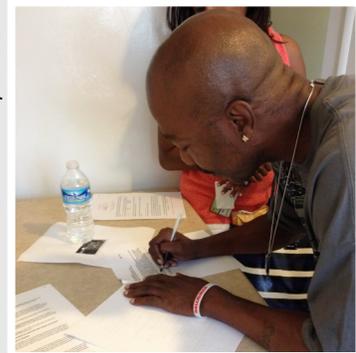


# PATHWAYS POST

SUMMER 2014

## RANDALL'S ROAD TO RECOVERY

Randall first connected with Pathways to Housing DC through our Homeless Street Outreach Team in the fall of 2012 while panhandling outside a local coffee shop near DuPont Circle. We came to know him as a mild-mannered and introverted 48-year-old who rarely asked for services or help while living on the streets for more than four years. Randall's mistrust of others and a well concealed mental illness kept him isolated and disconnected from receiving services, despite multiple hospitalizations and suicide attempts over the years. In the absence of professional support, he relied heavily on alcohol and other drugs as a means of self-medication and escape from life on the streets. Unsurprisingly, his frequent and public alcohol use resulted in compounding legal issues and an ongoing cycle of jail and homelessness. For Randall, "the voices in my head", the lack of a stable support system, and no safe place to call home were all barriers to his sobriety and stability.



Today Randall is still surprised and excited by all that has changed in the last six months. Partnered with the Pathways staff, Randall began working to define and achieve some of his goals, including navigating the legal system, managing his schizophrenia and finding a place to call home. In fact, within weeks of identifying an apartment in southeast DC, Randall signed a lease and moved in! Armed with a strong support team at Pathways, he is now clean and sober, has resolved his legal issues, is meeting regularly with a psychiatrist (for the first time in years), and is thriving in his new home. Well on his way to recovery, Randall hopes to one day help others who have struggled with addictions and mental illness. He knows that with the help of his support system the possibilities are unlimited!

## ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC

Clients and staff celebrated together at our annual summer picnic. Good food, outdoor fun, and wonderful company made our 10th anniversary celebration a day to remember!



Celebrating 10 years of Home, Health & Hope!



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## STAY CONNECTED

We're always sharing photos and stories from the front lines!



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



At Pathways DC we know that recovery is possible. We are always looking for ways to grow and enhance our services to better support our program participants. This summer, we are especially excited to expand the opportunities in our Peer Health Specialist program. As the name suggests, Peer Specialists are individuals who have experienced homelessness and are in recovery from mental illness and addiction. These staff members are certified by the DC Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) and are fully integrated into our support teams. Our Peer Specialists have an expertise that other professional training cannot replicate. Although each person's recovery journey is unique, they share a deep personal understanding of what our program participants may be going through. Our Peer Specialists are able to connect through their shared experiences and are a beacon of hope proving that recovery IS possible. Many people in our program have told me how much the Peer Specialists have added to their Pathways relationship: one consumer said to me recently, "Peers just get it!"

This summer one of our Peer Specialists designed and piloted an in-house, 12-week, intensive preparatory course for our consumers interested in becoming certified DBH Peer Specialists. Upon certification, participants can be hired by Pathways to Housing DC and other similar agencies as they pursue long-term careers dedicated to helping others recover. I am pleased to share that three of the five graduates have already been accepted into DBH's highly competitive certification program (graduating in January 2015) and the other two have been hired to provide peer support to patients leaving St. Elizabeths psychiatric hospital and returning to the community. Due to its initial success, the next cohort has already started classes! Peer support is absolutely essential to what we do here at Pathways. I am so proud to see the people we serve succeeding in their own recoveries and reaching out to support others as they begin their own journeys.



Esther, Peer Health Specialist and class leader, with our proud graduates!



## OUR WISH LIST



Hats • Scarves • Gloves • Toiletries • Pillboxes  
Metro Cards • Gift Cards • Microwaves • Can openers  
Pots and pans • Dishes • Silverware • Linens • Towels  
TVs and/or TV converter boxes • Alarm clocks/clock-radios

*For questions or to arrange a drop-off, please contact [development@pathwaysdc.org](mailto:development@pathwaysdc.org)*