

HOMeward

FALL 2019

“When I laugh, it’s a big laugh”

Thomas Shuron, who has spent all 70 years of his life in Baltimore, never went to a dentist until last September.

Without insurance or a stable place to live, dental care just wasn’t an option for Thomas. And he was terrified of the pain.

Over the years, lack of dental care took its toll on Thomas’ mouth and the way he lived his life. Because of cavities and gum disease, Thomas lost most of his teeth and was in constant pain. He couldn’t eat his favorite foods and held back smiles and laughter.

Then, one day, his brother told him about the pain-free, payment-free experience he had at the Health Care for the Homeless dental clinic at Our Daily Bread. So Thomas decided to give it a try.

He was literally shaking before his first appointment. But when Thomas arrived, he was greeted by a passionate and supportive team, including Dr. Koby Sarubin, DDS and dental assistant Judy Sparkman.

“They took their time to make sure everything fit right,” Thomas says about getting dentures. “They supported me through the whole process and made me feel so comfortable.”

Dr. Sarubin is thankful to donors like you who make dental care available to so many Baltimoreans. “Here, people can walk in off the street and have a tooth that’s been killing them for months removed. They finally get relief and joy.”

This fall marks one year since Thomas decided to pay us a visit. The man who used to be afraid of the dentist now keeps all his appointments and cares about his health. For the first time in years, Thomas is pain-free, confident and eager to start job searching.



Lack of insurance and high costs are tremendous barriers to care. You made pain-free and payment-free dental care possible for Thomas.

Thomas says, “Now, when I want to smile, I smile. When I laugh, it’s a big laugh. I don’t hold back like I used to. And now I can eat my favorite food—a whole bag of cashews!”

#GivingTOOTHday

Donate on December 3 to give people like Thomas dental care, smiles and confidence.

giving.hchmd.org/givingtoothday



Nettie: A mom with a plan



Nettie (right) fights to reunite her family - with LaTasha's help.

Six months ago, Nettie Snyder, her partner, Jaden, and five kids piled into a U-Haul, leaving North Carolina and heading back to Baltimore with little more than their clothes. She was a mother on a mission to reunite her family.

"My seven-year-old daughter is in foster care, and I couldn't keep fighting for her from another state," Nettie says.

Nettie's plan to get her daughter back included the basic things any family needs: a stable home, steady income and a network of care and support. To her, the first step of her

plan was obvious; she'd return to the place that helped her years ago.

"I came to Health Care for the Homeless," she says. "I know I can get all my needs met: primary care, therapy, it's a one-stop shop. And having a respected place helping me also means a lot to the social workers handling my daughter's case."

Sometimes homelessness feels like an intractable problem. Yet thousands of people see us for less than a year - getting the support they need to meet their goals and find stability. Nettie is on her way. "She was so motivated when she got here," says her case manager LaTasha Rogers. "She went out and quickly found an apartment."

And in the months since, she has developed a trusting rapport with her therapist, Lydia Santiago, LCSW-C, who helps her cope with trauma from her past and the stress of parenthood without a stable home. Nettie has gotten her youngest child a check-up from Dr. Iris Leviner at our pediatric clinic and encouraged Jaden to get care here, too.

Nettie and her family have settled in their new place. Her plan is coming to fruition, and she's hopeful an upcoming custody resolution will finally bring her daughter home.



Know someone like Nettie whose plan includes stable housing and health care?

Refer them to: hchmd.org/get-care-now



DONATE MONTHLY

A monthly gift of \$15 means we're here whenever Nettie and Thomas need support.

giving.hchmd.org/heartbeat



VOLUNTEER

Assemble and donate street survival kits for Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. (Page 4)

www.hchmd.org/fulfill-our-wishlist



CONNECT

Be a local champion for affordable housing by joining your neighborhood association.

For Baltimore City:
<http://cityservices.baltimore.gov/cad/home.aspx>



More supportive housing projects are in the works with Episcopal Housing Corporation, hospitals and others.

Bringing our mission home

What does home mean to you? Safety, privacy, comfort—each of us probably has a different answer. For Nettie (Page 2) a home is an opportunity to bring her family together.

At Health Care for the Homeless, home means everything. “I see people doing well once they get housed every single day,” says Lawanda Williams, LCSW-C, Director of Housing Services. “They find gainful employment, reunite with their families, start relationships and learn to trust again.”

There isn’t enough affordable housing in Baltimore, but we are part of the solution:

- In 2005, we first partnered with Baltimore City to house 30 people.
- Thirteen years later, we grew our program by 100x in order to provide 300 people with supportive housing.
- In the past year, we have continued to grow our program to serve an additional 100 people.


And there’s more housing coming. In July, ten Baltimore-area hospitals committed \$2M to fund supportive housing for 200 people. We have three projects in the works with our friends at Episcopal Housing Corporation—building new affordable housing units, with 55 specifically reserved for people experiencing homelessness.

The partnerships with local hospitals, developers, city officials and the wider community are coming into place. The reason that such diverse stakeholders are coming together on a single goal is clear: housing works.

Help us keep the momentum going. Learn more at hchmd.org/supportive-housing.

New creative solutions to Baltimore’s housing shortage

 **200**
People housed through Medicaid pilot and \$2 million hospital investment

 **55**
New apartments for people experiencing homelessness in the pipeline with Episcopal Housing Corporation

On the ground in West Baltimore



with Medical Director
Dr. Tyler Gray

Q: Why should we invest in West Baltimore?

I’ve seen a lot of health disparities. Life expectancy is much lower. Jobs in the area are scarce. Public transportation is not reliable. And people have significant medical, mental health and substance use needs that aren’t being met. It’s where we need to be.

Q: What steps are you taking to build community and trust?

We’re connecting with organizations, community associations and churches - like Wilkens Avenue Mennonite Church - that are already doing good work in the community. By letting on-the-ground experts share their realities of homelessness, we’re in a better place to understand how to align with existing community strengths.

Q: Why do you like working in West Baltimore?

Our team of 10 sees between 10-30 people each day. Clients seem to appreciate a smaller, close-knit team, and they feel more comfortable here as a result. Even if you were a client who had never had an appointment with our therapist, Ebony Hicks, you would probably still know her face.

Q: What motivates you?

When we see clients succeed, it’s pretty awesome. Whether it’s a week or two without using drugs, actually getting housed or finding a job—I try to hold those moments up with my team because it takes a lot of work to get there.

See what West Baltimore clients are saying about their care and community. hchmd.org/news/townhall

A Purrr-fect Partnership

Baltimore's perfect rough and tumble mascot. The Mayor of Hampden. Instagram influencer.

We're talking about Killer, an orange cat who is low on teeth, but full of charm. He can be seen chatting with customers at Common Ground, chowing down on sushi from Nori and sunbathing in Flaunt salon. But he uses his "cat-titude" for more than adoration from friendly passersby.

Since last September, Killer's mom Joy Sushinsky and Debbie Miller, a member of Killer's entourage, have worked with businesses like Nori and the American Visionary Arts Museum to donate 35 home starter kits for newly-housed Health Care for the Homeless clients.

These kits include the things we all need to make our house feel like home: kitchenware, bedding and even decorations. And they provide a warm welcome for families like Nettie's who are moving into a new place after experiencing homelessness (Page 2).

As a realtor, Joy feels a special connection to Health Care for the Homeless. "Home is so important. I work with people who have stable housing, so this experience really opened my eyes. People wait for housing for so long, and they shouldn't have to worry about having simple things like forks, tea towels and cleaning supplies."

Joy wants Killer's fans to know that when it comes to supporting our neighbors without homes, putting aside judgment and taking the time to help is crucial. Together, the pair reminds us that we don't know the struggles



He might not have thumbs, but Killer has a big heart for helping those in need.

people carry with them.

She says, "People judge Killer because of how he looks, but they don't know his story. I adopted Killer as a kitten after he was found wandering alone outside. But now, he has a safe place to sleep and a community that loves and protects him—something we know everyone deserves."

Killer and his crew dropped off donations to our downtown clinic this February, and they are planning another visit this fall. Meanwhile, he's gearing up to be a celebrity judge in the BARCS Halloween costume contest. His costume? Sushi!

Follow in Killer's paw prints.

Donate now to help people move home. giving.hchmd.org



HOMELESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL DAY

Saturday, December 21

Join us at War Memorial Plaza to honor our neighbors without homes who died in 2019. 5 p.m. RSVP to memorialday@hchmd.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

FALLSWAY TOUR | Thursday, November 14

Your chance to see our downtown clinic in action. Tour starts at 9 a.m. RSVP to tours@hchmd.org.

CHOCOLATE AFFAIR | Saturday, February 1

Save the date for a lively evening to end homelessness, featuring chocolate-inspired dishes from Baltimore's top chefs. Tickets at chocolateaffair.org or call 443-703-1345.