



PATHWAYS POST

SUMMER 2015

You Are Making Hope Happen: Deshawn's Story



Deshawn came to Pathways to Housing DC as a survivor of childhood trauma who was struggling to meet his basic needs on a daily basis. He had spent more than two decades homeless, traveling across the country from Berkeley, CA to New York City, trying to find work and create a stable life for himself. Several years ago, Deshawn relocated to Washington, DC committed to starting over and rebuilding his life. He secured a part time job at a downtown restaurant but his meager paychecks were not sufficient to cover his rent and living expenses, so he began to supplement his income by panhandling downtown.

By the time our Homeless Street Outreach Team met Deshawn, he was a regular fixture on a downtown street corner where his charismatic smile engaged many people who made their way to and from work each day. But Stephanie, an outreach specialist, soon learned that his smile masked deeper struggles. Stephanie spoke to Deshawn every day, and as he began to trust her, he opened up about his deep depression and his chronic arthritis pain. Both of these debilitating issues were being exacerbated by nights spent sleeping on the cold and lonely streets. Deshawn was “self-medicating” to treat his depression and pain with alcohol, which only made these challenges worse. With Stephanie’s help, Deshawn was quickly connected to a Pathways DC Housing First team who provided him comprehensive support services. In a matter of weeks, Deshawn moved into his very own apartment in Southeast DC.

Prior to coming to Pathways to Housing DC, every minute of Deshawn’s day was spent simply trying to survive; life on the street had robbed him of the ability to think about a more hopeful future. Today, with the safety and stability of housing, Deshawn’s hope has been restored, and he is now setting goals for the next chapter in his life, including a career in IT. Welcome home, Deshawn!



Pets at Pathways: A Purrfect Addition

We are always striving to expand and enrich our programs for the people we serve. Recently we started using pet therapy to improve our clients' mental, social, emotional, and physical wellness. Caring for an animal can have a strong positive impact in addressing mental health disorders and substance abuse issues. By focusing on an animal and its needs, our clients develop nurturing skills, learn coping mechanisms and healthier response behaviors, and build trust. Our furry friends not only serve as a calming presence but as a powerful tool in supporting our clients in their recoveries. Mark (featured left) loves spending time with “Cat” the cat.

Home • Health • Hope



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Pathways to Housing DC

101 Q Street NE, Suite G

Washington, DC 20002

(202) 529-2972

www.pathwaystohousingdc.org

United Way #: 9536

CFC #: 59854

CHRISTY'S CORNER:

An Update from our Executive Director



Friends, family, and community are at the center of everything we do at Pathways to Housing DC. While housing is a crucial *first* step to ending homelessness, we know that rebuilding old relationships with family and friends and developing new ones is ultimately what helps people feel like part of a community. Summer is that great time of year where there are endless opportunities to socialize and have fun. It's no different here at Pathways DC. While we focus on relationship building throughout the year, summer is when we gather together on multiple occasions as one big Pathways DC community.

Our summer picnic is our best attended event! Every July, staff and clients join together to soak up the summer sun with a delicious and nutritious barbeque and an afternoon of outdoor fun. With food and camaraderie, this annual tradition continues to provide a positive social outlet for our organization and the people we serve.

What says summer more than baseball? Thanks to the Nationals' Community Ticket Grant program, our clients come together with other baseball fans each season to take in a game at Nationals Park. This ballpark outing is a wonderful way to celebrate our clients' recoveries, inspiring in them a sense of belonging to the larger Washington community.

These and many other summer events help our clients connect with others in their life and neighborhood. These connections become stronger and empower them to grow on their personal journeys. A community is defined by people in a common place with shared values and concerns. It takes all of us to create community. Thank you for being a part of ours!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: AXIOM LAW



We are grateful for our partnership with Axiom Law. Over the past year, Axiom has provided hundreds of hours of pro-bono legal support, served as a sponsor for our first annual breakfast fundraiser, and volunteered with us on several occasions. In November, Axiom joined us for our annual Thanksgiving Celebration (left), helping us serve a turkey dinner with all the trimmings for more than 300 clients. They also volunteered with us at a recent Martha's Market (right), helping the people we serve select fresh produce at our on-site farmer's market.