

FROM THE CEO'S DESK: EVERYONE WELCOME, REALLY!



Bruce W. Spangler, CEO

He was sure that it just did not apply to him.

Sam (not his real name) struggled with both mental and behavioral health concerns and was perplexed by the life situations that followed. Wrought with guilt for his acts of prostitution, attempted suicide, and the wide swings between deep depression and euphoria, he just could not accept that he was worthy of being loved and accepted – by anyone. “Sure,” he reluctantly acknowledged, “I believe that God loves everyone, just not me.”

Both foundational and at its core of values, Volunteer Ministry Center has a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity. With that commitment, every staff member and volunteer offer a level of hospitality that is both inclusive

and affirming. When we say everyone is welcome, we really mean – EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Without diversity, it is impossible to be “culturally sensitive and competent” with those we serve. The valuing of differing cultures can only occur only if known and acknowledged.

Recently, a few of our neighbors offered their own evaluation of our banner of hospitality. Here are a few of their impressions:

“Staff have shown that they are incredibly non-judgmental. They are respectful of pronouns, and neighbors can use the restroom that matches their gender identity and expression. Everyone I’ve encountered so far is very friendly and welcoming.”

“Having a safe place is absolutely vital, both for people who are in a homeless situation due to being kicked out, and for those of us who lost our homes for reasons unrelated to being LGBTQ. We all need a safe place where we can be ourselves.”

“I need a safe place where I know that I won’t be harassed or treated differently for who I am, and there are so few places that are safe. Staff don’t let people discriminate against me here. I feel grateful that I have a place I belong, even if it is only temporary.”

“We are all human, and we all need a safe place where we can just be ourselves. We don’t have to pretend we’re not struggling. We can just be and know we aren’t judged here.”

The neighbor that I mentioned at the beginning is someone that I met over a decade ago. While he continued to struggle with self-affirmation, he later confessed that God just might love him but for now, the acceptance and love of the staff and volunteers would do.

Welcome neighbor,

Bruce W. Spangler
Bruce

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VMC
Opening Doors for a Better Tomorrow

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Billy Courier Legacy Society

Billy's Story

Billy was a long-time resident with VMC for about 15 years. As assistant apartment manager at our former Jackson Apartments and part-time facility custodian, he lived at Minvilla Manor since its opening in 2010. As a model resident, VMC was his family.

A few years before he passed in September of 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.

Over the years, VMC provided a home and stability for Billy. To include VMC in his Will was the best way Billy knew to give back to his “VMC family.” To honor Billy and his special gift, VMC not only named its Legacy Society after Billy, but also recognizes him as a founding member of the Billy Courier Legacy Society.



Billy standing with other residents who were also residents of Jackson Ave Apartments and moved into Minvilla Manor when it opened in 2010

Why join VMC's Legacy Society?

VMC is proud to announce the establishment of the “Billy Courier Legacy Society.” The society is composed of generous and forward thinking donors who will support long term success of our mission through a planned gift. The Billy Courier Legacy Society is the honorary society of supporters and donors who have made estate, cash, or named endowment gifts in a minimum amount of \$5,000 for the benefit of Volunteer Ministry Center. The Billy Courier Legacy Society provides a way for VMC to recognize and thank donors during their lifetimes for their legacy gifts.

We invite you to contact VMC's Development Department at 865-524-3926 with any questions or additional information.



Billy enjoying lunch with fellow Minvilla Manor residents

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Carry the Torch
KNOXVILLE

Featuring Father Gregory Boyle

Rescheduled Date: December 16, 2021

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY CENTER

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The *Journey*
Home

www.vmcinc.org

THE TRANSFORMATION OF 1501

trans·for·ma·tion *noun*
tran(t)s·fər·mā·shən
: a thorough or dramatic
change in form or appearance

It has been in the making for three years.

It started with a conversation at a local diner and standing at an altar of a local Lutheran Church. Though the two were separate and independent events, their intersection is where the transformation of 1501 E. Fifth Avenue all started.

Following a dynamic and inspiring presentation by Kathy Izard at our 2018 Carry the Torch fund-raising event, Bo and Beth Townsend (Beth is a present VMC Board Member) wanted to have lunch with me. Izard had been inspired by Denver Moore (Same Kind of Different as Me by Ron Hall and Denver Moore) to initiate the development of 100 homes in Charlotte, NC.

Over a lunchtime meal, they both shared their inspiration by Izard to initiate a development. They were very clear, “We need to do something.” We discussed a very preliminary plan of action with no site or location in mind. Just, “we need to do something.” That lunch meal would be transformative.

About seven months later, I was



Renderings of the Caswell Manor development were displayed at the Groundbreaking on August 18th.

attending the community's “Homeless Memorial Service” held annually at St. John's Lutheran Church. Such services are observed throughout the country sometime around the 20th of December to coincide with the longest night of the year. The service is a memorial for those who died during the year while experiencing homelessness. Each name is read aloud followed by the ringing of a single hand bell.

The service was solemn that evening with occasional outbursts of laughter as memories of the deceased were shared. One of the speakers for the evening was David Arning. Apart from being a present VMC Board Member, David's association with VMC goes back over a decade ago as he was the developer for our present supportive housing

continued inside...



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

FOYER BIRDS

The message in the frame below hangs on the wall of The Foyer as a simple reminder of a new beginning for a changed life.

Birds

These birds are handmade from scraps of clay that might otherwise have been thrown away. They are all unique and none of them is perfect. When you leave The Foyer and move into your own place, please pick a bird to take with you to your new home.

Let it remind you that no one deserves to be discarded. With hard work and support from others, we can all take the scraps of our lives and form them into something new. Fly!



48 units of permanent supportive housing

On-site case management is key to successful permanent housing. Residents will experience:

- 24/7 property management
- Daily in-house services from professional case managers
- Interpersonal counseling
- Skills and workforce re-entry training
- Support from other community service entities such as McNabb Center and Cherokee Health Systems
- Education
- Financial literacy training
- Life enrichment

Help us make our building a home.

The building is fully funded and set up for long-term success, but individual gifts from the community are needed to make it feel like home.



PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING WORKS.

Minvilla Manor

- 95%: Annual occupancy
- 5 years: Average length of residency
- 90%: Residents with income

Housing stability improves health outcomes, facilitates reintegration to the community and costs less than providing services on the street.

Caswell Manor will help chronically homeless neighbors find safety, stability and success.

Volunteer Ministry Center is an inter-faith, ecumenical, professional social service organization focused on providing housing-first solutions to our unhoused neighbors, in cooperation with local partners and non-profit organizations.

vmcinc.org/caswell-manor

THE TRANSFORMATION OF 1501 CONT.

opportunity at Minvilla Manor and Knoxville Leadership Foundation's Flenniken Landing. David spoke of the successes of permanent supportive housing and the necessity of housing for one to be healthy, safe and secure. However,

he was there to be more than a historian. He stood at the altar and declared that he is making a public commitment to help develop more permanent supportive housing so that fewer names would be read at future memorial services.

It was the convergence of these two events that became the catalyst for the transformation at 1501 E. Fifth Avenue. With the major work of underwriting the project accomplished, the transformation of 1501 E. Fifth Avenue has physically begun. Purchased in August 2020, the old Positively Living (aka Parkridge Harbor Apartments) has been demolished. Built in 1965 as an office building, through the years it became an emergency shelter for families and then most recently a



Groundbreaking attendees celebrated the event commencing the addition of 48 permanent supportive housing homes

housing opportunity for about 20 plus men who were homeless with a catastrophic illness.

The property will be rebuilt with two wings with 24 one-bedroom apartments each connected by a center building for community space, dining, laundry, and support staff offices. With its proximity to Caswell Park, the new facility will be named Caswell Manor with new residents of single men and women moving in the late summer or early fall of 2022.

Yes, the transformation is beginning! The ground has been broken. The powerful transformation of the property and more importantly, the lives of future residents await!

Excitedly,
Bruce W. Spangler



VMC HAPPENINGS



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



A crowd of 250 guests at this year's Don Sproles Memorial Evening: Wine and Shine Event on July 16th at the Crowne Plaza Knoxville were entertained by the lively music from The Tennessee Stifflegs.



VMC Board Member Darrell Murrell, along with Board Chair Nancy Friedrich, celebrated birthdays for Minvilla Manor residents with a cookout.

Cherokee Health Systems Mobile Unit provides medical services to our neighbors experiencing homelessness in the VMC parking lot.



The Smile 180 Foundation and Delta Dental awarded the VMC Dental Clinic a grant for a new dental patient chair and dentist and assistant chairs.



VMC staff at the Foyer encourage socializing and healthy activities for those receiving overnight shelter services.



VMC Board Chair Nancy Friedrich hosts a craft event for members of the VMC Resource Center, Minvilla Manor, and The Foyer.



100 golfers participated in VMC's Inaugural Golf Tournament on August 23rd. Bruce Spangler, VMC CEO, and Todd Mason, VMC Board Member and an organizer of the event, enjoyed a very hot day on the course at Egwani Farms.

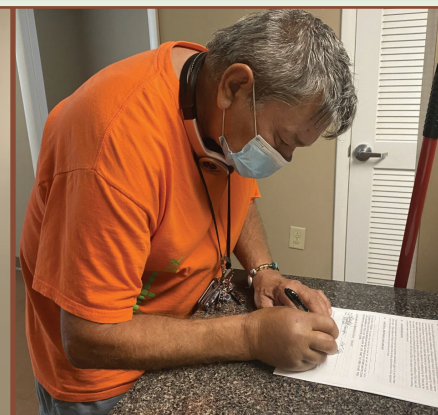
WE HAVE A HOME NOW!



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.



Joseph happily shows his key to his new apartment. With the help of Craig, his housing case manager, he can put his life on the streets behind him.



Karl became a member of the Resource Center in 2020 after being referred to VMC's Foyer by a street outreach worker. His goal for housing has been attained as he signs a lease to his new home.



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. Welcome Home Marcy!!