



GMC NEWS

The Newsletter of the Georgetown Ministry Center



Housing First

I received a text from Bill's housing case manager one day last spring. She wanted to meet him at 11 am the next day to show him an apartment. She could not contact him because his cell phone was not working. The next morning before I reported in, I went looking for him. I knew the general area he would be, but not exactly where. Looking first in the Starbucks at George Washington Hospital without success, I then walked up to Washington Circle where I saw Nathan. Nathan hadn't seen him that morning but knew that he always came from the east. I had an idea that was the direction where Bill slept. Off I went down Pennsylvania Avenue. Before long I spotted Bill walking urgently away from me. With a short burst of speed I caught him. "Bill," I called, but he barely turned. "Headed for the bathroom," he said without breaking stride, pointing to the Subway sandwich shop just ahead. I managed to deliver the message, aware that his mission at this moment was more important than my message.

Bill's case manager works on the new Housing First initiative which has become the chief tool in the fight against homelessness and is being adopted nationwide. The goal is to get homeless people into housing and worry about treatment of the pathologies that caused their homelessness afterwards. Once in housing, the thinking goes, it will be easier to engage the individual in treatment. On my way back to the Center I encountered two more homeless men. Each of them was in the process of getting a housing voucher that would require them to pay only 30% of whatever income they had. It might be no income at all, in which case the entire rent is paid from the voucher. This is the rent subsidy allowed by Section 8, the name of the HUD program for low income and/or disabled individuals, seniors and families.

I was struck by the fact that just eight months ago I would have never expected more than three people to be housed in a year. Now, because of a new imperative from the federal government and embraced by Mayor Bowser, vouchers are flying out of the door. More than a dozen people we have worked with and advocated for are in housing or in the process of getting housing.

It is exciting, but also a cause for anxiety. Some have always been ready while others are simply not ready to live

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Home Sweet Home: GMC Success Story



Ismail's look of pure joy as he shows off keys to his home

35 years ago Ismail stepped off a plane in search of new opportunities and a fresh start in Washington, D.C. Along with his wife and kids, he fled Sudan and the ongoing danger of civil war. Like many refugees, Ismail drove a cab when he came to D.C., but when he fell on hard times and lost his job, his escape from civil unrest in Sudan evolved into a long period of homelessness in the U.S. His wife and kids returned to Sudan and he lived on the streets of D.C.

for six years. Thankfully this gentle and sweet man's story doesn't end there.

Ismail moved into a brand new apartment building this summer. He said when he was selected to move into housing everything changed. Hearing the good news was emotional and nearly brought him to tears. He no longer has to worry about the weather in the way that he used to and his new way of life is far safer and predictable. Before, falling asleep for 10 minutes could mean waking up to realize his stuff is gone, but now it means waking up to comfort and safety.

Georgetown Ministry Center helped Ismail receive SSI, secure personal documents and apply for housing. A case manager from a collaborating organization, Miriam's Kitchen, helped match him to housing and transition into his new place. His building offers panoramic views of the city, a sunroom, library and a courtyard.

Ismail said he is thankful for GMC's help. He continues to stop by the center to read the newspaper, see the staff and use the computers. Housing is the first step on his road to stability. Next he wants to get a driver's license and a job because these steps will help him provide for his family and bring them back together. We are cheering Ismail on and will continue to be a resource for him as he transitions out of homelessness!

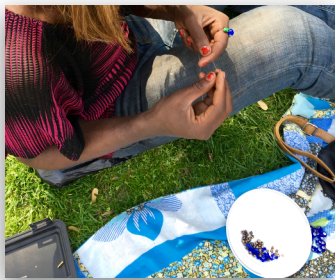
—Sarah Hartley



within the confines of a room. Either because of anxiety about confined spaces or because of a lack of social discipline, they simply won't be able to keep the place safe and clean by any standard. Those that do succeed will do so with support from a case management agency typically referred to as CSA (Core Service Agencies) or ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) teams. Case management is an important element in Housing First but it has, thus far, seemed to be materializing at a much slower pace than the availability of the housing vouchers. So the big question now is, will that support be there? We hope that this new commitment to people living on the street will be permanent and successful, learning as we go.

—*Gunther Stern*

Beading for Change



A guest participates in the weekly beading workshop

Last fall, Gil Rosen dropped into GMC with a lot of energy and a strong desire to help the homeless community. He started visiting the Center weekly with friends from his synagogue to serve homemade, nutritious lunches including lentils, salad and fruit. He puts a lot of care into these meals and after a few months he wanted to do even more.

Thanks to his leadership, guests can now participate in a weekly beading workshop. His program uses art therapy to help the group explore spiritual beading patterns and engage in mindfulness exercises. One guest says she rarely misses a session because it's so relaxing and rewarding. This weekly activity may seem small, but it has a big impact. The beading workshop has a way of humanizing people who live in inhumane circumstances; it gives them a creative outlet and a sense of belonging.

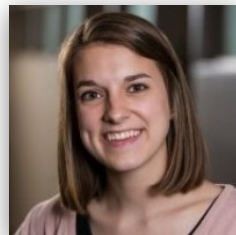
Thank you, Gil, for treating GMC guests with warmth and kindness. And for the lentils. Those are also a big hit!

—*Sarah Hartley*

A New "Development"

I was hired as GMC's Communications Coordinator in March. The nonprofit sector interested me throughout my high school and college years as I watched my mom strengthen the work of nonprofits in our home state of Oklahoma as a non-profit professor and consultant. She is my inspiration and the primary reason I was drawn to this job. Despite being far from Oklahoma, I feel right at home in my work here at GMC.

I was initially hired to help



*Sarah, GMC's
development &
communications
coordinator*

tell GMC's story through social media, our website and our newsletter, but because the development position at GMC opened up, I now lead our fundraising and development efforts as well. I am humbled by the generosity of our supportive community and motivated by the commitment of the center staff and the impact of our programs.

I enjoy my work, but it's a big job and it can't be done alone. As we prepare for our 30th anniversary in 2017, we need to expand our annual income by \$100,000 so we can continue to meet our modest budget. That's the job I am tasked with and I need your help. I ask that you share our story with friends and family who you think might be interested. Whether that's passing along this newsletter, inviting friends to run in the 5k, or organizing a group to make a meal for the winter shelter, there are many ways to help us strengthen our community and carry out our mission. We so appreciate your support! It's needed and it's noticed.

—*Sarah Hartley*

Join the Club

You can now provide consistent monthly support by joining a GMC giving club online! Every dollar makes a difference and this is a convenient way to provide essential services each month for people experiencing homelessness. Review the details below and please consider joining a GMC club today.

Coffee Club

\$10/month provides two weeks worth of hot coffee, cream and sugar each year. After spending time in the cold or a poor night's sleep, guests flock to the Center for a hot cup of coffee and a place to belong.

Cleaning Crew

\$25/month provides 35 showers and 15 loads of laundry each year for guests who otherwise face obstacles bathing and washing their clothing while living on the street.

Wellness Warriors

\$50/month provides 10 GMC guests with access to our two psychiatrists and general practitioner each year. By serving clients who do not have access to basic medical care and psychiatric treatment, we help them address the underlying issues that may cause their homelessness.

Homeward Heroes

\$100/month provides 20 GMC guests the opportunity to receive essential case management services each year. This helps guests secure IDs and birth certificates, apply for benefits and submit housing applications.

To join a club, visit gmcgt.org/help/donate and select "monthly," or contact Sarah at sarah@gmcgt.org with questions.

Race Against Homelessness: March 26

The third annual Georgetown 5k Race Against Homelessness is scheduled for March 26, 2017. The event was previously held in the fall, but between the Spirit of Georgetown and the Taste of Georgetown in October, we decided moving the 5k to the spring would improve the event for all involved. Now you will have more time to train and it will be worth the wait. The 2017 race route will showcase the newly renovated and reopened north side of the Georgetown University campus and we are adding a family friendly fun run/walk. Stay tuned for more details or visit www.georgetown5k.org.



The 5k race will return in Mar. '17

Need a Ride? Get Lyft and Support GMC!

When you download Lyft using the promo code HELPGMC, we receive a \$10 donation and you get a \$10 Lyft credit. Don't miss this simple way to help GMC.



To unlock ride credit & earn \$10 for GMC, visit:
lyft.com/invited/HELPGMC

Thank you, GMC meal donors!

Every Sunday at noon, the group pictured on the right, along with the rest of their tight-knit volunteer family, gathers at GMC to serve lunch. They are joined by Kazi Mannan, owner of Mayur Kabab, who prepares and delivers extra food from his restaurant each Sunday. This volunteer group and all other meal donors help make our program great! If you are a sandwich or meal donor and haven't recently received an email from us, please let us know by emailing info@gmcgt.org. We want to connect with you. Thank you for your support!



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Citizens Association of Georgetown - Page Robinson
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Ross Goodwin, M.D.; Psychiatric Resident (GWU)
Family Practice
Catherine Crosland, M.D. (Unity Health Care)

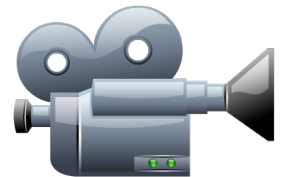


2016 Spirit of Georgetown

The eagerly anticipated Spirit of Georgetown event is just around the corner! On October 13, GMC supporters will gather to celebrate our community's commitment to ending homeless in Georgetown. We will honor Patricia Davies, former GMC Board President and long-time GMC supporter. This spectacular annual benefit is made possible by the hard work of our event co-chairs, Nancy Taylor Bubes and Megan Gabriel, the generosity and hospitality of our hosts, Karen and Bill Sonneborn, and the support of the benefit committee and event attendees. Check your mailbox for an invitation or RSVP at www.spiritofgeorgetown.org. We can't wait to see you on October 13!

Calling all Videographers

GMC wants to make a new video to demonstrate our work, and we need your help! If you are (or know of) an amateur or professional videographer who is interested in GMC's mission, please contact Sarah at sarah@gmcgt.org.



Georgetown Ministry Center
1041 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007
www.georgetownministrycenter.org

