



# PATHWAYS POST

SPRING 2014

## YOU ARE PART OF GERARD'S STORY

Gerard is an Army veteran who served his country honorably in a stateside military hospital during the Vietnam War. After completing his years of service, and as a result of his undiagnosed and untreated paranoid schizophrenia, Gerard found himself caught up in the drug culture of the 1970s: in and out of prison, mental institutions and eventually homeless – sleeping on park benches, in alleys and even in the woods of Rock Creek Park. During this 30 year period, Gerard lost his job, his family and friends, and worst of all, he lost hope.

Ten years ago Gerard found Pathways to Housing DC and his life changed once again. We offered him a home – no strings attached. For Gerard, having a place to call his own and a roof over his head, allowed him to focus on getting sober and managing his mental illness. In the days, months and years that followed, Gerard and his Pathways team partnered in his recovery – working at first to achieve smaller goals, like visiting a doctor and going grocery shopping and then, much larger ones – including getting a well-paying job. In his own words, “Once I attained stable housing and genuine support, my mental and physical health improved and I have been able to re-educate and re-train myself.”

Today, Gerard has an apartment, a bike, a three-computer workstation and a positive outlook and mission in life. He works as a certified Peer Health Specialist, teaching other formerly homeless veterans about wellness tools and strategies to live meaningful, positive and healthy lives. Gerard's success is not an anomaly; we are bursting at the seams with stories like Gerard's – because of your ongoing support. Ten years of Pathways' patient, caring professionals using the *Housing First* model have helped over 600 men and women end their homelessness, find their motivation, take charge of their recovery, and begin a new, more hopeful chapter in their lives.



*“I'm living proof that housing first and peer support works.”*  
-Gerard



## BRINGING HEALTHY CHOICES TO PATHWAYS

Our work is not possible without our partners. The collaborations we have developed over the past decade have allowed us to fulfill our mission of ending chronic homelessness and supporting recovery for individuals living with complex needs. Recently, we expanded our partnership with Martha's Table, another local non-profit organization, to provide the people we serve with access to fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as nutritious non-perishable items at our very own onsite market. We are thrilled to work together to empower the people we serve to live happier and healthier lives!

**Celebrating 10 years of Home, Health & Hope!**



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## CHRISTY'S CORNER:

### An Update from our Executive Director



This year marks a huge milestone for us: our 10th Anniversary! It's hard to believe that a decade has gone by since we first opened our doors in the District, with a dream to provide home, health and hope to our most vulnerable homeless neighbors. And that is exactly what we have continued to do for the last ten years.

Today, we offer permanent housing and wraparound support services to more than 2,000 individuals who are homeless or at risk for homelessness in DC. This is quite a leap given that we served 55 people our first year! Now we do more to enhance our *Housing First* programs: we have expanded to include an onsite primary healthcare clinic, a mental health clinic in the DC Superior Court, a program to prevent and end veteran homelessness, and two downtown street outreach teams. All of these innovative initiatives build upon our commitment to end chronic homelessness for individuals with complex health and mental health challenges here in our nation's capital.

This continues to be an amazing journey! For me, it is truly an exciting and rewarding time to be at the helm of Pathways to Housing DC. I am proud of our staff who have worked tirelessly to bring so many people off the streets and empower them to reclaim their lives. But they also remind me that our work is not yet done. As we look towards the future, I envision a city where all of our neighbors have a home and know they are a part of our family and greater community. I feel so privileged to have been here from the start and to be leading this dynamic agency into the next decade.

Our future is bright thanks to supporters like you who understand how important this work is and who have taken steps with us to end homelessness in our community. Together, we are opening doors to a better tomorrow.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Volunteers (left) from **EJF Real Estate** create welcome baskets to turn empty apartments into warm and inviting homes. Our partners at **HomeGoods** (right) make trail mix bags and toiletry kits for our homeless street outreach teams.