Mark Greenlee, Sr., Director of Facility Services for VMC, and to Bette Austin, community servant who, since 2015, has volunteered twice a week in the Bush Family Refuge. We congratulate and thank Mark and Bette for their service in ending and preventing homelessness.

