

## “Home is where Mom is.”

*With your help, Gloria is rebuilding her family and reclaiming her life!*



**Gloria still remembers** the day her little boy, who wasn't so little anymore, came running back into her life out of seemingly nowhere. “MOM! This is where you've been all this time!?! Everybody's been looking for you!” Tears streamed down Gloria's face as she realized how depression and drug use had taken over her life, isolating her from everyone and everything she loved, including the young man now standing before her. For most of her life, Gloria had a relatively stable and happy existence. She held down multiple jobs to raise her son the best way that she could. Life wasn't perfect, but Gloria worked hard for what she had and was unapologetically hopeful for the future. Unfortunately, the life she had built for herself and her son would not last forever.

**After putting everything she had** into her second marriage, including the equity from the sale of the townhouse that she had owned for 17 years, Gloria once again found herself a single mother. Initially, she tried to be strong for her son, Jonathan. However, the depression she had struggled with since childhood gripped her tighter than ever before and refused to let go. Most days, all she wanted to do was sleep. As her condition worsened, Gloria eventually lost custody of Jonathan, the person she loved most in the world. She lost the will to work and eventually lost even the small apartment in which she was living. Feeling like there was no escaping her situation, Gloria decided one night to swallow a handful of pills and wash them down with cleaning solution. A day later, she woke up in the mental health ward of a hospital, in complete disbelief that she was alive.

**Over the next several years**, Gloria was admitted to the hospital dozens of times as she sought treatment for her depression. Each time she was discharged, she returned to the streets since she had no home to go to. Gloria needed stability to help her recover her life, but as her vicious cycle of

homelessness continued, she lost sight of who she once was. Addiction took hold of her and she lived in a state of constant panic. Her family tried to help, but Gloria disappeared for months, even years, at a time, only to resurface and repeat the pattern. It would take a chance encounter with her son for Gloria to decide that something had to change. That day, Gloria was waiting at the bus stop for her drug dealer to arrive. Hearing the pain in Jonathan's voice and seeing the sadness in his face as he ran over to her from across the street, screaming “MOM!”, chilled Gloria to her core. She wanted to be worthy of that title again, but knew that it would be impossible without help. Gloria decided, then and there, that she would do whatever it took to be in her son's life again.

**Gloria was referred to Pathways to Housing DC** in May of 2016 after working with another organization for months that couldn't help her with housing. She immediately met with her new mental health team and within two weeks found herself out in the community looking at apartments. Soon after, she moved into a home of her own and is now actively working on her mental health and addiction. For Gloria, it was a dream come true. One of Gloria's first priorities after moving in was to decorate her new apartment so that she could invite her son Jonathan, and the granddaughter she had never met into her home for dinner each week. Although every day is a challenge, Gloria is committed to making up for lost time to be both the mother and, now, grandmother that her family deserves. Gloria has the stability of a home and the support of her team at Pathways. On her refrigerator, Gloria keeps a constant reminder of why she continues to push forward: a card, given to her by Jonathan on the day she moved into her new home after years of being on the streets. Inside the colorful congratulations card, a handwritten note reads simply: “Home is where Mom is.”

*Because of your generosity, Gloria and over 700 others have the dignity and stability of a home. Your compassion provides hope and enables the recovery of lives.*



# “The Season of Hope”

## Christy's Corner

**Christy Respress, MSW**  
*Executive Director*

*“Spring is a season of the soul to regain its strength.”*

Lailah Gifty Akita

I love spring. The new colors bursting from flowers, people smiling and walking with a bounce to their step, lingering outside a little longer each evening as the daylight hours increase. Spring is a time for change and growth. I don't know about you, but I feel energized and revitalized. We are excited here at Pathways DC that we are ending homelessness for 135 additional people this year - change and growth are awesome!

and healthcare. Federal HUD dollars account for 40% of our housing vouchers. These include 50 housing subsidies specifically set aside for Veterans. We rely on federal Medicaid funds to provide critical mental health support services to over 350 individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness or who have moved off the streets and into their own home. Federal dollars also support our Veterans Housing First team and a portion of our street outreach services.

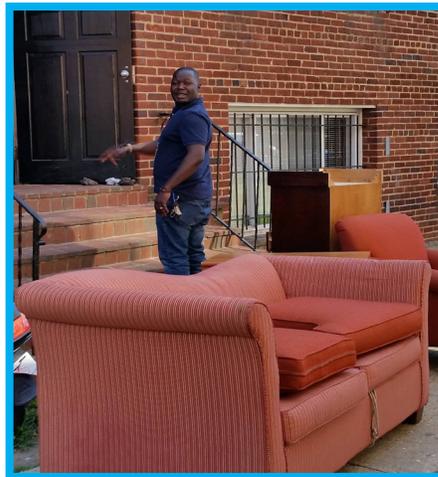
While we don't know for certain what changes will come, we do know that we will continue to fight for the rights of our neighbors experiencing homelessness to have access to decent, safe, and affordable housing. We will educate our local and federal partners about our life-saving safety net services and advocate to ensure policy and budget decisions support these services. However, we know we're not alone. That's why we're thankful for our friends and supporters like you. Whether you're making a financial donation, donating items for Welcome Home Baskets, giving of your time and talents, or advocating alongside us in the community, we are more grateful than ever to have you in our family.

While wonderful things are happening, we also face some uncertainties about how federal policy may impact our local efforts to end chronic homelessness and help people rebuild their lives. Serious cuts are being proposed to housing

## Pathways Happenings



“Housing First isn't just housing. It's a way to address health, mental health, and employment.” - Christy, Pathways to Housing DC Executive Director, speaking at the Rally for More Housing Now, organized by our amazing partners at CNHED and The Way Home Campaign



We love our partners KEYS for the Homeless who helped furnish an apartment for a recent move in!



Alex and Carly, student interns, help out at our weekly Art Therapy Group!



Thank you Center DC for spending a Saturday afternoon making Welcome Home baskets.



Georgetown Day students made toiletry and trail mix bags for our Outreach teams to use as engagement tools.

# More Than a Tour

William reflects on his one year anniversary since he first publically shared what his life was like living on the streets of DC and how speaking at Pathways Opening Doors tours has helped in his road to recovery.

***"In the beginning it was hard for me to just get through my story, but from all the support I've received, sharing has become therapeutic. After speaking for a year, I've been exposed to a broad range of people who are constantly teaching me something new and exposing me to things I never knew I'd be interested in. More than anything, I've been most surprised by people's concern. When you're on the street, you have a sense that no one cares about you. From the tours I've spoken at, whether it was students at Georgetown Day School, employees of Fannie Mae, or other community members at Pathways, I am always struck by the level of empathy people have."***



If you'd be interested in hearing William's and other Pathways consumers' amazing stories of hope, consider coming to or hosting a tour! Contact [openingdoorsrsvp@pathwaysdc.org](mailto:openingdoorsrsvp@pathwaysdc.org) or head to [www.pathwaystohousingdc.org/opening-doors-tours](http://www.pathwaystohousingdc.org/opening-doors-tours) for more information.

## The Fabric of Who We Are

### Board Member Spotlight



***Amber Shaver is Director of Member Services at The Advisory Board Company and joined Pathways to Housing DC's Board of Directors in 2014 where she has shown leadership and a deep passion for the work. We recently sat down with Amber to learn more about why Pathways to Housing DC and its mission are so important to her.***

#### ***What about Pathways DC made you want to join the board?***

"What immediately stood out above anything else is how Pathways never gives up on anyone. It's ingrained in the fabric of who we are. Whether it's someone's second apartment or the 100th time an outreach worker has visited someone experiencing homelessness at Union Station, it has never been a question of 'Should we go back?' but rather 'When are we going back?'"

#### ***How has your involvement with Pathways DC changed the way you look at issues of homelessness and mental health?***

"Pathways DC was my first experience with Housing First. I had no prior knowledge about the policies that surround the voucher system or the different barriers and hurdles organizations have to overcome when people don't have their ID, birth certificate, or even a cell phone- things we often take for granted. Since joining the PathwaysDC Board three years ago, I've learned how we navigate the system to ensure these barriers do not prohibit people from getting the apartment they deserve. I'm also inspired by every opportunity I have to meet one of our clients- their love of life and hopefulness reinvigorates me despite the upward battles they face on their road to recovery."

#### ***What is one of your favorite memories of Pathways DC so far?***

"On my second tour at Pathways, I met a consumer who had just moved into his second apartment and was so excited that he brought several pictures he had taken. Though he was nervous to share his story, it was such a powerful moment to see someone so proud of himself and of the hard work and commitment to what he was doing to recover. It was the excitement he brought to the conversation that made my colleagues and me want to get involved. When I saw him several months later, the Advisory Board Company had taken up a collection to purchase him a toaster oven for his apartment. It was a wonderful moment to see someone so proud of how far they had come and really owning their path."



Amber and Charles, a Pathways consumer

#### ***What do you wish other people knew about Pathways DC?***

"I'd love for more people to just have conversations with friends and colleagues about our mission and the work we do- it's critical. Everyone has something to give- whether it's monetary, your time, or another set of eyes- never underestimate the impact you can have on an organization and our community."

## Our Greatest Needs

- Air Conditioning Window Units
- Men and women's pants, shirts, shorts, socks, underwear, and shoes
- Pots, pans & cooking utensils
- Cleaning supplies (Lysol, Clorox Wipes, Sponges, All Purpose Bath & Kitchen, Toilet Bowl Cleaner & Brush)
- Full sheet sets & pillows

Visit [www.pathwaystohousingdc.org/our-wish-list](http://www.pathwaystohousingdc.org/our-wish-list) for a full list of our needs, including our Amazon Wish List (Amazon ships directly to us!)

## Volunteer Need

### Opening Doors Tour Ambassador

Do you have people from your family, social, faith, or professional networks that would benefit from learning about the state of homelessness in the District and the work of Pathways DC in ending it? Host a tour and become a Pathways Ambassador today!



*Interested in getting involved? Contact Jeremy Weatherly at (202) 660-2249 or [jweatherly@pathwaysdc.org](mailto:jweatherly@pathwaysdc.org)*

## Spring 2017 Newsletter

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## Housing First Works!

Since 2004, we have

**ended chronic homelessness**  
for



**89% OF CLIENTS SERVED BY  
PATHWAYS DC STAY IN HOUSING**

Average annual savings per client  
using **Housing First**

**\$22,995**

OVER BEING HOMELESS

**\$36,500**

OVER JAIL

**\$296,275**

OVER PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION

