



# NIGHTLIGHTS

FALL 2023

## Carol J. Sharp Joins The Night Ministry as President & CEO

After a national search, human services leader Carol J. Sharp has been selected to serve as the new President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The Night Ministry. Sharp assumed her role this August.

A Chicago native, Sharp brings a deep passion for serving marginalized communities. Throughout her career, she has been dedicated to enhancing the living, learning, and earning potential of under-resourced and underrepresented youth and young adults. Her unwavering commitment to mobilizing evidence-based resources that provide access has empowered future leaders to achieve beyond the limitations imposed by their community influences.

“Carol is a visionary and collaborative leader with a powerful commitment to The Night Ministry’s mission and values,” said Michael Borromeo, Chair of The Night Ministry’s Board of Directors. “Her role as President & CEO is the culmination of her personal and professional path and the opportunity to provide deeper impact in the lives of those who are unhoused or experiencing poverty.”

“The Night Ministry continues to serve as a cornerstone for our collective approach to bridging gaps across Chicago’s unhoused communities,” Sharp said. “As President & CEO, I have a great deal of appreciation and pride to be working with our passionate and dedicated team to advance the organization’s legacy.”

Before joining The Night Ministry, Sharp held influential leadership positions at Youth Guidance, Girls Inc. of Chicago, and Perspectives Charter Schools. Under her leadership, she has played a pivotal



Carol J. Sharp is the new President & CEO of The Night Ministry.

role in shaping organizational operations, cultivating donors and partnerships, and championing the design and implementation of comprehensive program strategies that have supported youth in healthy living, academic achievement and life skills development.

She has also served as Senior Director of College Counseling & Community Partnerships at the Chicago Scholars Foundation, where she played an integral role in facilitating educator and youth development programs and leading a collaborative of attuned organizations striving to improve graduation rates for first-generation

college students.

Sharp holds a Master of Public Administration & Nonprofit Mission-Driven Management from the Illinois Institute of Technology and a Bachelor of Arts from American InterContinental University. She remains an active member of the American Society of Public Administrators and has previously served as Past President of the Chicago Chapter. ♦

*“As President & CEO, I have a great deal of appreciation and pride to be working with our passionate and dedicated team to advance the organization’s legacy.”*

– Carol J. Sharp, President & CEO

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# Pathways Is a Place to Make a Soft Landing

By Henry Merrill, Pathways Transitional Living Program Supervisor

At The Night Ministry's Youth Housing Programs, we are in the unique position of helping young people who are unhoused find a home with us, while we support them in finding a more permanent home of their own.

The program I supervise, Pathways Transitional Living, provides up to two years of stable housing, either in our residence in North Lawndale or in nearby apartments. The things that I find in my own home—security, love, acceptance, and support—are the very same things the staff and I want represented at Pathways. I let our residents know that once they enter the Pathways door, they are safe. As they face the day-to-day grind that our young people experience, the staff are here to lend an ear and provide support. Pathways is a place to make a soft landing.

Residents have a lot of stake in the game at Pathways because it is their home. We host house meetings where all of us—the young people served by the program and the staff—talk and listen to each other. Our residents hang out together. They go on the outings like museum and theater visits that The Night Ministry organizes. They look out for each other and stand up for each other. That kind of supportive environment is the solid foundation we work so hard to build at Pathways.

Karim, a longtime resident of Pathways, made a successful transition from Pathways to independent living this year. One day before he moved, Karim let me know he truly appreciated everything that The Night Ministry had provided for him, that he had learned so much about being independent and about being the best he could possibly be, and that the relationships he had created with staff and residents had



Henry Merrill is the Supervisor of the Pathways Transitional Living Program.

helped him grow and motivate him.

That's the experience that I want every Pathways resident and every young person who The Night Ministry serves to have. I want our young people to go out and say, "Hey, when I was part of that program that Henry ran, it was off the chain. And I know if I need support in the future, The Night Ministry will be there

for me." ♦

*"I let our residents know that once they enter the Pathways door, they are safe."*

— Henry Merrill,  
Pathways Transitional Living Program Supervisor

## REAP THE REWARDS



This summer, staff, guests, and members of The Night Ministry's Board of Directors gathered for the annual Reap the Rewards lunch honoring employees who have demonstrated their dedication to the mission with 5, 10, 15, or 20 years of service.

Pictured here (from back and left) are honorees Phyllis Murphy, Christy Prassas, Betsy Carlson, Burke Patten, Damian Nelson, Tiffany Moore, Devin Redmond, Sarah Warner, LaChania Conwell, Alicia Stewart, Rutulia (Faith) Miller, Jerome Boyce, Theresa Ross, and Bridget Thomas. The honorees not pictured are David Baumgartner and Aisha Blackwell.

# Flexible Housing Pool Case Managers Support Stability and Growth

Since launching in 2020, the Flexible Housing Pool for Youth, a collaboration between the Center for Housing and Health and other Chicago nonprofits, has helped 325 unhoused young adults access permanent housing through rent subsidies and supportive services. The Night Ministry plays a key role in the program by offering ongoing case management to nearly a third of the program's participants.

“Our goal is to give our clients the best shot they can have at sustaining their own housing,” said Steven Dougherty, The Night Ministry's Flexible Housing Program Manager.

The Night Ministry's involvement has grown from a caseload of 20 households when the program launched to 95 currently. Five Housing Case Managers lead the charge, offering extensive in-person support, including through apartment visits. Staff are in contact with their clients multiple times per month.

Housing Case Managers must be on their toes, as every day brings new needs and requests. They may be helping one client apply for public benefits, accompanying another to visit food pantries, and helping yet another navigate landlord-tenant relations, all while being on call for whatever additional needs may arise.

“We are, for a lot of our clients, the only supportive adult that they have,” Housing Case Manager Maya Rudder shared. “We do our best to promote them being independent, but they also know that if they fall short, they still have somebody looking out for them.”

The program's clients have a 92% housing retention rate, which



Housing Case Manager Maya Rudder delivers necessities to the home of a Flexible Housing Pool for Youth participant.

means that the vast majority of program participants remain stably housed. And that level of security and stability is vital to helping them grow. With The Night Ministry's support behind them, residents have a chance to reach beyond meeting just their survival needs.

“We work with people at a very exciting stage of their lives when they are developing, growing, and learning a lot about themselves,” said Housing Case Manager Brianna Bueltmann.

Fellow Housing Case Manager Bridget Thomas elaborated further: “We see clients go from not knowing where they're going to sleep at night, to signing a lease, being happy, and starting to accomplish goals.” ♦

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– Bridget Thomas,  
Housing Case Manager

## Night Lights

On **Thursday, October 5 at 6 pm**, join The Night Ministry's Associate Board for Night Lights, an evening of fun and philanthropy at Marshall's Landing at the Merchandise Mart! Enjoy dinner, drinks, and a silent auction full of dining, travel, and entertainment packages.

Get your tickets today at [www.thenightministry.org/nightlights](http://www.thenightministry.org/nightlights).

Event proceeds will go to support the agency's mission. If you are interested in becoming an event sponsor, please reach out to Events Coordinator Erica Schoppe at [ericas@thenightministry.org](mailto:ericas@thenightministry.org) or 773-506-6029.

# Health Outreach Programs Serve Populations with Distinct Housing and Health Challenges

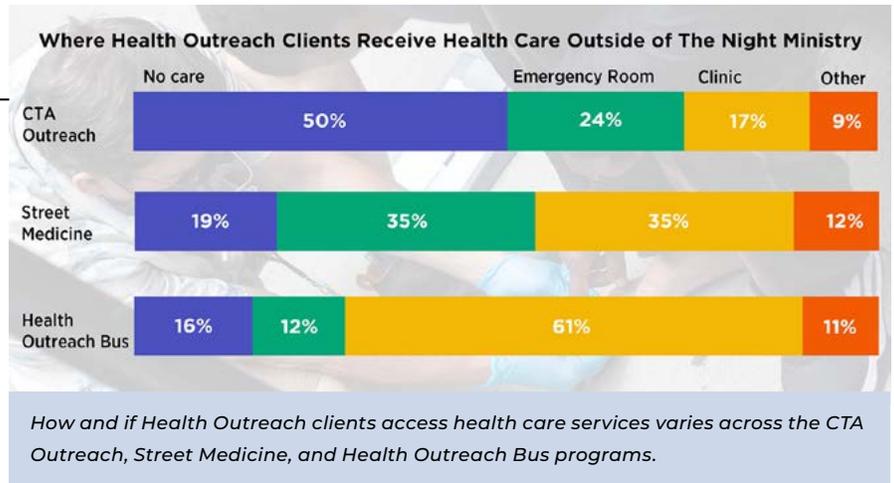
By Damian Nelson, Director, Learning and Impact

The strength of The Night Ministry's three Outreach and Health Ministry Programs is their ability to tailor their approaches to better help Chicago residents who are unhoused or experiencing poverty. The Health Outreach Bus, Street Medicine Team, and CTA Outreach Program each serve unique populations with distinct circumstances and, because of those distinctions, tailor services to best address the varying needs of their clients. All three programs bring services directly to clients and allow them to decide which services they want to access, increasing the scope and impact of the programs.

Surveys conducted by the Learning and Impact Department with Outreach and Health Ministry clients confirm the individuals served within each program have diverse living situations. Staff within each program understand these distinctions and tailor services to meet the needs of each individual client.

Almost all clients of the Street Medicine Team are unsheltered, living outside. The team's first step when working with a new client is often to provide a tent, which both increases the client's safety and ability to stay in one location until a more permanent housing solution is found. The Street Medicine team provided about 60 tents to clients in the previous fiscal year. Similarly, CTA Outreach clients are overwhelmingly unhoused, but use Chicago's transit system to seek shelter, which is why

*"The Health Outreach Bus, Street Medicine Team, and CTA Outreach Program each serve unique populations with distinct circumstances and, because of those distinctions, tailor services to best address the varying needs of their clients."*



The Night Ministry conducts outreach at public transit stations. Most Bus clients are housed; however, their housing is often unstable, and they access the services the Bus offers, such as food and hygiene supplies, to help meet their basic needs.

Clients within each program also have distinct health care needs. Because most CTA and Street Medicine clients report not accessing any medical treatment outside of the care offered by The Night Ministry or relying on the emergency room for critical circumstances, they are more likely to have complex medical conditions that require immediate attention. Bus clients are more likely to receive care from a clinic, but a large percentage still report using the emergency room or not seeking care of any kind. The Night Ministry's

medical professionals work to understand the individualized needs of each client and provide the highest standard of care possible. ◇

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# The Night Ministry Helps Migrants Access Health Care and Shelter

As thousands of migrants have arrived in Chicago from the U.S. southern border over the past year, individuals and organizations across the city have stepped up to support them. The Night Ministry is one of the local nonprofits that have been working to help asylum seekers meet their basic needs.

In coordination with the City of Chicago Department of Public Health, several times a week The Night Ministry's health care professionals have been providing medical assessments to migrants who have been staying in police stations to identify those whose health conditions warrant expedited access to shelter.

"We're trying to find anybody whose health will deteriorate if they have to wait too long for shelter placement," said Stephan Koruba, Clinical Supervisor. "We also treat acute conditions as we would do on the streets through our Health Outreach Programs and arrange for emergency care when necessary."

Koruba said the health challenges experienced by asylum seekers range from infectious diseases such as the cold and chicken pox to seizures and complications from injuries individuals sustained during the journeys from their home countries.

The Night Ministry has also provided temporary housing, as well as meals, clothing, and other resources, to several migrants who are young adults over the past year at The Crib emergency overnight shelter and the Interim Housing Program.

Sarah Warner, Case Manager at the Interim Program, said many of the asylum seekers served by the agency's Youth



Case Manager Sarah Warner has assisted several migrants who have stayed at the Interim Housing Program, one of The Night Ministry's Youth Programs.

Housing Programs have exhibited signs of trauma.

"It's largely the trauma associated with leaving or being separated from their family and their trips to the U.S. border and here to Chicago," she said. "Fortunately, therapy sessions are available to our shelter residents through Rush University Medical Center, which offers Spanish-speaking therapists."

Warner, who, like several of The Night Ministry staff, speaks Spanish, has also assisted clients in either starting to learn English or improving their already existing English-speaking skills.

"I let them know that if it's their goal to eventually find work, they can be very marketable as a bilingual person. So, I'll show them the free language app Duolingo and have conversations with them to help them learn," she said. ◊

*"We're trying to find anybody whose health will deteriorate if they have to wait too long for shelter placement."*

– Stephan Koruba, Clinical Supervisor

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# Make a Difference

by supporting our mission



## Health Outreach Bus Expands Services on Chicago's West Side

The Night Ministry's Health Outreach Bus, which brings free health care, food, and other resources directly to Chicago neighborhoods, extended its services on Chicago's West Side this summer, with new stops in Austin and Garfield Park on Saturdays.

The selection of the Austin and Garfield Park locations involved research, planning, and relationship building from departments across the agency.

"The Night Ministry looked at many data points across the neighborhoods we were considering to see if they were a match for our mission. From that data, we figured out that Garfield Park and Austin would be good areas to focus on because they have disproportionate rates of homelessness and of people who are uninsured or underinsured," said Tedd Peso, Director of Strategic Partnerships.

In addition to gathering data, the agency also began working with local institutions and organizations in the area.

"What also makes these two stops really interesting to us is that we're teaming up with partners who are already established in the neighborhoods," added Peso.

The agency has joined up with partners at both sites, including the Legler Regional Library at Garfield Park and Bethel New Life in Austin, an organization dedicated to providing a network of partnership programs and initiatives promoting health and wellness.



Outreach Services Driver Ronnie Robinson, Bus Outreach Professional Edward Davis, Outreach Operations Manager Juan Roca, and Bus Driver Sylvester Farmer at the Health Outreach Bus in Garfield Park.

"The Legler Library is already assisting a number of unhoused individuals and has a strong social services program. Now the Bus can further help those individuals and the larger community by providing health care, food, and other vital resources," shared David Wywialowski, Director of Outreach and Health Ministry.

Bethel New Life CEO Sharif Walker believes The Night Ministry has much to offer Austin too. "More than anything, what matters to people in our community is presence, that they know that there's another resource available in the neighborhood that can help them get support at a vulnerable period in their lives," he said. "The Night Ministry's mobile care is intentionally somewhere easily accessible to the public, and that means the world to communities like ours." ♦

**Thank you to those who generously gave at the \$500 level or higher between June 16 and July 31, 2023. Thank you as well to everyone who donated during this time period through alternate giving portals, such as Facebook, AmazonSmile, Workplace Giving, and more.**



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