

## FROM THE CEO'S DESK:



### WE WILL BE EAGER TO TURN ON THE LIGHTS!

Scheduled to open this fall, Caswell Manor will provide a place called home for 48 single women and men experiencing homelessness, located at 1501 E. Fifth Avenue.

Designed from a trauma-informed perspective, Caswell Manor will offer an environment that promotes a sense of calm, safety, dignity, empowerment, and well-being for all residents.

Construction started with demolishing an existing building (aka Positively Living/Parkridge Harbor) and replacing it with two residential structures, each with 24 one-bedroom units (620+ sq. ft) that include a kitchen, living space, and full-size bathroom. The two structures are connected to a shared community room by covered walkways.

With a "punched opening," the exterior buildings have materials, roof lines, and 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, a public telephone, a TV lounge area, and community and activity rooms.

VMC will provide two on-site housing case managers, Monday through Friday, 8 am-5 pm, with clinical support available during off-hours by phone and on-site. Case management services include the direct provision and coordination of services for rental counseling, income management, employment or vocational training, access to medical and dental services, referrals for substance abuse treatment, life skills coaching, housekeeping skills instruction, food security, adult education, mobility, field trips, and in-house community events.

Property attendance will also be in place 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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

By turning on the first light of the first resident, I will be reminded of the offering by my unknown neighbor. His gift reminds me that our work continues.

Rev. Bruce W. Spangler  
Chief Executive Officer

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022

David Arning  
Linda V. Bailey  
Brittany Bonner  
Dr. Jimmy Cheek  
Susan Conway  
Charlie Daniel  
Nancy Friedrich  
Phillip M. Furlong  
Felix Harris  
Rick Jenkins  
Cara Knapp

Adam T. Luttrell  
Todd Mason  
Darrell Murrell  
Hunter Purnell  
Ragan Schriver  
Laura Seymour  
Karen Sproles  
JD Sullivan  
Beth Townsend  
Mark Walker  
Eboni Winford

## CASWELL MANOR – OPENING SOON!

The transformation is almost complete! The property was acquired in August 2020 and in August 2021 VMC broke ground on a new 48-unit Permanent Supportive Housing Facility birthing what is now known to many as Caswell Manor.

Over the last 12 months, the brick and mortar, sheetrock, wiring, fixtures, appliances, etc. are all coming together to form 48 homes for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who have a disability.

But a home is more than just walls, furniture, and appliances. Pillows, blankets, sheets, towels and washcloths, cups and dishes, kitchen utensils, cleaning supplies, etc. are all needed too. This is where you, our generous and kind-hearted supporters, can help. The following is a list of items needed to make these apartments a home.

- Pots and pans
- Dishes
- Sharp knives
- Cutting board
- Can opener
- Flatware
- Glasses
- Dish draining rack
- Dish towels
- Ice trays
- Towels and washcloths
- Shower curtain/shower curtain rings
- Toilet paper
- Laundry detergent
- Dish detergent
- All-purpose cleaner
- Broom and dustpan
- Mop
- Mop bucket
- Toilet brush
- Sponges
- Trash can
- Trash bags
- Laundry basket
- Paper towels
- Sheets
- Blanket/comforter
- Pillow
- Alarm clock
- Coffee pot

For additional information, please contact the Development Department at 865-524-3926.



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Knoxville, TN  
Permit No. 981

P.O. Box 27406

Knoxville, TN 37927-7406

865-524-3926

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY CENTER

**VMC**

Opening Doors for a Better Tomorrow



## KEEPING HOPE ALIVE ON A BUCK AND A PENNY

He walks into the Refuge reception area on a muggy and warm day. He receives a generous and welcoming smile from the receptionist, followed by, "How may we help you today?"

After a brief get-acquainted conversation and with some hesitation, he says that he needs clothing to replace the worn and soiled attire that has long outlived its usefulness.

Later in the day, however, he returns. This time he is eager to have his say. "I have something for you. This place was good to me earlier today. But now, I have something for you."

With that, he reaches into his pocket and places a dollar bill accompanied by a 1989 Lincoln penny on the countertop. "This money is not much, but I hope it helps someone like me."

The receptionist tries to convince him to keep it but to no avail. He is adamant in his gifting, so the receptionist relents and receives the gift while offering a receipt. He politely refuses the receipt and quietly leaves.

I learned of this event following my lunchtime walk.

My walks follow a repeatable pattern, including some parts of Happy Holler and a stroll in the National Cemetery.

Besides the emerging new businesses reclaiming former spots of industry and entertainment, Happy Holler is full of signs of an active entrepreneurial renaissance made by a collective spirit of creative dreams and hopeful investments.



In contrast, my stroll through the National Cemetery reveals hopes buried, marked by white marble headstones hosted by a carefully manicured green lawn. The monuments etched with condensed biographies tell stories of young and old soldiers, either given to or taken by war. Scattered throughout the grounds are stones naming supportive spouses.

The variety of personal remembrances left at the headstones by the living catch my eye. Apart from the traditional placement and sight of flowers and the ones that never wilt, there are coins on some.

A coin left on military graves is a tradition that may have started with the Vietnam War. According to the traditional legend, leaving a penny at the headstone signifies a visitor of no relationship. The nickel indicates that the visitor and the deceased trained at boot camp together. The dime means service with the deceased in some capacity. Leaving a quarter at the grave means companionship with the soldier when killed.

No memorials are near the headstones etched into perpetuity with "Unknown Soldier" or simply "Unknown." I pause to imagine the anguish, sorrow, and grief of a family who never knew the fate of their loved one. The living is left eternally continued inside...

## A BUCK AND A PENNY CONTINUED

in doubt. The buried are more than covered by the dirt; they lose to known history.

Those who experience homelessness can feel lost to living history or as a shadow cast against a lively community's landscape. Regrettably, a sector of society doubles down on them and writes them off. Hope is hard to keep alive amid a shadowed life.

The generous neighbor remains nameless in this story as, regrettably, I do not know it. His generosity, however, reminds me of the immediacy and importance of our work.

In his book, *Eviction: Poverty and Profit in an American City*, Matthew Desmond's reflection on the housing crisis speaks volumes: "No moral code or ethical principle, no piece of scripture or holy teaching can be summoned to defend what we have allowed our country to become." The \$1.01 gift is a reminder of the need for a more excellent light that needs to shine on the shadowy experience of homelessness.

VMC's job is to cast a bright light on the event of homelessness with a firm commitment to permanent solutions that end and prevent homelessness. The gift by our nameless neighbor is to ensure we don't forget him and others along the way.

By: Bruce W. Spangler

**THANK YOU  
to our 2021 Foyer  
Bed Sponsors! This  
placard hangs on  
the Welcome Wall  
at the Foyer.**



## WE HAVE A HOME NOW!



Kevin is doubly excited! Not only did he achieve housing, but he proudly shows off his State ID. VMC housing case managers continue to work with our neighbors to overcome any issues which might hamper housing sustainability. Congratulations Kevin!

Phillip and his dog Bonkers are excited to have a home now. Phillip was engaged through Street Outreach and then referred to the Foyer for overnight shelter as the Foyer has accommodations for pet companions. Phillip worked with his housing case manager and now has a home and a place for Bonkers to run without a leash.

Richard is all smiles to have housing and a place to call home for himself and his dog Logan. Through Street Outreach, Richard connected to VMC and worked towards achieving housing. Welcome Home Richard!

Patricia holds the VMC Keychain with a key to her new apartment. With the help of case manager Andrea Dalton, Patricia now has a home after numerous years of living on the streets and in shelters.

Ian and his case manager, Sabrina Greene, are all smiles now that Ian is in housing. Ian connected with VMC's street outreach program and worked with his case manager for a year to achieve housing.

## Carry the Torch KNOXVILLE

### The Volunteer Ministry Center Presents Carry the Torch Knoxville



**Featuring President & Founder  
of Thistle Farms, Author of  
Practically Divine**

**Becca Stevens**

**Thursday, October 19, 2022  
10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
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 [carrythetorchknoxville.com](http://carrythetorchknoxville.com)

## HAVE YOU MADE YOUR WILL YET?

The latest statistics reveal that 67% of Americans do not have a will. Having a will or trust ensures control over your finances long after your lifetime. In addition to protection for your loved ones, the values you cherish through the organizations you support will long be remembered.

In the article below written by Peter Keese, a former longtime Refuge volunteer and VMC Board Member, the impact of a will is shared.

For more information on Estate Planning and becoming a member of the Billy Currier Legacy Society contact the Development Department at 865-524-3926.

## BILLY CURRIER

I've told this story more than once, but I retell it here, because it captures something of the essence of Billy—a truly sweet man (with just the right touch of "sour", tinged with his wise "street smarts" humor).

[That sentence might actually be enough—it has the core elements of Billy. But I'm committed to telling the whole story.]

In my early days as a volunteer in the Refuge, I was definitely a newbie and a novice and very uncertain about my role and function. The day had officially ended, and the front door was locked. To my untrained eye, the man knocking looked like any other homeless person. I opened the door a crack to announce that we were closed. He smiled and kindly and gently explained that he did janitor service for us and was there to sweep the floor and empty the trash. I soon found out that he was a neighbor and a resident in one of our apartments; and a man with both wisdom and a wry (and sly) sense of humor.

He welcomed me into the life of the VMC. And thus, contributed greatly to my education, by disabusing me of my notion of myself as being only a dispenser of hospitality but also a self in need of receiving it. He taught me what it is to be a neighbor. I am forever grateful to Billy.

But that is not the entire story.

Back when Ginny Weatherstone was the CEO and Billy was working regularly, doing some of the janitorial work with his perpetually cheerful attitude, Billy walked into her office. Legal Aid of East Tennessee was there that day providing services to neighbors in the Resource Center. After posing several questions to "Miss Ginny," and piquing her interest, Billy shared that he wanted to make a will so he could leave what he had to VMC. And so, he did.

In 2021, Billy passed and yes, what he had accumulated during his lifetime was designated to VMC. When it was time to name VMC's Legacy Society it was most fitting to name it after Billy.

Hospitality is what the VMC is about. Billy personified that. I want to continue what he started.

That's why I am a member of the Billy Currier Legacy Society and have included VMC in my will.

Peter Keese

## VMC HAPPENINGS



Karen Sproles with her family and friends at the 10th Annual Don Sproles Memorial Evening: Wine and Shine on July 29th presented by Sugarlands Distilling and the Crowne Plaza Knoxville.



Laurie shows off her new smile after receiving dentures from the VMC Dental Clinic.



VMC case managers Craig Ahern and Charli Jones not only work with neighbors to achieve housing, but also locate and move in furniture for their clients newly acquired homes.

Meal groups are a vital asset to the Resource Center program. Members of Immaculate Conception Church regularly cook and serve for our neighbors in the Resource Center.



Staff from Legal Aid of East Tennessee meet with members of the VMC Resource Center to assist with legal issues.

Greg Ward and staff from Axiome Advisory Group recently collected and donated move-in baskets for VMC neighbors achieving housing.