



# NIGHTLIGHTS

HOLIDAY 2024

## “They Changed the Trajectory of My Life.” 14 Years Later, Entrepreneur Reflects on Her Time with The Night Ministry

Kay’Chanel was 16, expecting a child, and experiencing housing instability when she came to stay at The Night Ministry’s shelter for pregnant and parenting mothers. Now, 14 years later, she is a successful entrepreneur who credits the organization with helping her realize her dreams.

“It wasn’t what I expected,” Kay’Chanel recalls about her first impression of the shelter. “I thought there would be bunk beds with people sleeping on top of each other. Instead, I had my own bed and closet. It was very nice.”

Staying at the shelter was a transformative experience for Kay’Chanel. She found role models among the staff, including Felitha Jones-Patterson and Phyllis Murphy, who are still with the organization today.

“They changed the trajectory of my life,” she says. “Coming from where I came from, I didn’t see anyone besides my mother with a job. But Felitha and Phyllis were always at work before they had to be there. They were always prompt and very organized.”

Sharing household responsibilities, interacting with other residents and staff, and receiving assistance in managing her finances provided a structure that helped her achieve her goals.

“I didn’t always like it, but now I definitely appreciate it because to be successful, you need structure,” she says.

Having overcome the obstacles she faced as a teenager, Kay’Chanel encourages young people with similar challenges to “keep an open heart.”

“Don’t let it harden you,” she advises.

“Sometimes, when you grow up in survival mode and don’t have a



*“I love The Night Ministry,” says entrepreneur Kay’Chanel, who benefited from the agency’s services while experiencing homelessness as a pregnant young mother.*

lot of money, you want to hold on to everything you get. But the more you release and open your hands, the more will come in. The more you help others, the more they will help you.”

*“What you’re doing has helped me, and I know it will help many generations to come.”*

*– Kay’Chanel, former client of The Night Ministry*

And she expresses gratitude to The Night Ministry’s donors.

“I love you all so much for what you’re doing. Your support has helped me, and I know it will benefit many generations to

come. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.” ♦

**HUMAN CONNECTION • HOUSING • HEALTH CARE**

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# Winter Can Be Deadly for Unhoused Individuals. Here's How We Help

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, people experiencing homelessness are nearly 40 times more likely to die from cold exposure compared to the general population. With winter nearly here, The Night Ministry is gearing up to help our unhoused neighbors survive another season of snow and cold temperatures.

“Inclement weather poses life-threatening risks for unhoused individuals, including hypothermia, frostbite, and other serious cold-related injuries affecting the extremities and face,” says Derek Ma, Nurse Practitioner at The Night Ministry.

“Repeated cold exposure can also worsen chronic health issues like heart and lung disease, weaken the immune system, and increase vulnerability to infections and chronic pain,” Ma says.

The Night Ministry helps clients connect with housing throughout the year, which is critical for keeping individuals healthy and alive year-round. During inclement weather, staff help those who are unhoused stay as safe as possible. While performing well-being checks, outreach staff look for signs of cold-related health conditions, offer education on preventing such illnesses and injuries, and encourage clients to access warming centers and emergency shelters. In cases of severe illness, arrangements are made to transport clients to hospitals for further treatment.

In addition, The Night Ministry provides clothing and other material resources to help clients protect themselves from the cold. Between January and March of this year, staff distributed 345 winter coats, 310 blankets, 7,200 pairs of socks, and 86 tents.

As The Night Ministry's Health Outreach Operations Manager,



Health Outreach Operations Manager Juan Roca provides a winter coat to Bolo, a client at the CTA Howard Street Red Line stop.

Juan Roca has seen how those resources make a difference. On a snowy night last January, he encountered a client at the CTA Forest Park Blue Line stop who was in immediate danger of developing cold-related health conditions.

“He was completely wet, and he was shaking,” Roca recalls, “and we were able to give him dry clothing, including a winter coat, boots, and socks. Can you

imagine what would have happened if we didn't have those items for him? He would have spent the entire night in wet clothing without protection from the elements.” ◊

*“Inclement weather poses life-threatening risks for unhoused individuals.”*

– Derek Ma, Nurse Practitioner



Scan for our Amazon wish list.

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can provide relief for our unhoused neighbors during the winter with donations of the following:

- Adult Winter Hats
- Adult Warm Gloves
- New Adult Hoodies (size large & above, dark colors preferred)
- Adult Long Underwear Sets (size large & above)
- Adult Size Socks (athletic or winter socks)
- Hand & Foot Warmers
- Tents & Sleeping Bags

Visit [www.thenightministry.org/wish-list](http://www.thenightministry.org/wish-list) for more information.

A financial gift enables us to allocate your support to the areas most needed this winter. To donate, visit [www.thenightministry.org/gift](http://www.thenightministry.org/gift) or return the enclosed envelope.

# “Do Whatever You Can Do to Give Back to People.” Experience with Foster Care System Drives Student’s Philanthropy

What motivates you to give back? For high school freshman Victor Campos-Schultz, it’s his experience within the foster care system.

Victor, his older brother, and their family first came together through foster care and legally became a family through adoption. But Victor remembers what it was like when he and his sibling did not have one place to call home.

“I was originally in different homes, so we didn’t have much stuff,” Victor says. “I wanted to make sure that people got some things I didn’t have growing up.”

This past summer, Victor organized a drive to collect hygiene items such as deodorant, shampoo, and toothpaste, which he donated to The Night Ministry. The organization provides personal care products to clients it serves on the streets and in its shelters to help them maintain cleanliness, protect their health, and uphold their dignity.

Victor created a wish list of items on Amazon and spread the word about the collection drive through his family and friends and on social media. He was surprised by the generous response.

“It was shocking how much there was,” he says. “I didn’t think people would donate as much as they did.”

Five large boxes of hygiene items were delivered to The Night Ministry because of the drive. Victor created personal thank-you videos for each person who contributed.

*“Just keep giving and remember that some people aren’t as fortunate as you.”*

*– Victor, who organized a collection drive for The Night Ministry*



*Victor and his dog Oreo with hygiene items he collected for The Night Ministry’s clients.*

And he is already on to his next philanthropic endeavor. An avid basketball player and member of his school’s basketball team, Victor is planning a basketball clinic to help young people experiencing housing instability improve their game.

“Just keep giving and remember that some people aren’t as fortunate as you,” Victor says. “Do whatever you can do to give back to people.” ♦



To learn more, visit [www.thenightministry.org/associate-board](http://www.thenightministry.org/associate-board) or scan the QR code.

## ASSOCIATE BOARD RAISES \$107K IN SUPPORT OF UNHOUSED YOUTH

Congratulations to The Night Ministry’s Associate Board! They raised more than \$107,000 to support Chicago’s unhoused young people at the Night Lights event held at Marshall’s Landing on Thursday, October 10. Proceeds from the event will benefit The Crib, our overnight shelter for young adults. Last year, The Crib provided safe shelter and support to more than 230 youth experiencing homelessness.

The Associate Board supports the overall mission and activities of The Night Ministry. Acting as ambassadors of the agency, Associate Board members engage with the community through volunteering, fundraising, networking, and advocacy opportunities targeted toward young professionals.

# Client Perspectives and Experiences Drive Youth Programs Training Conference

Customer feedback is essential for ensuring that products and services meet consumer needs. Who better to inform The Night Ministry about the strengths and weaknesses of its programs than the clients it serves?

That's precisely what happened when staff from The Night Ministry's Youth Programs, which include overnight shelter, long-term housing, and supportive services for unhoused youth, gathered for their annual conference. Young people served by the agency organized and led the daylong event of training and professional development.

"We recognize the value that clients' voices have and wanted staff to hear from young people themselves about the experiences they have in accessing our services," said Candace Musick, Manager of the Interim Housing Program, which provides short-term housing for young people ages 14 to 20.

Young people presented on topics such as mental health and trauma-informed care, which is an approach to providing support that recognizes the lasting impact of trauma and strives to make services and environments safe and welcoming. They also spoke candidly about their experiences with The Night Ministry and identified gaps in services and areas where the agency can improve.

John, a participant in The Night Ministry's Youth 4 Truth leadership development program, passionately spoke to the staff about the importance of seeing the world through the eyes of the young people they serve.



John, a client of The Night Ministry, encouraged Youth Programs staff see the world through the eyes of the young people they serve.

"This is your calling," he told staff at the conference. "There's a reason some youth go out to get help, and they come out the same. It's because of how the help is being presented. You have to place yourself in the youths' shoes."

*"This has inspired me to enhance our customer service and rethink how we welcome youth."*

– Latice Woodard,  
The Crib Program Supervisor

Staff, including Lattice Woodard, Program Supervisor of The Crib overnight shelter, say the messages and discussions were impactful.

"This has inspired me to enhance our customer service and rethink how we welcome our youth, from the moment they arrive to the intake process and throughout their orientation at The Crib."

The Night Ministry has a long history of incorporating clients' perspectives into its programs. It is leading the formation of a Youth Action Board in Illinois, which will empower young people to drive efforts to end youth homelessness across the state. ◊

## LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT: AN EVENING TO BENEFIT THE NIGHT MINISTRY

Save  
the  
Date

**Thursday, May 29, 2025**

**Morgan Manufacturing in Chicago's West Loop**

Join us in celebration and support of our mission to provide human connection, housing support, and health care to members of our community who are unhoused or experiencing poverty. For information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact please contact Erica Schoppe at 773 506 6029 or [ericas@thenightministry.org](mailto:ericas@thenightministry.org).

# “If It Weren’t for The Night Ministry, I Wouldn’t Have Had a Safety Net.”

Dan knows downtown Chicago. He knows the parking lot stairwells that offer a relatively safe place to sleep, the alleyways that provide some privacy, and the blocks that pose potential risks of danger.

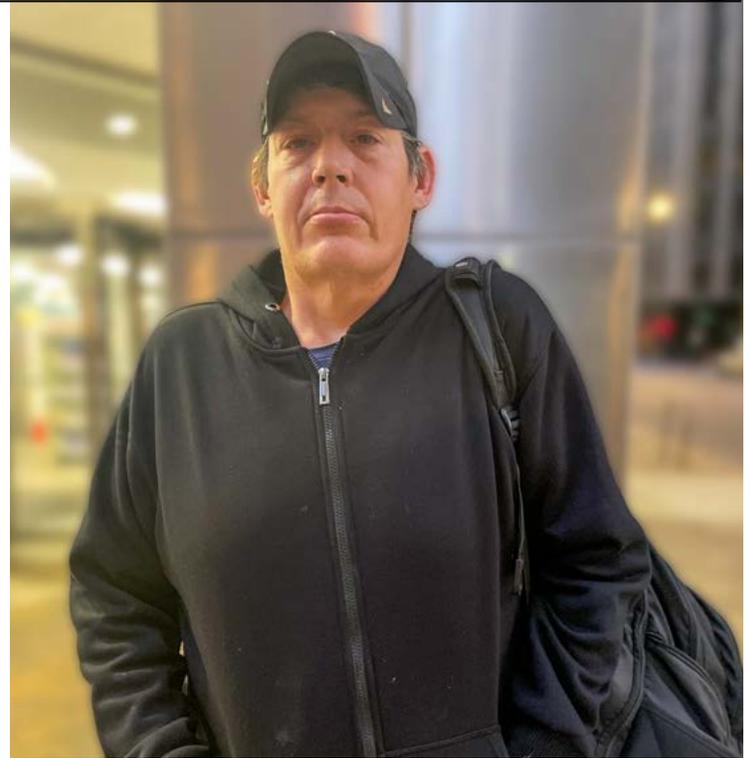
He wasn’t always this familiar with the city’s streets. Dan grew up in the suburbs and built his life there. He began experiencing periods of homelessness in 2011 after losing the home he shared with a girlfriend to foreclosure. That’s when Dan first moved downtown.

While it was difficult for Dan to secure a steady job without a permanent address, access to a shower, and clean clothing, he obtained employment at a suburban hotel in 2022. He worked his way from maintenance to the front desk, often logging more than 60 hours a week. But a nearly fatal case of pneumonia landed him in the hospital for several weeks.

“I lost my job. I lost my place to stay,” Dan says. “That’s how I became homeless and ended up down on Lower Wacker Drive. Where else was I going to go?”

While living in a tent amidst the noise and pollution of Lower Wacker, Dan was introduced to The Night Ministry’s Street Medicine Team. One of the agency’s Nurse Practitioners removed the stitches from his surgery and treated an infection that had developed. The Team also provided food, harm-reduction supplies, and other resources to help Dan stay alive.

“If it weren’t for The Night Ministry, I wouldn’t have had a safety net,” Dan says. “The relationships I built with all the individuals who work there gave me the confidence to get



Dan poses outside a store in downtown Chicago. After periods of homelessness, he has been housed for more than a year.

*“The relationships I built with all the individuals who work there gave me the confidence to get where I needed to go.”*

– Dan, a client of The Night Ministry

where I needed to go.”

That place is the apartment Dan has lived in for more than a year. With permanent housing, Dan is rebuilding his life. He has returned to his job at the hotel. Next year he plans to get his driver’s license back.

“I’m bettering myself,” Dan says. “And my chances of doing that are 100% better now than when I lived on the streets.” ♦

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# Give the Gift of Hope



## Hope for the Holidays

Hope is essential to The Night Ministry's work. In fact, it's one of our core values. This holiday season, we asked our staff to reflect on the role of hope in our mission to serve our unhoused neighbors.

*"In my work with clients facing profound challenges, I bring hope by offering care that meets them where they are. Sometimes, it's simply being present or providing the basics of medical care—small acts that remind them, even on the hardest days, that they aren't alone."*

– Derek Ma, Nurse Practitioner

*"Hope is the backbone of everything we do here. It's what keeps us going and pushes us to give our best, even on tough days. Without it, our work would be empty."*

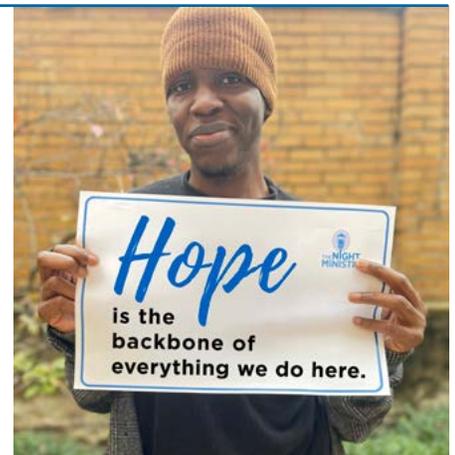
– Vaun Reed, Program Specialist

*"I bring hope to The Night Ministry by building genuine relationships not only with the staff but to those that we serve. I do this by listening to individuals' stories and acknowledging their strengths and potential."*

– Yasmin Clarke-Greenlee, Senior Program Supervisor

*"Hope is important because it emphasizes that where the young people are in their lives is only temporary. Hope is a powerful driving force. Hope is purpose. Hope gives young people something positive, joyful even, to look forward to in their futures."*

– Michaela Foreman, Program Specialist



Vaun Reed, Program Specialist with The Night Ministry's Youth Housing Programs.

*"Throughout my career, I've carried one core belief: that people have the ability to achieve beyond the scope of their environment and community influences. Opportunities and options exist—we just have to recognize them and take actionable steps toward personal fulfillment. This is my hope for our neighbors, our staff, and our broader community."*

– Carol Sharp, President & CEO

*"I see that hope is alive and vibrant at The Night Ministry when I see the great diversity of people from so many backgrounds come together to show the world that together we care through our actions. Kind and caring hearts win the day."*

– David Wywialowski, Director of Outreach & Health Ministry