

FROM THE CEO'S DESK:
"YOU CAN'T PUSH A STRING"



Bruce W. Spangler, CEO

I trust you have taken the time to read Peter Keese's address that was given during our Annual Dinner this past March. Peter reminds us that the Volunteer Ministry Center defines "success" in the offering, recognition, and respect given to every individual that starts by hearing their story. Peter gave us a glimpse into the stories of Nakesha and Trudy. Trudy may not be the most pleasant, affable, and agreeable person. She might be on some days, but not most. I cringe at the thought of the torment that I perceive Trudy experiences. I want to know more about her story, or so I think. Knowing or not knowing her story, however, as Peter insists, Trudy deserves respect.

Let me now introduce you to Heather and George.

Their story of the experience of homelessness is unique because it is their story. Living in a car has its challenges. Yet their story is so similar to the 998 others who preceded them. In his address, Peter anticipated the 1,000th person to achieve housing through our Resource Center. Heather and George are the 999th and 1000th persons who achieved permanent housing through the Resource Center.



There seems to be quite a contrast between Trudy's experience and Heather and George's. We desire something much better for Trudy. We celebrate Heather and George's "something" better – housing! Yet, they are respected for their choices. As a former colleague of mine, Stan Frazier, often reminded me, "you can't push a string." This was his way of saying that you can't make decisions for others, no matter how well intended. However, one must respect the "string."

Echoing Peter's thanks, "your dollars have done—and do—wonders," respectfully!

Peace,

Rev. Bruce W. Spangler
Chief Executive Officer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018

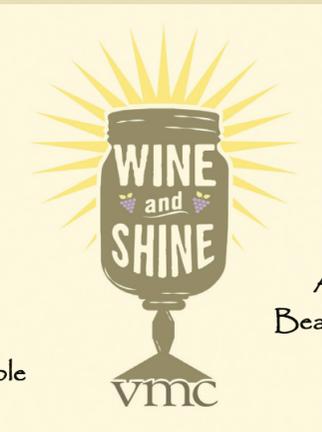
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"YOU HAVE GIVEN GENEROUSLY"

THIS ADDRESS WAS GIVEN BY REVEREND PETER KEESE,
VMC BOARD CHAIR, AT THE ANNUAL THANK YOU DINNER IN MARCH 2018



At the base of the Helmsley Building in Midtown Manhattan, a woman passing by, named Pamela J. Dearden (PJ), noticed a woman, seemingly oblivious to the rain and her surroundings, standing on a 36-square-foot sidewalk grate she had chosen as her home.

In time PJ found out that the woman's name was Nakesha. PJ gave her an umbrella that day and that was the start of a sort of friendship. After that, PJ would stop and talk with her from time to time, and sometimes give her a sandwich or coffee. Their relationship developed.

Nakesha was both very intelligent and highly educated; she and PJ would sometimes have lively discussions about books they had both read. PJ would regularly urge Nakesha to leave that place to seek help, to seek the safety of a shelter. Nakesha always refused.

There was a long and very touching story about Nakesha in the New York Times a couple of weeks ago about how this vivacious dancer and leader in high school and college had over time descended into some kind of madness and now lived on that grate on a sidewalk in mid-town Manhattan.

Over the years there developed a small group of people who would offer kindnesses as PJ did; and they would try to cajole Nakesha to seek help. 'Go to a shelter', they said. She always refused.

When I read that story, I thought of Trudy (not her real name) who stays on the streets of Knoxville—our downtown streets—right now. Trudy is a tiny little lady, very thin, very few teeth in her head. She talks a lot and very fast; she chatters, and I can't understand a thing she says. She can be real sweet sometimes; and wildly angry sometimes. She panhandles. She'll sometimes stand in the middle of an intersection with traffic going by (or stopping for fear of hitting her). She might be fully clothed, or not. The police will come and take her away. But soon she's back where she lives—on the streets.

This may seem an odd way to begin this talk meant to be a thank you, but I'll get to that directly.

I begin this way, because it occurs to me that if you drive from town past the Knox Area Rescue Ministry and look under the bridge you'll see lots of people like Nakesha and Trudy. And you might say to yourself, 'I've given generously to the Volunteer Ministry Center to help get folks who are without a home into a home; why are all these people here?'

And you have given generously. So don't worry, the bottom line of my talk is not going to be that you need to give more.

No, in fact, I'm about to recount the many wonders your dollars perform.

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... CONTINUED FROM FRONT

I begin with this story about some who refuse to go into a shelter. Those of you who read Bruce's introductory piece in our latest newsletter know that a shelter is quite definitely not a safe place for those who can't tolerate being in a crowd of people. For many folks, such a situation as a crowded shelter is not safe, perhaps because of the external realities of the dangers of so many people crowded together or because of the internal demons, or both. In an odd way, then, Nakesha's choice to live on that grate made sense.

So what I mean to tell you is how your dollars do such wonderful things, even for the Nakesha's and the Trudy's.

Not everybody will agree that it was right not to force Nakesha into a shelter or that it is right not to force Trudy.

But the first principle of the work that you support at the Volunteer Ministry Center is respect—respect for the individual, as an individual.

Nakesha couldn't tolerate shelter life; Trudy can't. We respect that and we respect Trudy—as she is.

Trudy comes to the Refuge regularly. Your dollars created and now support the Refuge, the place where she can come; where we give her clothes and a place to be for a while. And listen to her, and pay attention to her, and talk to her. On my Thursday volunteer day two or three weeks ago, Trudy came in; as usual she was chattering away, and, as usual, I couldn't understand anything she said. There were several people in our lobby—other people currently without a home—who obviously knew Trudy. I don't know if they could make any better sense of her rapid chatter, but, in a way, they seemed to understand her, and they responded with warmth and affirmation and a 'God Bless you' as she walked out the door.

Your dollars provide a space and a community that accepts Trudy as she is and respects her as she is—a place and a community that both says and is a blessing. Your dollars make that happen.

Your dollars do lots of good things. You know that sometime this year we expect to achieve helping our 1,000th person in to permanent supportive housing. Your dollars have created Minvilla; more importantly now your dollars pay our case managers who have the know-how to get people—when they decide they are ready—(respect)—into

Minvilla or other permanent home situations. That's the work of our Resource Center. Your dollars built and now support the Resource Center.

I work in the Refuge. Your dollars provide a staff person to coordinate us volunteers; your dollars provide a welcoming lobby—a safe place for people to be for a while—your dollars provide private office spaces where volunteers can have a private conversation with each person. Respect.

But in addition to a bit of safe shelter for people we call homeless, your dollars provide funds to help us volunteers pay the last bit of a light bill or rent—so as to prevent people losing their homes. Or we help folks get an ID, without which they can't work, or a birth certificate, so they can get into housing or their kids into school.

BUT, we don't give one piece of clothing, or one voucher for rent or utilities or ID's, we don't give any kind of material assistance without having a conversation. It's all about respect: we take each and every person seriously—as deserving of respect as a fellow human. The conversation is at least as important as the material aid. It says, you are a person—currently homeless—but homeless is not your name or your definition; you have a name and a story all your own.

We say to Joe or Sam or Sarah, "tell me your story; I'm interested in you". I think people hear their own story in a new way—as meaning something—when they experience somebody else really listening. Each person has a story to tell. And we volunteers are grateful for the dollars you provide for the place and the opportunity you give them to tell, and us to hear, the stories.

Back to Nakesha and Trudy. We might wish, for their sake as well as for ours, that they wouldn't sleep on the streets. But, in addition to supporting the good work of our case managers in the Resource Center, and the good work of the volunteers in the Refuge, your dollars also do good work—they are not wasted—if they allow us to honor and respect Nakesha and Trudy in perhaps the only way they can receive that honor and respect.

Your dollars have done—and do—wonders. And we're here tonight to say a heartfelt thank you for your remarkable generosity.

Thank you.

WE HAVE A HOME NOW!



Sarah and Vincent, pictured with their case manager, Daryl Higdon, are happy to have a home for themselves and their children.



It's a special day for Tanka as she opens the door to her apartment.



With the help she received in the VMC Resource Center, Mellownice signs the lease to her apartment.



After a long time on the streets, William moved into his own apartment with the assistance provided by VMC case managers Opal Bryant and Katlyn Gass.



Martha worked hard to achieve housing and signs the lease to her very own apartment.



Chris proudly shows off the key to his apartment presented to him by VMC case manager Katlyn Gass.

1,000 HOUSING PLACEMENTS SINCE 2007!

Gregory	David	Zhane	Larry	George	Derek	Teresa	James	Michael	Glen	Billy
Ronald	Jeffrey	Christpher	Jerri	Sherry	Denise	Michael	Michabel	Lonette	Christi	George
Brandon	Latoya	Erica	Mae	Donnie	Robert	Steven	Steven	Jason	Ernest	Danny
James	Ricky	Timmy	Robert	Donald	Jacob	Joshua	David	Randall	Randy	Diane
Gary	Milton	Steven	James	Walter	Barbara	Gary	Karen	Ronald	Michael	John
Rolando	Joseph	Richard	Dennis	Mary	Earl	Joseph	Carol	Charles	Frank	Stephen
Diana	Gregg	Analicia	Caitlin	Larry	Ray	Florence	Tina	Robert	Lajecania	Andrew
Gregory	Eric	Martha	Kristen	Kim	Brett	Helen	Kim	John	Leonard	Christopher
Charles	William	Bettina	Roger	Kenneth	Warren	Betty	Deborah	Willie	Joanne	James
Josha	Michael	Connie	John	Daniel	Kesha	Nathaniel	Michelle	Michael	Walter	Wesley
Gerald	Christopher	Summer-Lee	Patricia	Joshua	Ken	Charles	James	Steven	Carlton	Charles
Joseph	Marvin	Mellownice	Valerie	Chauincey	Susan	Richard	Kyle	Bruce	Ronnie	Katherine
Aimee	Christopher	Robert	Andre	Michael	Duane	Michael	Brett	Raymond	Julia	Charles
Jerry	William	Edward	Katy	Jimmy	David	William	William	Archie	Leslie	Jerry
Sean	Robert	Tanka	Stuvella	Jackie	Robert	John	John	Timothy	Corlisa	John
Sandra	Tara	Teresa	Jimmy	David	Shannon	David	Naomi	Ronnie	Todd	Stacy
Julian	Brittany	Deborah	Donna	James	Tammy	James	James	Sharon	Mandie	Eacie
Jeanne	Farley	Donald	John	James	Jamesena	Gracie	Gary	Thadis	Ernest	Lisa
Amy	Thomas	William	Joyce	Cynthia	Margaret	Alexander	Maurice	John	David	John
Michael	DeAngelo	Rodney	Rick	Gerald	Michael	Matthew	Latandra	Clarence	Julie	Sarah
Jennifer	Alfonse	Vincent	Carl	Guy	Randy	David	Walton	Walton	Whitney	Vicki
Mugabe	Charles	Frank	William	Melvin	Jackie	Joseph	Thomas	Lynne	Calvin	John
Josha	Mark	Linda	Caroyn	Pernell	John	Aaron	Harry	Nicolas	Shavar	Thurman
Debbie	Billy	Sarah	Stanley	Rodney	Lisa	Thomas	William	Joseph	Nathan	Kristie
Danny	Carl	Vincent	Lori	Thomas	Bose	Geneva	Tricia	James	Jeremy	Barry
Jonathan	Timothy	Gordon	Melissa	James	Martha	Tammy	David	Elbert	John	Christopher
Wayne	Ramatu	Mary	Christina	Robert	Ingrid	Richard	Edward	Anthony	Candace	Tapessa
Matthew	Kyle	George	Vivian	Charles	Jeff	Chester	Thomas	Carol	Thomas	Dale
Ronald	Vernon	Heather	Ronald	Tyson	Wayne	Roger	David	Charles	Anthony	Brisfield
Deane	Sarah	Phillipe	Tammy	Willie	Phillip	Roger	Rebecca	Gary	Greg	Posetta
Marzena	Mitchell	Gail	Wayne	Norman	Eric	William	Arnold	Teresa	Greg	Andrew
Denise	Alan	Doctor	Charles	Eric	Glenda	Mark	Randy	Donna	Juanita	Patrick
Michael	Richard	Kevin	Jackie	Kenneth	Joseph	Anthony	Ricky	Sasha	James	Charles
Belinda	Joseph	Timothy	Richard	David	Robert	Karl	Jamar	Robert	Jennifer	Jeffery
Timothy	George	Frederick	Shaun	Robert	Vincent	Tyrone	Lara	John	Annette	Kathy
Nokoma	John	Kathleen	Sue	Robert	Phillip	Tiffany	Terry	Craig	Michael	Annie
Oscar	Alisha	Robert	Sentron	Susan	Johnny	John	Malik	John	Michael	Harold
Lula	Rieterio	Jeffrey Brian	Troy	Jenaya	Alvaro	John	Phillip	John	Kelly	Johanna
Rickshauna	Kenneth	Mark	Barbara	Dorothy	Marquitta	Don	Darrell	William	Dawn	Antonetta
Anthony	Kevin	Shavar	Joanna	Mary	Edward	Mary	Debra	Josh	Cameron	Leslie
Deidra	Cathy	Philip	Beverly	Sheila	David	David	Brenda	John	Johnny	Darryl
Michael	Elizabeth	Jimmy	Dewayne	Melvin	Barbara	Barbara	David	Arleena	Holly	Misty
Sean	Carmen	Brenda	Ronald	Marilyn	John	Thomas	Steve	Warren	Danny	Missisa
Bernice	Kevin	Clayton	Frank	Nancy	David	Sarah	Jerry	Robert	Dennis	Michael
Joseph	William	James	Teresa	Lonzetta	Linda	Melody	Norma	Kornie	Richard	Kenneth
Sheila	James	Warren	Duffny	Jon	Lloyd	Sammy	Carrie	Jeffery	Jeffery	Abdul
Dennis	Patricia	Carlyn	Larry	Tommy	Tommy	Tommy	Carrie	Kimberly	Larry	Larry
Robert	Rosewellt	Michael	Joe	Danny	Danny	Douglas	Nora	Kenneth	Conley	Conley
Barbara	Frederick	Dan	Evelyn	Donald	Paul	Geraldine	Ronald	Clark	Kenneth	Conley
Eddie	William	Mary Ann	Lavanna	Sandra	Cassie	Mamie	Steven	Charles	Brenda	Missisa
Connie	Pamela	Eddie	Jeff	Lawrence	David	Darryl	Angela	Barbara	Bruford	Michael
Danny	Donald	Tazzie	Louis	Michael	William	Cecil	Heath	Jeffery	Richard	Shianne
Wanda	Doyle	Barbara	James	Tracey	Charles	Issac	Thomas	Jessica	Kris	Mark
Elizabeth	Arnold	William	Jeff	Johnny	James	James	Noah	Earl	Kenneth	Kathy
Thomas	Donnie	Kim	Ray	Christopher	Sherrie	Joshua	Carol	Michael	Henry	Charles
Charles	James	Thomas	Willetta	Gail	Dianne	Gloria	Edith	Tracey	Elaina	Josh
Robert	Donald	Lily	Michael	Deborah	Richard	Richard	Raymond	David	Gregory	David
Joe	Alvin	Felix	Michael	Tracey	Jeffrey	Jeffrey	Willie	Donivalde	Dannie	Leo
Steven	Cory	Kim	Dave	Annette	Joseph	Joseph	Anson	Missisa	Lisa	Terry
Jamie	Phyllis	Kellye	William	Stephen	Teddy	Ellen	Belinda	Johnny	Isaac	Julie
Breina	Linda	Jahl	Craig	Demetrius	Nelson	Charles	Kevin	Judy	Steven	John
Gustav	Peter	Michael	John	Tommy	Brian	Brian	Douglas	Rocky	Jane	Benjamin
Scottie	Michael	Glesha	Mary Ann	Cornelia	David	Mae	Cindy	Garry	Earlene	Sabrina
Bishop	Anthony	Byron	Sam	Ginger	Robert	William	William	Evan	Robert	Troy
Heather	Tony	David	John	Emmitt	Jennifer	Preston	Virginia	Janna	Eddie	Alicia
Andra	Nancy	Johnnie	Richard	Anthony	Matthew	Matthew	Cynthia	Daniel	Kevin	Kevin
Chelsea	Steven	Nancy	Karl	James	Ricky	Robert	Robert	Michelle	Eric	Bill
Christopher	Andriy	Susan	Thomas	Mia	Harold	Nancy	Eric	Elmo	Anthony	John
William	William	Rick	Alexander	Edward	Jerome	Eric	Thurman	Camalita	Teresa	John
Charles	Tommy	Kendall	Jerome	Eric	Regina	Regina	Stanley	Michael	Thaddeus	Elton
Leon	Lewis	Debra	Jeanne	James	Willie	Chris	Chris	James	Thaddeus	Pamela
Jean	Dorothy	Debra	Marcus	William	Wesley	John	John	Michael	William	Marnie
Lowery	William	Nathaniel	Raquel	William	Wille	Rebecca	Debra	Raymond	Raymond	Kenneth
Janice	Stooksbury	Debbie	Cliff	Karl	Anita	Cindy	Maurice	Ralph	Raymond	Pamela
Curtis	Charles	Frank	Dennis	Lonzetta	Fred	Jerry	Hoyt	Anthony	Nicholas	Christopher
Arthur	Glennis	Robert	Robert	Vincent	Robert	Damon	Mark	Richard	David	Christina
Wayne	George	Joseph	John	Joseph	Vicki	Lola	Lynn	Randy	David	Timothy
Jennifer	George	John	Kenneth	Annie	Ken	James	Glesha	Randy	William	Darrel
Pauline	Regina	Joanne	Marilyn	Robert	Gary	Joshua	Sonya	Johnny	Perry	Larry
Charles	Edward	Ronald	Samantha	Pandora	Larry	Dylan	Charles	Susannah	Henry	Irvin
John	Arthur	Tyler	Harold	Glenn	Kenneth	Robert	Gary	Dwight	Steven	Brandon
Shaun	Wayne	Robbin	Glenda	James	Kenneth	James	Robby	James	Gregory	James
Billy	Jennifer	Terry	Paula	Jackie	Phillip	Linda	Phillip	Diane	Milton	Jeffery
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Robert	Billy	Scott	Timothy	Lillian	Ken	Jeffrey	Child	Justin	Robert	Susan
Lisa	William	Rachael	Billy	John	Billy	Tracy	Child	Greg	Leroy	Robert
	Richard	Maryann	Tracy	Robert	James	Edward	Child	Harvey	Raymond	Thomas
	Michael	Shirley	Krystal	Barbara	Ted	Jessica	Heaverly	Donald	Raymond	Randy
	Lavon	James	Edna	Margaret	Bruce	Josh	Child	Dan	Roger	Norman
	Tony	Michael	Hazel	Nahala	Kenneth	Josh	Child	Ed	Brand	Lajecania
	Robert	William	William	Danny	Danny	Elizabeth	Lynn	Michael	John	Gerald
	Lisa	Sasha	Heather	Judith	Judith	Keisha	Deanna	Kerby	Julie	Julie

VMC HAPPENINGS



Dr. Carter Davis retires following 10 years of dedicated volunteer service in the VMC Dental Clinic.



Beacon Insurance is one of the many meal groups providing a delicious meal for our Resource Center members.



Kathy Izard shared her inspiring story at the 2018 Carry the Torch Knoxville event.



VMC staff celebrate the 1000th person achieving housing and moving from the streets to a home of their own.



Lula gets a new hairstyle during Spa Night hosted by the Women's Mentoring Group from Church of the Good Samaritan.



Melissa Gill assists Sheri Pender in picking out a piece of jewelry at her jewelry show to benefit VMC.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

- Deodorant
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Shampoo
- Socks
- Boxers for men - all sizes

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY CENTER



Opening Doors for a Better Tomorrow

