



NIGHTLIGHTS

HOLIDAY 2019

What Is Home?

“Home for the holidays” is a phrase heard often this time of year. But what does “home” mean for individuals who have experienced homelessness?

Teresa, who recently found permanent housing with the help of The Night Ministry’s Street Medicine Team, said home means stability. “It’s a place where I can get myself together. I can look for a job now. I can become a productive human in society again,” she said.

For Keith Belton, a volunteer with The Night Ministry, home means freedom and stability. “Having housing means not being hand-cuffed,” he said. “It means having a place where people can help me get situated and meet my goals.”

“Home is not a place, it’s a feeling,” said Daniel, a former resident of The Night Ministry’s Interim Housing Program, which provides short-term shelter for young adults. “It’s people you love, people who are concerned about you. When you are on the streets, you’re on your own. It’s hard to go up to somebody and tell them what you are going through.”

Love is also an important aspect of home for Amber, who also stayed at Interim. “Home to me is having a place where you can create memories with friends and family and be loved.”

Relationships are a key part of Lukas’s concept of home. “I’ve had plenty of housing, but never had a true home,” said Lukas, who has stayed at The Crib, The Night Ministry’s overnight shelter for young adults. “I’ve never had anyone to share it with.”

Nakiesha experienced a sense of home when she stayed at The Crib. “I was safe there. They were my family, and I was respected.”



This holiday season, The Night Ministry is asking members of its community like Amber what home means to them.

Amber also felt like she was part of a family when she was with The Night Ministry. “I’ve always felt like a stranger in my home,” she said. “But when I got to The Night Ministry, [Program Specialist] Miss Shen’a, who is no longer with us, took me under her wing like I was her daughter. Staff motivated me to become who I am now.”

Willow said he appreciates the family-like environment the Youth Outreach Team provides alongside its van on Thursday nights in Lakeview. “How they all look out for the needs of the homeless is very inspiring, and it feels like home. They feed us, they give us clothing. A lot of the things they do are what your parents would do,” he said.

Visit www.thenightministry.org/what-is-home to learn more about what home means to members of The Night Ministry community and to tell us what it means to you. ♦

*“Home is not a place,
it’s a feeling.”*
- Daniel,
former resident of the
Interim Housing Program

Dear Chicago,

Members of Youth 4 Truth, The Night Ministry's leadership development program for young adults, have written an open letter to Chicago about how our city inspires them and what they would change about it.

When we think of Chicago, we think of "hustle." All over the city, people are coming up and doing their thing.

Up north, the sidewalks are filled with moms and strollers, lots of dogs, joggers, and bicycles. On the West Side, we see neighbors talking on porches and kids playing in open fire hydrants.

Out south, we see corner stores where someone can buy full-fledged nachos—Doritos, cheese, and peppers, all in a bag—for only \$3.50. We see people hanging out on corners and basketball courts, and lots of elderly people spending time together. Downtown, we see people walking really fast, but they probably aren't really going anywhere that important.

You can't be mad at people's hustle, but folks live in their own pockets too much.

Does everyone know that on the North Side the grocery stores are full of healthy food? Does everyone know that there is diversity on the West Side? Does everyone know that the South Side is made up of communities that take care of each other?

Streets and potholes seem to get fixed faster on the North Side, while out south and west, the streets are full of litter. We see how certain people look down on others because of who they are or where they live.

We see a man sleeping in front of a train station because that's the only place he has to sleep, but there are abandoned buildings that could be turned into housing. We see a woman standing in front of a fast food joint at 3 a.m. She's hungry but has only a dollar to her name.



Julie, Tone, and Rich read Youth 4 Truth's "Dear Chicago" letter at Night Lights, the Annual Gala of The Night Ministry's Associate Board, held in October.

We remember block parties, and how violence made those go away. We see how people only really communicate when something bad happens that forces them together.

In the words of Malcom X, "There is no better than adversity. Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss, contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to improve your performance next time."

You have to choose what kind of person you want to be in Chicago, and we choose to love and fight for what our city needs, such as more affordable housing for young people trying to start their lives; mental health for youth and health education in schools; recreation centers for kids to keep them off the street; and a stop to drug use on the streets.

We want to leave you with this quote from Bahā' Allāh, the founder of the Bahā'ī Faith, because we feel it speaks to all of us in our city:

"So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth." ◇

"You have to choose what kind of person you want to be in Chicago, and we choose to love and fight for what our city needs."

AN UPDATE ON OUR MOVE...

We are making progress on the plans we have shared with you for The Night Ministry's new headquarters at 1735 North Ashland in Bucktown, with a move-in goal of spring 2020. In the meantime, because the lease at our Ravenswood office ends on December 31, we have moved the Health Outreach Program staff and our Central Administration into a temporary home at Edgewater Presbyterian Church. **Please note the following during this time of transition:**

- **Our mailing address will remain 4711 North Ravenswood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640.** Please send any mail correspondence, including financial donations made by mail, to this address.
- **In-kind donations should be brought to 4711 North Ravenswood through Friday, December 13** (Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm).

- **Beginning Monday, December 16, please bring in-kind donations to Edgewater Presbyterian Church, 1020 West Bryn Mawr Avenue in Chicago** between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday.
- The Crib will remain in operation at its current location until the Bucktown facility is ready for occupation.
- Our transition has been designed to have minimal impact on those whom we serve. The Health Outreach Bus, Street Medicine Program, and our Youth Housing Programs will continue to run as usual.

Questions may be directed to Gail Bernoff at gailb@thenightministry.org or 773-506-6015.

For more information about our move and to take a video tour of our new space, visit www.thenightministry.org/move.

Budget Process Is Focused on Needs of Clients and Rooted in Strategy

How is the yearly budget for an organization with multiple programs serving more than 6,000 individuals per year formulated?

“We empower our department directors and program managers to drive the budget process, as they know first-hand what the needs of The Night Ministry’s clients and staff are,” said Erin Ryan, Senior Vice President.

Directors and managers always track spending, but midway through the fiscal year they take a deep dive into expenditures by comparing their actual to budgeted spending and asking themselves what expenses, such as training and supplies, they will need in the coming year.

Budgets are then submitted to The Night Ministry’s Finance Department. At the same time, The Night Ministry’s President & CEO, Paul W. Hamann, and Vice President of Development & External Relations, Christy Prassas, put together a road map for generating revenue. The Finance Department then prepares the organization’s overall spending and revenue plan for review and approval, first by the Board of Directors’ Finance Committee and then by the overall Board.

“We look at the budget to see how it aligns with our strategic plan and if it hits all of the marks we’re looking to accomplish over that fiscal year,” said Kiantae Bowles, Board Secretary and a member of the Board’s Finance Committee.

The Night Ministry’s budget has risen annually for the last six years. At \$9.45 million, this fiscal year’s budget is the largest in the 43-year history of The Night Ministry. Bowles, who has served on the Board since 2012, said increases have been purposeful.



Growth in The Night Ministry yearly budget has been in line with the agency’s strategic goals and focused on better meeting the needs of clients served through programs such as the Health Outreach Bus.

“The budget has grown so we can address our strategic priorities and go deeper with the programs The Night Ministry offers.”

- Kiantae Bowles, Secretary, Board of Directors

“The budget has grown so we can address our strategic priorities and go deeper with the programs The Night Ministry offers so that we have better connections with those whom we serve and hopefully better outcomes.”

The 2020 fiscal year budget is about 15% higher than the previous year. Some of the increases are related to the upcoming move of The Crib, Health Outreach Program, and central office to 1735 North Ashland, as costs for rent and utilities are higher in the new location. The Street Medicine Program

has also expanded this year with the addition of three new full-time team members. All of these changes are rooted in enhancing the services The Night Ministry provides. ◊

Save the Date: 2020 LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Join friends of The Night Ministry at the Sheraton Grand Chicago for this memorable and mission-driven event. For more information, contact Shante Harding, Special Events Coordinator, at shante@thenightministry.org or (773) 506-6009.



WHAT DOES HOME MEAN TO YOU?

Home should mean more than four walls around you and a roof over your head. This holiday season, we are asking members of The Night Ministry community to reflect on what home means to them. To share your thoughts, and to see video of what others are saying, join us at www.thenightministry.org/what-is-home.

Board Chair Alicia Pond Values Devotion of The Night Ministry's Board and Staff

For Alicia Pond, Chair of The Night Ministry's Board of Directors, being a Chicagoan involves taking an active role in making the city a better place. "Your community can be your neighborhood, but your community is also the larger city. And being a member of the community means caring for one another," she said.

We spoke with Pond as she winds down her three-year tenure as Board Chair.

"The Board has become much more sophisticated in applying its collective skills to both support the work of the agency and in finding board members who can help lead the organization into the future."



Alicia Pond joined The Night Ministry's Board of Directors in 2008.

What makes The Night Ministry's Board of Directors unique?

The commitment of the Board to the mission of the organization is incredible. They take a very active role in all levels of the organization. Their participation spans not only their board duties such as fiduciary responsibilities, but volunteering with The Night Ministry's programs and participating in fundraisers and staff events as well.

What changes have you seen with the Board over the last few years?

The Board has become much more sophisticated in applying its collective skills to both support the work of the agency and

in finding board members who can help lead the organization into the future.

What have you enjoyed about serving as board chair?

Being board chair granted me so many opportunities to really get to know the staff, one-on-one, and observe how they work really, really hard to make those whom we serve feel safe and comfortable. They are particularly professional and particularly caring.

What would you say to someone who is considering supporting The Night Ministry?

It's obvious that homelessness is a challenge in Chicago. The question is what can each of us do about it other than bemoaning it. You can support an organization like The Night Ministry that is on the cutting edge of providing services in a deeply compassionate and humanitarian way. ♦

WANT TO HEAR FROM US MORE OFTEN?

Visit www.thenightministry.org/newsletter-signup to start getting our monthly e-newsletter!

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Housing Instability and Inadequacy Common among Health Outreach Bus Clients

Housing instability and inadequacy are challenges that impact nearly all of the visitors to The Night Ministry's Health Outreach Bus.

According to the sixth annual Outreach & Health Ministry (OHM) survey, one in every four Bus guests report living outdoors, in an abandoned building, or in a shelter. But the majority of those who do have housing—whether in an apartment, house, or single-room-occupancy (SRO) hotel—live with conditions that suggest a lack of stability or adequacy.

“Over 60% of those who have housing are spending more of their income on rent than is considered affordable, and 40% don't have a lease,” said Gregory Gross, Director of Mission Fulfillment.

“Meanwhile, a small but significant portion report lacking basic amenities such as a stove or microwave or heat in the winter. So while the vast majority of those whom the Bus serves are housed, this gives us a better understanding of what their living conditions are.”

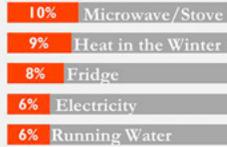
Clients rely heavily on the Bus for food. 81% have either not eaten anything that day prior to visiting the Bus or had not eaten enough.

“Coupled with the fact that virtually every visitor receives food when it is available at the Bus, this tells us that the meal service has become a core aspect of what the Bus offers,” said Gross.

Survey results also confirm that OHM services are reducing client reliance on emergency rooms. Four out of every ten

Housing Amenities

Many respondents **don't have** basic needs



Housing Conditions

Most people report at least one **precarious housing condition**



Surveys of Health Outreach Bus clients indicate that the majority of those who do have some form of housing live with inadequate or unstable conditions.

“Over 60% of those who have housing are spending more of their income on rent than is considered affordable, and 40% don't have a lease.”

*– Gregory Gross,
Director of Mission Fulfillment*

survey respondents who have not met with the Bus's Nurse Practitioner rely on the ER as their primary source of care, while only 29% of those who see the Nurse Practitioner for their primary care use the ER.

The Bus is a welcoming environment for many who visit it. Most reported that they feel accepted for who they are and have meaningful interactions

with other clients. And while the majority said they have companionship in their lives, nearly a third reported being lonely most of the time, underscoring the importance of the relationships offered by Bus staff and volunteers.

“There are high levels of trust with staff among clients,” said Gross, “with six out of ten respondents reporting they trust staff more than they trust others. And there is a clear correlation between levels of trust and accessing of health care and case management services at the Bus.” ♦

SHARING IN THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

Help make this holiday season and winter a little brighter for young people and adults struggling with homelessness or poverty. Your generous donation of the following will not only liven up the holiday celebrations we hold for our clients but spread warmth throughout the coming months as well:

GIFT CARDS

\$10: McDonald's; Subway; Burger King; Walgreens; Jewel-Osco; Mariano's

\$25: Target; Walmart; Kohl's

WINTER GEAR

New hats, scarves, gloves (no knitted items, please), and long underwear.

Dark colors and adult large sizes preferred.

We are accepting donations Mondays through Fridays, between 9 am and 5 pm, at 4711 North Ravenswood through Friday, December 13. After December 13, please bring them to our temporary home at Edgewater Presbyterian Church, 1020 West Bryn Mawr Avenue in Chicago. Questions? Email volunteering@thenightministry.org or call 773-784-9000.



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for joining our community! With your support, The Night Ministry will be there for thousands of youth and adults struggling with homelessness or poverty this winter.



Street Medicine Widens Its Impact with More Staff and New Vehicle

What started as a pilot project with a few members of The Night Ministry staff visiting encampments once a week has blossomed into a robust outreach program making deep inroads into Chicago's homeless population.

With the addition of three new full-time staff members, the Street Medicine Program is now on the road six or seven days a week, usually in the morning and in the evening. A Nurse Practitioner or volunteer physician offers treatment for health care needs. Surveys recently conducted with Street Medicine patients suggest these are the only health care services most of them are receiving. Meanwhile, a Case Manager links clients to housing and supportive services and Outreach Professionals and volunteers provide survival resources such as food, tents, and clothing. And, in response to clients asking for assistance in stopping or reducing alcohol or drug consumption, the program recently brought on a Substance Use Advocate.

"Being out all week, and at different hours of the day, allows us to reach more people and respond more immediately to their needs."

– David Wywialowski,
Director of Outreach & Health Ministry

"We've significantly increased the number of patients we are serving and outreach contacts we are making," said David Wywialowski, Director of Outreach & Health Ministry. "Being out all week, and at different hours of the day, allows us to reach more people and



The new Street Medicine Van is customized to allow team members to better serve their clients.

respond more immediately to their needs."

This past summer, the program received an upgrade in the form of a custom-outfitted van, donated by Auto Truck Group. The interior of the vehicle is designed with space flexible enough to accommodate private consultations between clients and staff. The van has a medical refrigerator, organized storage space for supplies, and exterior lighting that provides illumination under Lower Wacker, a frequently visited site, and at night.

"With this van, we're able to provide a lot of different kinds of services out of a relatively small space," said Noam Greene, Lead Street Medicine Outreach Worker. ◇

Thank you to those who generously gave at the \$500 level or higher between July 1 and October 15, 2019. Thank you as well to everyone who donated during this time period through alternate giving portals, such as Facebook, Amazon Smile, Workplace Giving, and more.

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