



# PATHWAYS POST

FALL 2015

## Celebration of Hope Honors Client Achievements



*“Pathways to Housing DC saved my life.”*

— *Cliff, Pathways DC consumer*

The keynote speaker at our Celebration of Hope event was Cliff, who struggled with homelessness and addiction for many years. With the help of his Pathways DC Supported Employment and mental health teams, Cliff was able to obtain a job working as an usher for the Washington Nationals baseball team.

Since then, he has celebrated 18 months of sobriety, regained his union membership, and is now back to work as an iron welder.

Congratulations, Cliff!

“What do you do?” For anyone in Washington, there is no more ubiquitous conversation starter. For many of the consumers at Pathways DC, a return to meaningful employment is a key element of recovering from chronic homelessness and regaining dignity. More than two dozen Pathways DC consumers were honored at our first annual Celebration of Hope event in July, which recognized both the achievement of new jobs and the educational strides made by many as they sought to re-enter the workforce. “The key to recovery is never to lose faith in yourself,” said Nellie, a consumer who was honored for her

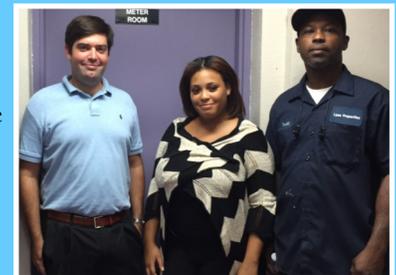


employment achievements at the event. “If you don’t have faith, you don’t have anything. Pathways always had faith in me, and helped me find that faith in myself again.” Also recognized at the event were Supervisor of the Year, Steven Miller from the DC Department of Behavioral Health, and Employer of the Year, Kevin

Muhammed from Konstructure LLC, both of whom have worked extensively with our Supported Employment Program to find positions for the people we serve. We are proud to celebrate the achievements of our consumers, who inspire us daily with their tenacity, perseverance, and grace. We look forward to next year’s celebration!

## Spotlight On: Our Landlord Partners

Since opening our doors in 2004, we have ended homelessness for more than 600 of the District’s most vulnerable neighbors. None of this would be possible without our amazing network of landlords. Today, Pathways DC has clients in every ward of the city and works with more than 100 landlords. These invaluable partnerships have helped us find safe, stable, and affordable housing for the people we serve. “I like working with Pathways. ... They do great work and their caseworkers are all very available and very supportive. I’m excited about our projects together in the future,” reports landlord Max Finland of MED Developers. Many thanks to our incredible safety web of landlords — we couldn’t do this crucial work without you!



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## STAY CONNECTED

We are always sharing photos and stories from the front lines!

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## CHRISTY'S CORNER: An Update from our Executive Director

Recovery is a journey; it has no end, only goals and steps along the way. We honor the experiences of our past while allowing ourselves to grow and change as we plan for the future. Similarly, our board has been turning its attention

lately towards our own journey, and the steps we can make towards our bright, sustainable future. Our theme for this year is strategic planning. Eleven years ago, Pathways to Housing DC opened its doors with a small team of determined staff who were committed to bringing the Housing First model to the District. We ended homelessness for 55 people living with serious mental health challenges that first year. Since then, we have grown to serve more than 2,000 people each year through our community services and have ended homelessness for more than 600 individuals. However, we have no intention of stopping there. In the years to come, our focus will be on capacity building as we seek to strengthen the Housing First programs and services we already offer and expand them to help meet our community's goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2017.

At Pathways DC, we envision a city without chronic homelessness, where everyone can find the support and safety they need to live a life filled with meaning and hope in their own home. We are actively working to expand our homeless street outreach team so that we may better serve the needs of those who have not yet obtained housing and deepen our existing services through training and hiring. We seek to grow our Supported Employment Program to provide these crucial opportunities to more of our clients, and continue offering the same level of holistic, person-centered wraparound care that we have made our signature service product. We cannot do it without you — our neighbors, community partners and supporters. We will work and keep you involved as we continue on our own journey to being the most healing, inspiring service organization we can be. Thank you for joining us on our path and for your continued support of our mission!

## Masterpieces of Recovery Art Group Brings Support, Education, and Fun



Every Thursday at noon, several Pathways DC clients assemble together with paints, brushes, and markers to hone their skills in Art Therapy Group. With careful brushstrokes and lots of peer encouragement, clients craft self-portraits and landscapes, dream destinations and holiday décor.

“Recently, we did a project where clients were painting their ‘safe space’ — showing a place that is beautiful, where they can retreat from their anxiety,” Rachel, the staff group leader, shared. Paired with mindful breathing and other anti-anxiety and coping techniques, art therapy has been studied as an effective tool in shaping positive behavioral health outcomes. It’s a great place for clients to socialize, too. “The other week, I didn’t even have to give a lot of direction,” said Rachel. “I just set it up and the group members got to work. They were just talking, helping each other. It was great.” “I love art group,” said Pathways DC client Carl as he carefully traced words onto a jumbo piece of construction paper. “We learn things and everyone is so nice. I always look forward to it.”

### Art Group Wish List

- ◇ New paint-brushes
- ◇ Watercolors
- ◇ Old magazines
- ◇ Construction paper

