



NIGHTLIGHTS

HOLIDAY 2020

Closing off a Challenging Year with Gratitude

There is no question it has been a difficult year, with upheaval and tragic losses experienced by so many. But as the year winds down and with the holidays season underway, it is important to find reasons to be grateful.

Rox, a client of The Night Ministry's Youth Programs who has experienced housing instability this year, is grateful for the new apartment they are moving into with their partner this month.

"This is a big step for the future," they said. "It gives me a stable place to stay at—I signed a lease. It will help me make sure I can keep a job for a long time, and at the same time, it's something that I want to commit to."

Juan Roca, Lead Outreach Minister at The Night Ministry, feels grateful for the colleagues who work alongside him at the Health Outreach Bus.

"My teammates are great people who give me confidence, who tell me, 'go ahead, you can do this,' and their encouragement gives me the courage to continue to be of service," he said.

Roca is also grateful for the individuals and families who come to the Bus for assistance.

"The thank-you I get for providing a meal, clothing, or another service stays with me all night. The thank-you sustains me and helps me to keep going in my life with friends and family and in my job here at The Night Ministry," he said.

Paul W. Hamann, President & CEO of The Night Ministry, has a special message of gratitude for the friends and supporters who allowed the organization to focus on its mission to provide housing, health care, and human connection during this year's



Rox, a client of The Night Ministry's Youth Programs, is expressing gratitude for their new apartment. "It represents stability," they said.

challenging conditions.

"During the pandemic, it's become clearer than ever that there are so many Chicagoland residents who want to support their neighbors who are vulnerable to homelessness and poverty."

- Paul W. Hamann, President & CEO

"We couldn't have done it without you," he said. "During the pandemic, it's become clearer than ever that there are so many Chicagoland residents who want to support their neighbors who are vulnerable to homelessness and poverty. The generosity they've demonstrated through their donations of time, money, and resources to The Night Ministry fills me with gratitude."

To view The Night Ministry's recent Community Celebration of Thanksgiving and to watch a special video celebrating the spirit and impact of The Night Ministry community, visit www.thenightministry.org/thanksgiving. ◇

HOUSING • HEALTH CARE • HUMAN CONNECTION

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Street Medicine Teams up with Skilled Assessor to Move Clients into Permanent Housing

More adults who have experienced chronic unsheltered homelessness are finding housing because of a partnership between The Night Ministry and the nonprofit Heartland Alliance.

Ryan Spangler, a Senior Outreach Worker and Case Manager at Heartland Alliance, is what is known as a Skilled Assessor for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which coordinates placement into permanent supportive housing. Spangler joins The Night Ministry's Street Medicine Team weekly as it visits encampments to conduct housing assessments with clients, the first step in matching someone with available units.

"What's involved is mainly getting people's history—how long they have been homeless. There's also a vulnerability assessment to determine what kinds of disabilities or health conditions folks have," Spangler said. "The more vulnerable you are, the more likely you're going to get housing."

The working relationship between Spangler and Street Medicine has resulted in 20 Street Medicine clients moving into permanent housing.

"It's been a godsend," said Street Medicine Case Manager Sylvia Hibbard about Spangler connecting with her team. "Not just because he does the housing assessments, but he's also an amazing resource."

For example, in addition to entering individuals into HMIS, Spangler also puts them on the Chicago Housing Authority list, where they are prioritized for apartments because they



Ryan Spangler of Heartland Alliance and The Night Ministry's Sylvia Hibbard work together to move chronically homeless adults into housing.

are experiencing homelessness.

Once a match is made, Hibbard works with the client to make sure they have, or helps them obtain, the documents such as state ID, birth certificate, and social security card that are required by housing providers. And on move-in day, she is there with some basics such as food and cookware, as well as a list of neighborhood resources.

Newell is one of the individuals served by Street Medicine who did an assessment with Spangler, which led to him moving into his own apartment in October.

"Until I met The Night Ministry, I was on a housing list for three years," he said. "I was living in a tent. I couldn't do another winter. This came at the right time." ♦

"Until I met The Night Ministry, I was on a housing list for three years."

- Newell, Client of Street Medicine

CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT: SC JOHNSON

The Night Ministry is grateful to SC Johnson for a \$25,000 grant supporting the Outreach & Health Ministry Program. SC Johnson, which operates its Southside Soap Box Factory in Chicago's Pullman neighborhood (shown on the right), is dedicated to making a positive impact in the communities in which it operates.

"Our Outreach & Health Ministry Program, which includes the Health Outreach Bus and Street Medicine Team, serves Chicago's most vulnerable residents, many of whom live on our city's South Side," said David Wywialowski, Program Director. "SC Johnson's support will help us continue to bring free health care, food, clothing, supplies, and supportive services directly to the neighborhoods and individuals who need it most."

THE NIGHT MINISTRY THANKS SC JOHNSON FOR ITS GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION.



Youth Clients Share Their Perspectives with Board of Directors

Young adults served by The Night Ministry recently convened with members of The Night Ministry's Board of Directors to share their experiences with homelessness and offer their perspectives on the agency's services.

Sharday Hamilton, a former Peer Outreach Professional, joined Rich and Julie, members of Youth 4 Truth, The Night Ministry's leadership development program for young people, to present virtually before the Board.

Hamilton spoke to Board members about adultism, which is the assumption that the experiences and opinions of older people are inherently more valuable than those of younger people.

"That translates into making sure that young people have input into the structure and rules of the programs," said Candace Musick, Youth Development Specialist, who worked with all three speakers on their presentations.

Julie, who spoke about her experience as a pregnant and parenting young woman struggling with homelessness, asked that Board members visit The Night Ministry's shelter programs more often, when conditions permit it.

"This would be helpful because it would help to understand why your role as a Board member is important, and why the staff's jobs are important," she said.

Rich, who shared about his experience with the criminal justice system, encouraged Board members to continue pursuing opportunities to hear from young people who have struggled with homelessness.

"Our voices and stories are very powerful, we have lived



Rich and Julie, seen here at an event in 2019, shared their experiences with homelessness and The Night Ministry's services with the agency's Board of Directors.

experience, and when we talk and we speak, I want you to really listen," he said. "To actually hear a young person that can sit down and talk about what they've gone through is a blessing, and it's not something that should be missed."

Board Chair Kiantae Bowles said the discussions were very rewarding.

"It definitely brought a new perspective to hear from people who had received services and to hear how they valued the services The Night Ministry is able to bring to youth. And it's important to make sure that they have a voice in those services," he said.

Julie said it was also a good experience for her.

"To have this opportunity to speak up about what I feel would be helpful makes me feel like my voice matters and that they listen to us," she said. ◊

"To have this opportunity to speak up about what I feel would be helpful makes me feel like my voice matters."

- Julie, Youth 4 Truth Member

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Based in Reality and on Evidence, Harm Reduction Saves Lives

The Night Ministry's commitment to meeting people where they are at is reflected in its utilization of an evidence-based approach known as harm reduction when providing services to Chicagoans living on the streets.

Substance abuse disproportionately impacts individuals struggling with homelessness. Harm reduction provides a practical range of strategies—from medication-assisted treatment to the dispensation of clean needles and medication to reverse overdoses—for mitigating the harmful effects of drug use, as well as other potentially risky behaviors such as sex work, which is a common means of survival among individuals experiencing homelessness.

“As a medical intervention, it is proven to reduce disease and death as well as the consumption of resources offered through the medical system,” said Andrew Wojda, Substance Use Advocate. “For example, the use of clean syringes can help prevent skin and soft tissue infections.”

“Ultimately, it saves lives,” he said. “You don't get to make any decisions or changes if you are dead. Harm reduction can give you a second chance.”

Noam Greene, Lead Street Medicine Outreach Worker, said harm reduction is rooted in reality.

“Everyone is the expert on their own life. People understand that using injection drugs is not healthy, but they want to make choices that are best for themselves,” they said. “So, we walk alongside them and don't come from a place of judgment and just say, ‘drugs are bad,’ because we know statistically that doesn't help.”

Harm reduction strategies are most often implemented with clients of The Night Ministry's Street Medicine Team, but staff



Watch a discussion about harm reduction with Street Medicine Team members Noam Greene (bottom) and Andrew Wojda (upper right) at www.thenightministry.org/harm-reduction.

at the agency's Youth Programs are also trained on the model.

“Drug and alcohol use are not permitted in our shelter programs,” said Neal Marie Ross, Manager of Supportive Services, “but if residents do engage in such behaviors, our approach is not punitive. We talk about the risks involved in such behaviors and try to determine if there are other challenges a young person is facing that underlie the behavior for which we can provide help.”

Housing is one of the most powerful harm reduction resources. The Night Ministry provides housing through its Youth Programs and helps clients of its Health Outreach Program, including Street Medicine, obtain it.

“Housing first is a big part of harm reduction because if you are housed, you have that stability and can then work on the other challenges you need to address,” said Greene. ◇

“As a medical intervention, harm reduction is proven to reduce disease.”

- Andrew Wojda, Substance Use Advocate

HOW WILL YOU LEAVE YOUR LEGACY?



“I firmly believe that those of us who benefit the most from this society should pass it on. Over the years I have been impressed with the outreach work of The Night Ministry and decided it was one charity I wanted to provide for. I wish such organizations weren't as critical to our society as they are, but thank heaven there is The Night Ministry here in Chicago.”

— Kathy Gallo, Legacy Society Member

After securing economic stability and providing for the needs of your loved ones, you may choose to make a lasting charitable impact with a bequest to The Night Ministry. If you have already included The Night Ministry in your will, please let us know—we would like to acknowledge your generosity and welcome you as a member of The Legacy Society.

Contact Christy Prassas Vice President of Development & External Relations
christy@thenightministry.org or (773) 506-6023.



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Happy Holidays!

We wish you and your loved ones peace, joy, and good health. Thank you for helping to make our work possible!



The Night Ministry Adapts to the Present and Plans for the Future in Age of COVID

Adaptability and sustainability are guiding principles at The Night Ministry as the coronavirus remains a public health threat.

Departments across the organization assess current conditions on an ongoing basis and make real-time adjustments to procedures so The Night Ministry can continue to serve Chicago's most vulnerable residents while protecting the health and safety of its staff, clients, and volunteers.

Meanwhile, staff game plan for "what-ifs" in the future.

"We try to present different scenarios to just get us thinking," said David Wywialowski, Director of Outreach & Health Ministry. "For example, earlier this fall, we were planning for The Night Ministry's annual holiday celebrations at the Health Outreach Bus, and we asked, 'What if COVID cases continue to spike?' So, we are now scaling down the celebrations so we can keep everyone safe while still sharing some of the specialness of the season with those we serve."

The agency is also helping the young people at its Youth Housing Programs cope with the ongoing pandemic while maintaining progress on their goals. At Phoenix Hall, The Night Ministry's residence for high school students experiencing housing instability, that means offering students the resources they need to progress in their education while they learn remotely.



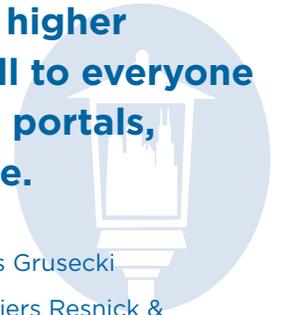
The Night Ministry continues to provide essential services and resources to those whom it serves, such as flu shots, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We provide whatever they need, from supplies to tutoring to socially distant group activities and a comfortable environment, so they don't have to feel so disconnected away from the schools," said Lori Herrera, Program Manager. "When you study alone and you feel by yourself, you can lose some of the drive to succeed."

At the same time, despite the pandemic, The Night Ministry remains focused on innovation and growth in programming that result in better outcomes for those whom it serves.

"We recently launched the Flexible Housing Pool Program, which provides subsidies and our case management support for homeless young adults in market-rate rental apartments," said Betsy Carlson, Director of Youth Programs. "We've already enrolled more than 12 young people in the program, and so we will be looking at how it is working to see if there are lessons that can inform potential expansions or pivots in other youth programs." ◇

Thank you to those who generously gave at the \$500 level or higher between October 1 and November 30, 2020. Thank you as well to everyone who donated during this time period through alternate giving portals, such as Facebook, Amazon Smile, Workplace Giving, and more.



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