

FROM THE CEO'S DESK: NINETEEN YEARS AND COUNTING NO MORE!



Bruce W. Spangler, CEO

I trust you saw the images of Judy signing her lease to Minvilla Manor as she celebrated the receipt of her apartment key and the excitement of moving in. It is a heart-warming portrait of a woman who had been experiencing homelessness for over nineteen years but no more.

There are numerous reasons that factored into Judy's long duration of homelessness. I will respect her privacy on those more personal factors but there were prevailing systemic reasons as well.

Affordable housing, across the country as well as in Knoxville, is hard to find. Once found, however, is it really affordable and accessible? The rent may be affordable but utilities are beyond one's budget. Can one afford the "move-in" costs? Can one pass the criminal and/or credit background checks?

On top of affordability and accessibility is the question of appropriateness. Not all housing environments are the same. Some will need a modest support to sustain housing. Others less, and a few need more support.

Judy found a housing opportunity that is affordable, accessible and appropriate for her. The manner in which it happened reflects a recent change in our community's approach to reach others that are similar to Judy's experience.

Since May, local providers, including VMC, have been using an assessment tool to determine the extent of an individual's vulnerability while experiencing homelessness. This assessment is to ensure that the most vulnerable, who are most likely to experience irreparable harm or even die while homeless, are served first. One day of homelessness can be detrimental to one one's emotional health; nineteen must be devastating. Judy was in such a place but no more.

Judy's experience is most difficult to imagine for many of us. However and due to your support, Judy and so many others like her, need not have to count the years or days any longer!

With the coming holiday season, I echo the words of Matthew Desmond, "may your home be filled with quiet dreams confessed and traditions celebrated." Again, thanks for making that possible for Judy!

Peace,

Bruce W. Spangler

Rev. Bruce W. Spangler
Chief Executive Officer

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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:

*"Sometimes angels are just ordinary people
who help us believe in miracles again.."*

— Anonymous

Angels are the perfect gift for family and friends, as well as neighbors, service people 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 Lisa Hutton at 865-524-3926 or by stopping by the VMC offices at 511 North Broadway, Knoxville, TN 37917.



THE 2018 HOLIDAY STORE – OVER 20 YEARS OF GIVING

For the 22nd year, the Volunteer Ministry Center will host the Annual Holiday Store program. It is a remarkable effort to enable those without Christmas and holiday shopping money to "earn" gifts for their loved ones by using their time and muscle to complete community service work which pays them in points, redeemable at the Holiday Store.

Every year, VMC relies upon the community to "stock" the store with all new merchandise suitable for gift giving. Many young parents shop the store, delighted to have the opportunity to select a Barbie doll or a train set for their child. And while toys are certainly the most requested items, many shoppers are also interested in procuring gifts for adults they love as well. Community service work is completed at a number of sites.

The Holiday Store is always in need of donations of new items for stock. Items which are in particular demand are baby dolls, new sports balls and equipment, craft sets, and other toys. Adult items include fragrance sets, small kitchen appliances and tool sets. Any new item appropriate for gift giving will be gladly accepted at the VMC office at 511 North Broadway.



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THE KEY TO HAPPINESS AND A WHOLE LOT MORE

Where is the happiest place on earth?

By: Bruce W. Spangler

In the 2018 World Happiness Report, the editors make an observation about the pursuit of a better life, or better yet, a happier life, "Increasingly, with globalization, the people of the world are on the move; and most of these are migrants seeking a happier life."

Then editors ask a question about their observation, "But do they achieve it?" (see Helliwell, J., Layard, R., & Sachs, J. (2018). World Happiness Report 2018, New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network).

So where is it? Where is the happiest place on the planet?

One commentator of the report after the reveal concluded that the happiest place has four lessons for all of us: 1) explore nature, 2) chat over coffee, 3) get some heat, and 4) everyone is welcome, (see <http://www.staradvertiser.com/2018/08/13/features/lessons-from-the-happiest-place-on-earth-not-disneyland/>).

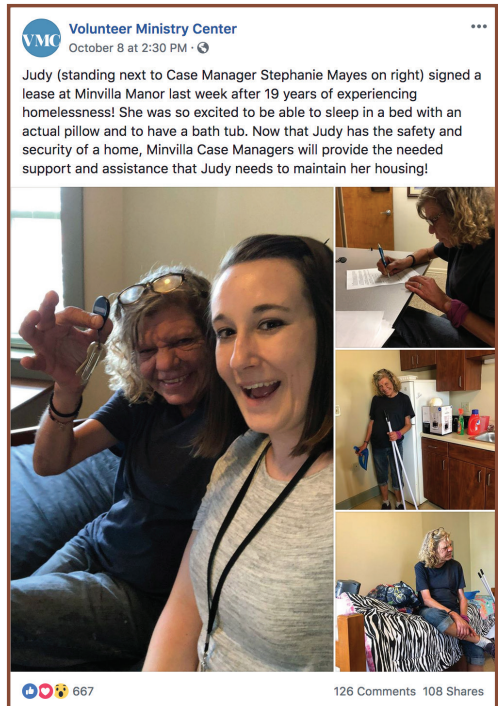
Many may guess that the happiest place is Disneyland or Knoxville (when UTK defeats Alabama in any fall season) but the 2018 Happiness Report ranks Finland as the happiest place for those seeking a better life and for those who already call it home.

Apart from the necessities of adequate housing, access to quality health care, enriching education, and numerous other infrastructure requirements, the four lessons are worth a little reflection. Each lesson can only be experienced, if and only if, there is a home from which each activity is launched and able to retreat. Home is the place where one's basic needs are present and available. Matthew Desmond writes in his celebrated volume, *Evicted*, "Home remains the primary basis of life. It is where meals are served, quiet dreams confessed, traditions created." Yes, home is required for any and all happiness.

Finland maybe the happiest country in 2018.

However, Judy (one of VMC's many neighbors) stole some thunder from Finland on October 8th as portrayed on VMC's Facebook page. The corner of Fifth Avenue and N. Broadway was the happiest place on earth for her.

Judy's face tells it all. The key to her happiness is proudly displayed in her hand! Judy, welcome home!



A TIME TO GIVE THANKS

The Season of Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on our many blessings. Those blessings come in a variety of ways; some large, some small, some expected and others unexpected. With grateful hearts, we share just a few of the abundant blessings you have given to the Volunteer Ministry Center.

FOR MEALS SERVED



Members of Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church hosted a cook-out at Minvilla Manor.



Laurel Church of Christ has provided delicious meals at VMC for over 25 years.



VMC Board members Jim Ford and Adam Luttrell host one of the Minvilla Manor monthly Birthday luncheons.



The staff of Master Dry regularly cook up a great meal for VMC Resource Center members.

FOR ENCOURAGEMENT



Occupational Therapy students from Roane State Community College provide life skills training to residents of Minvilla Manor.



After 14 years of experiencing homelessness, William, with the help and encouragement of his case manager Stephanie Mayes, is completing classes on his path to achieving housing.

FOR THE GIFT OF SIGHT



Remote Area Medial provides vision exams and glasses on a monthly basis at VMC.

FOR HELP IN A TIME OF CRISIS



Bush Family Refuge volunteer, Rick Jenkins, counsels with a client seeking assistance from the Refuge.

FOR DENTAL CARE



Dr. Sarah Dugger is one of the many volunteer dental professionals providing dental services in the VMC Dental Clinic.



Rico wears a big smile after receiving his new dentures from the VMC Dental Clinic.

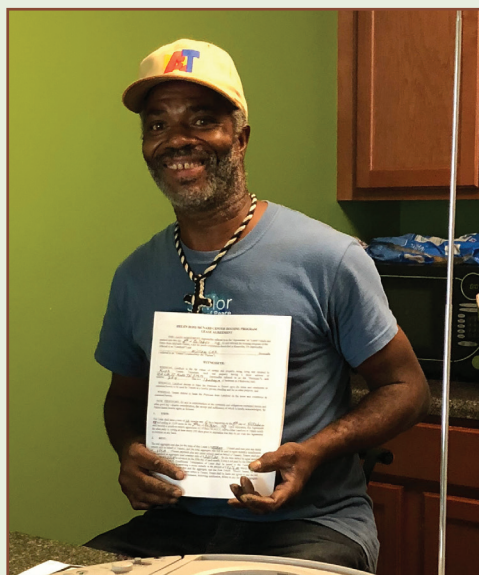
FOR A HOME



Samuel worked with his case manager to overcome the experience of homelessness and signs the lease to his new apartment.



Sasha is one of several VMC Resource Center members who achieved housing this year.



William "Country" proudly displays the lease he signed for his apartment. He now has a home of his own.

FOR CARING AND SHARING



As part of her Bat Mitzvah, Grace prepared food baskets and donated those to the neighbors served by the Volunteer Ministry Center.



The Women's Mentoring Group from Church of the Good Samaritan hosts Spa Night twice a year providing hair styles, make-up, and manicures for the ladies in VMC's programs.



Jim Friedrich regularly bakes bread for VMC Resource Center members. Joining him are Beatriz and Karen from the Lutheran Church in Guatemala.



Whittani Walden displays the move-in basket items collected and donated by The Real Estate Firm and Andrew Briggs with Mortgage Investors Group.

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 2018, we hope you will consider making a year-end gift to VMC. Whether your gift is made through a bank account, stock, a will, trust, or IRA, 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.

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