



With the uncertainty and hardships that 2020 brought us, many of us look forward to spending the holidays with loved ones inside our warm home. However, imagine not having the safety of a home to go back to and as temperatures drop you scramble for a place to sleep at night, ignoring the growls of your empty stomach. While stressed with only the focus of finding sanctuary on a park bench or under an awning, you hear talk of a second wave of COVID-19 cases. An occasional criticism of “Get a job!” is sent your way, even though unemployment rates have skyrocketed during this time. Addresses are needed to apply for jobs, and that is a privilege sadly you just cannot afford.

These thoughts race through my mind as I enjoy the privileges of my comforts in life. The everyday blessings such as a home, job, loved ones, and healthcare (especially during the time of a global pandemic) can often be taken for granted due to the good fortune of having these privileges as a constant in your life.

I not only feel blessed for my family and the constant sanctity of my home, but also to lead an agency that provided a home and access to services to over 1,400 individuals at risk of homelessness this year. I hear many heartbreaking stories each year of the grim and distressing events those we serve lived through before finding us. Thanks to your support, we can now provide them with safety and comfort.

These shorter daylight hours and dropping temperatures can bring back some traumatic memories of homelessness. In one of our recent newsletters, Thomas shared the hopelessness that comes with homelessness,

“I ended up homeless. I loved to read and would sit in restaurants reading my books until I was asked to leave. I lived in my car and anywhere I could find a spot. I had no money for diabetes medicine nor for medicine to treat my mental illness. One day I had reached my limit and was lying in my car on the side of the road. A police officer came to my car. I told him I needed help. He got me to crisis care and I spent the next several years in and out of hospitals stabilizing my diabetes and mental health symptoms.”

In Thomas’ early twenties, prior to coming to Pathways, he began to have issues focusing, processing events around him, and communicating with others. Thomas enjoyed intellectual discussion and worked as a librarian. Unfortunately, he became increasingly frustrated and began to experience negative thoughts impacting his mental health. On top of a diabetes diagnosis, Thomas was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder-bipolar type. His struggles led him to homelessness, and his intellectual pursuits were put to the side as he focused on survival. Thankfully, he became connected with us and we were able to set him up with the safety of a home and a mental health counselor. He was finally able to live again rather than just survive.

“Pathways recognized my intellect and helped me to develop skills so I could manage my physical and mental health on my terms. I have acquired tools to help me understand the structure of my recovery. I use scientific conceptualizations to help me manage my symptoms for both my diabetes and mental health. I work with the nurse and staff to make good nutritional choices and I take anti-psychotic drugs to stabilize my mood and increase my focus. I have room and time to think. I go to the park, the movies and holiday parties. I participate in self-esteem and art groups. For the last two years, I have exhibited in Pathway Homes Summer of the Art Exhibit. In December, I spoke to a group of Prince William County community leaders about my journey so I can help others.”

Thomas’s story of recovery is one of my favorites as I enjoy seeing how his scholarly pursuits returned to him as he no longer needs to worry about survival in the cold months. While I am pleased to know we have helped over 1,400 individuals this past year, I can’t help but be troubled while thinking of the many individuals that would benefit from our housing and services if we had more funds available to open more space for those in need.

(over)

With your help, we can continue to house and serve those struggling to survive these winter months and beyond. Today we launch our annual Holiday Wish List campaign, inviting you to contribute and turn a house into a home for the individuals we serve. With your donation, you too can experience this rewarding feeling of overwhelming satisfaction that you make a difference. You have a unique opportunity to give a holiday gift that will be appreciated like no other.

With lack of housing and access to basic physical and mental health services, the path to recovery becomes even harder. Every day we receive calls from desperate individuals waiting to see where they are on the wait list. It breaks our heart considering we want to be the caregivers that help guide them toward their path to recovery.

BUT with your contribution, we can continue to serve our current residents and also expand to those desperate callers and take them from their cold, dark, and hopeless places, to one where they can feel safe once again as well as able to move forward in life. With you, we can restore hope, independence, and the life of those affected by homelessness. You can make recovery possible.

Thank you. I wish you the happiest of holidays filled with family, friends, and happy memories.

With gratitude,



Sylisa Lambert-Woodard, EdD, LCSW, LSATP, MAC
CEO and President

P.S.: If you prefer, you can make your donation on-line. Visit our website at www.PathwayHomes.org, and click on the “Donate” button and select Holiday Wish List. It’s secure, convenient, and much appreciated!





Holiday Wish List 2020

- 1. Rent for a month (\$1,500)** The home is the foundation for recovery. It costs approximately \$1,500 per month to lease a unit for an individual we serve. You can provide a safe and secure shelter for an individual we serve.
- 2. Vacuums (\$50 to \$150)** Vacuums are the number one item requested by our residents. Whether hardwood or carpet, dust piles up. Many individuals we serve have respiratory issues and dust aggravates their quality of life. A good vacuum cleaner makes a huge difference!
- 3. Furniture (\$250 to \$500)** There is nothing better than slipping into a cozy bed on a winter night. We continually need new dressers, beds and mattresses for incoming residents. We also have aging furniture that needs to be replaced.
- 4. Linens (\$10 to \$50)** There are few better smells than the scent of freshly washed cotton sheets. New residents receive a good set of sheets and towels to go with their new home. Over time these wear out and need to be replaced. Residents also need other household linens like dish towels and potholders.
- 5. Large Appliance Replacements (\$500 to \$1,000)** Many of our residents have retro lime green refrigerators. These decades-old refrigerators are not energy efficient, and food doesn't keep as long, resulting in higher grocery bills and frequent trips to the store. Other items requiring replacement include stoves, dishwashers, and water heaters.
- 6. Microwave Ovens and Small Appliances (\$40 to \$150)** If you can't cook, frozen pre-made meals are a lifesaver. But they require a microwave oven to be able to heat them. A small, counter-top microwave, a coffee maker, a toaster – these kitchen appliances are badly needed, and greatly appreciated.
- 7. Technology to Mitigate Isolation during COVID – (\$100 to \$500)** Many clients have become increasingly isolated over the past year. We would like to purchase additional mobile telephones and tablets with broadband to give to clients so they can connect with counselors and loved ones remotely.
- 8. Professional Cleaning Services (\$100)** Even the most fervent housekeepers know that there's nothing like a good, deep professional spring cleaning. What a wonderful way to support our residents, many of whom rely on these simple gestures, to remind them of the better life that comes with a commitment to recovery.
- 9. Transportation (\$60)** Many of our residents do not have access to personal transportation to take them to doctor appointments, classes, etc. Therefore, we provide pre-paid taxi vouchers and metro cards to those that need to fulfill commitments. With your donation, our residents will have easier access to benefits the world has to offer!
- 10. Heat & Light (\$200)** Of course having a roof overhead is just the first step. A dwelling remains uninhabitable without utility services. You can help provide the warmth during a cold winter month, light the darkness, and restore a sense of hope to those who have gone for so long without both.
- 11. Annual Maintenance (\$200 to \$275)** An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. ~ Benjamin Franklin. Keeping up with annual maintenance costs helps home systems last longer and run more efficiently. Replacing filters annually also keeps the air cleaner.
- 12. Landscaping Services (\$100 - \$250)** Being a good neighbor includes maintaining the yards of our townhomes and single-family homes. To look out on a bed of fresh flowers in the spring or a newly raked yard in the fall provides a sense of pride and stability in maintaining a place called home.

YES, I want to make holiday wishes come true for adults with mental illness!

Click **HERE** to give!

