



October 2020

## A Message from the President & CEO

Dear Pathway Homes Supporters,

In reflecting on this past year, I can say that Pathway Homes has remained focused on our stated vision to create a future in which all individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disabilities are able to lead meaningful, self-directed lives in a home of their choice, with the supports and services they need.

While our nation continues to experience the unease caused by the dual pandemics of coronavirus (COVID-19) and racial unrest, we are reminded daily of the social polarization and physical distancing that we are experiencing as individuals.

We are also reminded that we are all more alike than different but that those with mental health conditions and those experiencing homelessness during this pandemic, are experiencing these realities with greater impact. People experiencing homelessness are uniquely vulnerable to contracting COVID-19 and to experiencing harsher effects of the virus. These effects also disproportionately impact people of color.

Fortunately, we have a new prescription that calls for all of us to wear an Equity Lens born from these dual pandemics. Nonprofits, government entities, foundations, and individuals alike are being challenged to “do the right thing,” through the call to develop equitable and sustainable communities. The only way for our sector to do more is to recognize where and how we have failed to do enough. This starts with a commitment to change by embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion. We must use this experience to amplify the voices of those that do not have a voice and to level the playing field for diverse groups.

Beginning with those we serve, we can do so by expanding our inventory of affordable housing, creating homes for individuals with mental health conditions across the region, and remaining committed to a housing-first philosophy based on the conviction that housing is a right not a privilege.



Pathway Homes will continue to rise to the task at hand as a behavioral healthcare agency built on the foundation of housing. No more than at any other time in our history has our mission been so relevant. Never at any other time in our 40 years of operation is there a time to be more resolute in responding to the call to action across the communities we serve. It is time to refine our vision with an equity lens. It is time to choose the right pathway to restore our community.

When our story is told about how we responded to these pandemics, we want to show that we and our partners did not pause when addressing this public health emergency. We want to be remembered as an agency and a partner that made a difference for the better. Most importantly, we want to be remembered for our commitment to change and our direct involvement in implementing sustainable solutions!



Sylisa Lambert-Woodard, EdD, LCSW, LSATP, MAC

*“Pathway Homes embodies the spirit of recovery: embracing an attitude of hope, self-determination and partnering with each individual on their personal journey toward achieving self-fulfillment and realizing their dreams.*

*We fulfill our mission by making available to individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disabilities a variety of non-time-limited, affordable housing, and services to enable them to realize their individual potential.”*

**- Pathway Homes Mission**

[Make a Gift Here!](#)

## In Their Own Words

### You Can Help Someone

*by Alan Miner*

I am a local guy for the most part. I was born in Boston and in 1970 my family moved to Northern Virginia when I was ten years old. I graduated from Annandale High School and earned my bachelor's degree in economics from George



Mason. I attended law school for one year. I then worked in a variety of jobs in Northern Virginia over the years.

When I was in high school, I enjoyed being in every activity from academic clubs to supporting the public address system at the high school sporting events. When I went off to college, I focused on my studies and stepped away from

activities. After college, I found balance was tough. It was difficult for me to focus and control my emotions.

After many years receiving help through Fairfax County programs, I moved to Stevenson Street in November of 2016. I view that my purpose here is to get better. It is not just about doing things. I have learned how to cope with challenging people and develop a “thicker skin” in my interactions with others. Being with others with mental illness has made me more aware that we all have challenges and I have learned to appreciate my neighbors more who live with me at Stevenson Place. We all deal with life the best we can.

With COVID, I find myself emotionally down. I am an only child and my father passed away a few years ago and my mother is in her 80s. While I connect with her by phone which helps, it has been a difficult year. The coping skills I have developed over the last three years certainly have helped me face this current situation.

I am a member of the Pathways Consumer Advisory Council. As a member of the Council, I participate in the annual Steps to Pathways Breakfast each year. Over the last several years the Council has started the breakfast by sharing a word that epitomizes their recovery journey. The first year, my word was valor, the second year it was honor and last year it was community. A couple of quotes have come to mind during my time here. The first is by Hillary Clinton: “It Takes a Village,” and the second is by Ronald Reagan: “We Can't Help Everyone, but Everyone Can Help Someone.”

I view the role on the Council as a platform for representing others, my way of “helping someone.” The Council represents all the consumers of Pathway Homes as well as the community of individuals with mental illness. Each month we meet and conduct our business. For example, recently we focused on helping Pathways consumers be ready to vote either safely in-person or through absentee ballots. We want all consumers no matter their party, to be able to exercise their right to vote.

Over the past several years, the Council has gone to Richmond to meet with local lawmakers and educate them on the needs and supports for individuals with mental illness. During our last visit, I met State Senator Saslaw. (Ironically, his wife had been my high school counselor for a couple of years). I found these visits extremely valuable and grew my knowledge of state government. I have lived in Virginia for decades; however, did not really understand how it worked until I was able to see it in person during these visits. I now better understand how to impact change.

The Consumer Advisory Council also attends and exhibits at the annual Wellness Recovery Conference hosted at the Fairfax County Government Center each

October. In addition, we have attended several mental health conferences on an array of educational topics from advocacy, treatment options and community awareness. In September, we attended our first virtual event which I found well-done and informative. However, I found it lacked the activity component previously experienced when we could attend in-person.

My future personal goal is to own a business providing DJ services and voice photography. Also, I look forward to continuing to utilize my strength as a thoughtful listener and problem-solver to help others face their challenges.

*Photo: Alan Miner (Front Right) pictured with the Consumer Advisory Council of Pathway Homes.*

## 40th Anniversary Breakfast Will Be Virtual



**PATHWAY HOMES, INC.**  
Supportive Residential Mental Health Services

# 40th Anniversary Celebration

Steps to Pathways

## Virtual Breakfast

OCTOBER 28, 2020

STARTING AT 8:30AM EST

For the past 40 years, Pathways has been committed to our mission of embodying the spirit of recovery : embracing an attitude of hope, self-determination and partnering with each individual on their personal journey toward achieving self-fulfillment and realizing their dream.

We fulfill our mission by making available to individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disabilities a variety of non-time limited housing and services to enable them to realize their individual potential.

For sponsorship information or any questions,  
please contact Leslie Wadler at  
[lwadler@epiphanyproductions.com](mailto:lwadler@epiphanyproductions.com)  
or call (703)683-7500

Pathway Homes is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.



For the safety of our guests, staff, and speakers, we have decided to make the 40th Annual Steps to Pathways Breakfast VIRTUAL!

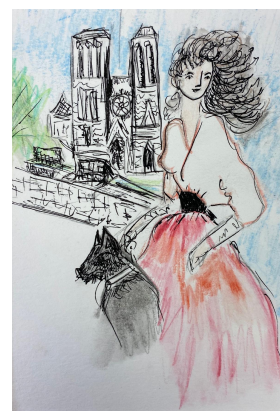
We look forward to seeing your beautiful, caring faces through our computer screens as we discuss the impact on providing a home and hope in the journey of recovery.

**Save Your Seat Here!**

## First Virtual Summer of the Arts a Success!



Due to the ongoing pandemic, we've had to cancel many of our consumer events, such as our resident cookout and resident holiday party. We couldn't bear to cancel our annual Summer of the Arts, an event that showcases the talent of those we serve and allows them to sell their pieces. Our usual artists always looked forward to this event and we had new artists showing interest as well. Therefore, we were able to look into virtual options and for the first time ever we hosted Summer of the Arts online!



We'd also like to give a big thank you to Vienna Arts Society for allowing us a socially distant option of hanging the art in their gallery! Although we were unable to host our Artist Recognition event, we were able to reach out to many art admirers virtually and were able to sell pieces on behalf of the artists. Our artists were thrilled with all the support our event was given this year. Thank you so much and we hope to see you in person next year!

*Top Right: A Walk to Notre Dame by Teri Sprackland*

*Lower Left: Woman With Turtleneck by Vickie Wolfrey*

**Pathway Homes Welcomes**

## Director of Development, Liz Susla



Pathway Homes welcomes Liz Susla as the Director of Development and Communications. Liz joined Pathway Homes in October of 2020 after a long career in corporate philanthropy. Liz led a multi-million-dollar community relations program for the Fortune 50 company, Freddie Mac, which included corporate giving, employee volunteerism and philanthropic events. Liz raised millions of dollars from Wall Street and other customers to benefit nonprofit partners in Freddie Mac's Hoops for the Homeless.

Now that Liz is joining the nonprofit sector, she will utilize her strong background in relationship building and experience as a nonprofit funder to grow Pathway Homes' funding, in-kind and volunteer services. Liz is also looking forward to seeking opportunities to educate the community to reduce mental illness stigma.

Recently Liz executed and oversaw Pathway Homes' Summer of the Arts 2020. She managed the newly created Summer of the Arts website which provided an alternative to viewing and buying the art at home. Most rewarding to Liz was witnessing the excitement of the artists. Lorraine, one of the artists, told her that her heart was filled with an abundance of gratitude to display her art in a public gallery. According to Liz, planning an event during a time when most events were cancelled was special and exemplified the exhibit's theme, Vision of Hope, since hope is never cancelled.

Liz personally has a deep commitment and connection to Pathways' mission. Liz's Aunt Lorraine, who had a diagnosis of schizophrenia, was homeless at times or in and out of psychiatric hospitals most of her adult life. Thankfully, she was able to secure supportive affordable housing in New Jersey the last 10 years of her life before passing away in 2010. Liz is honored to work for Pathway Homes because she believes that providing housing and services to Pathways' consumers enables them to realize their potential and dreams like her beloved aunt did.

In addition to Liz's professional accomplishments, she has been active in the community and served on Shelter House's board of directors for several years. She also is a Habitat for Humanity volunteer. She had the unique opportunity to build a Habitat house in Belfast, Ireland with a Congressional delegation. Liz is a 2003 graduate of the Leadership Fairfax Program, which is a 10-month curriculum designed to educate, inform and engage individuals to become agents of positive change in Fairfax County and the Northern Virginia region. She completed her bachelor's degree in Politics and Spanish from The Catholic University of America.

Dr. Sylisa Lambert-Woodard, President and Chief Executive Officer, is pleased and excited to welcome Liz as a part of Pathways' team. "Her tailored skills set and passion for our mission make her uniquely qualified to lead in development and communications."

