

Still in the Game: A Journey of Perseverance and Purpose

Alan, a determined 21-year-old from Central Africa, came to the United States for a better life. Now experiencing homelessness and staying at The Night Ministry's *The Crib*, a safe and supportive overnight emergency shelter for young adults ages 18 through 24, he's turning hardship into motivation.

“The fact that after every storm will always come a better day, so I just have to keep pushing until the better days come.”

With support from *The Crib*'s program specialists and case managers, Alan is enrolled in the Coordinated Entry System, which helps connect individuals with urgent needs to housing resources. He's also received access to medical care, job referrals, and, most importantly, genuine human connection. Though the journey hasn't been easy, Alan remains focused on his goals.

“Everything is all about determination and time management, I believe I can do whatever I want as long as I focus on the right track.”

He's studying engineering in college while working multiple jobs. In between, he's writing a book and planning for the future, driven by a vision of becoming a successful business owner. His ambition, intelligence, and determination are unmistakable to all who meet him.



Alan with his Case Manager Zama at *The Crib*.

A passionate soccer player, Alan recently stepped away from the game to focus on his future. Soccer has always been more than a game, it's been a source of joy and identity. But he's channeling that same dedication into a successful, thriving life.

Securing stable housing is at the heart of Alan's vision. Having a place of his own means safety, independence, and a foundation from which he can take bold steps toward success. And maybe when that day comes, he will return to the soccer field, not just as a player, but a man who turned struggle into strength.

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Carter-Westminster's Enduring Legacy: Over 40 Years of Faithful Partnership

For more than four decades, Carter-Westminster United Presbyterian Church has stood as a steadfast pillar of support for The Night Ministry's mission to serve Chicago's unhoused. The Skokie-based congregation, led by Rev. Stuart Barnes Jamieson, has woven service into the fabric of its identity, consistently providing 200 sack suppers each month for our Outreach and Health Program.

"The sandwich ministry, as we call it at Carter-Westminster, has become an important part of our ministry church life," Rev. Jamieson shared with a smile.

"Our members enjoy the opportunity to 'give back' by helping to make the sandwiches every month."

Dedicated church members, Elio Sidan and his late wife, Zenaïda, have carried forward this legacy of service. For years, the couple embodied the church's commitment, providing care for their neighbors experiencing homelessness and poverty by volunteering at local pantries, and on The Night Ministry's health outreach bus. Even as her health declined, Zenaïda continued to organize volunteers and prepare meals—her determination inspiring a new generation, including her granddaughter, Alicia, to join in the work.

"Zenaïda was one of a kind," Elio says.
"She truly helped so many people in the community."

Elio honors his wife's memory by continuing the monthly preparation and delivery of the sack suppers, each one containing sandwiches, chips, fruit, and pastries.

These meals offer immediate relief to unhoused individuals in neighborhoods such as Pilsen, New City, South Shore, and at various encampments throughout Chicago, offering nourishment and human connection.

As the unhoused population and their needs continues to grow, collaboration and support from community-based organizations are essential. Carter-Westminster's unwavering partnership not only reflects a powerful model of sustained community action but also a living

legacy of compassion and care that continues to feed both body and spirit. The Night Ministry is extremely grateful for this lasting partnership that helps us offer hope, dignity, and sustenance to Chicago's most vulnerable residents.



Elio Sidan and his family join the Carter-Westminster volunteers at The Night Ministry.

You Can Help Alleviate Hunger

Members of our community who are unhoused or experiencing poverty also struggle with hunger. You can make a difference in their lives by donating meals.

Volunteer to prepare and, if you wish, serve hot meals or sack suppers for our Health Outreach and Youth Housing Programs.

Groups and individuals are welcome—contact **Jenny** at jennifer@thenightministry.org or call 773-506-7719 to get started.



**Scan this QR code
to learn more**

Visit thenightministry.org/meals
for more information.

Lighting Up The Night Benefit

Highlighting Pathways to Possibilities



WGN's Lou Manfredini was our host for the second year in a row.



Christopher Jefferson, a Pathways client at The Night Ministry, gave a powerful and inspiring testimonial.



Event attendees enjoyed bidding on many items during the live auction.



Henry Merrill, TNM's Pathways Program Supervisor, Christopher Jefferson, Pathways Client, Carol J. Sharp, TNM President & CEO, Kathy Gallo, Beacon of Hope Awardee, Jenny Merritt, TNM's Community Engagement Manager, Mike Borromeo, TNM Board Chair and Vince Guider, Lamplighter Awardee.

On Thursday, May 29, nearly 350 generous supporters filled the room at the West Loop's Morgan Manufacturing, raising nearly \$400,000 at our annual benefit *Lighting Up The Night*. This year's theme, *Pathways to Possibility*, echoed throughout the evening, from the shared stories to the community celebrated, illuminating what can happen with the shared vision of hope.

We proudly honored two remarkable changemakers whose dedication embodies the heart of our work. Kathy Gallo, a longtime volunteer, was recognized for her service which has touched the lives of thousands of clients. We also celebrated Old St. Patrick's Church for its partnership, which was instrumental in launching and sustaining our Pathways Transitional Living Program. Their deep commitment reflects the very essence of what it truly means to light the path forward for others.

A highlight of the evening came when Christopher, a young adult currently in our Pathways program, took the stage to share his story. His powerful testimony reminded us that with compassion, opportunity and the right support, transformation is possible.

Lighting Up The Night was more than a fundraiser. It was an affirmation of hope and a declaration of what's possible when a community comes together to uplift those in need.

To everyone who attended, donated, and championed our mission, THANK YOU! Your generosity is lighting the way for brighter futures, and together, we are forging pathways to possibility for people in need in Chicago and beyond.

Giving Smarter:

The Power of Donor-Advised Funds

There are several meaningful ways you can help The Night Ministry. You can provide goods, donate your time, or give money.

A popular and powerful way to donate to your favorite charity is through a **donor-advised fund (DAF)**. A DAF acts as a personal charitable account, allowing you to deposit cash or appreciated securities (such as stock) and then direct grants to your designated charity.

The benefits of using this type of fund include:

- **Immediate tax savings**
- **Tax-free growth**
- **Capital gains avoidance**
- **Minimize reporting requirements**

If you are interested in setting up a DAF, many community foundations and financial services companies operate them. One stipulation to keep in mind is that you cannot use DAFs to satisfy a pledge or to purchase a table/tickets to a charity event. For more information, please contact us at Donations@thenightministry.org or (773) 506-6029.

A donor-advised fund offers a strategic and tax-efficient way to support The Night Ministry's mission.



The Night Ministry Board Member Dave Berger with his wife Nicole.

“We set up a donor-advised fund at Vanguard Charitable a few years ago, which allowed us to take advantage of tax-free growth and increase support to charities like The Night Ministry. Being able to designate grants all online makes it easy. It’s a great tool to benefit the causes close to your heart.”

Dave Berger,
Board Member at The Night Ministry

Support Us

The 2025 National Survey of Donor-Advised Fund Donors reveals that most DAF donors (72%) in the sample of 2,100 indicated they involved family members in financial decisions with their DAFs. Of these, 94% indicate that their spouse or partner was involved, and 18% included their children. If you want to learn more about DAFs and the people who establish them, check out this independent study: www.DafResearchCollaborative.org



Scan this QR code to support The Night Ministry.

Shanyah's Path to a Brighter Future

At just 19 years old, Shanyah has faced some extraordinary challenges. But with resilience, she is charting a new course for her life—one marked not by the hardships she's endured, but the future she is determined to build. A participant in The Night Ministry's Pathways program, Shanyah is studying to become a registered nurse while embracing the stability and support that are helping her thrive.

"You are the only one who can change things for you. You need to do what's best for you," says Shanyah with a wisdom that belies her years. "No one will do it for you, that sounds harsh, but it's true."

After being forced from her home, she endured homelessness, living in her car and facing deep uncertainty. She even spent a brief period in jail. But through it all, she remains determined and focused.

Now, with a roof over her head and a community around her, Shanyah is learning essential life skills she did not receive growing up. From navigating life with roommates to managing a busy schedule, she's developing the tools she needs to succeed. She's even discovered a love for maintaining her space, taking pride in her independence.

"I really don't know where I would be without the housing support from The Night Ministry."

She gratefully credits her progress to the support of The Night Ministry staff, especially Tamara, and the encouragement of her former West Town roommate.



Shanyah at her Little Village Pathways transitional home, part of a program helping young adults move toward permanent housing solutions.

Her greatest motivation? Her younger sister Azariyah. She is determined to be the best example for her.

Shanyah dreams of completing school, securing a stable job, and eventually owning her own apartment—a beautiful penthouse downtown where she can show off her newly acquired cooking know-how by preparing a meal while hosting friends and family.

Building Life Skills and Community at The Night Ministry

Our Interim Housing West Town location offers residents valuable support through weekly Life Skills Groups. Staff-led sessions cover topics like money management, health and safety practices, with residents encouraged to suggest discussion topics that interest them.

Beyond life skills education, our volunteer Jan coordinates engaging activities during Tuesday house meetings, fostering community connection among residents.

As summer approaches, The Night Ministry welcomes additional volunteers to help out in this capacity. Please contact **Jenny** at jennifer@thenightministry.org to learn more.



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**Give the Gift
of Hope.**
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Thank You!

The Night Ministry is a Chicago-based organization whose mission is to provide human connection, housing support, and health care to members of our community who are unhoused or experiencing poverty.

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