



VOL. X ISSUE 2  
FALL, 2012

THE PARTICIPANT GENERATED NEWSLETTER OF  
ROOM IN THE INN'S CAMPUS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Predator's Office Staff volunteers and participants say "Thank You to all of our great volunteers."



# The Journey Home

# Volunteering: An Act Of Giving...

by Participants, Volunteers & Staff of Room In The Inn



Charlie Johnson (left)  
with a participant  
and a fellow barber  
student.

## NEW PROFESSION

### Volunteer Barber

**Charlie Johnson** Charlie is a man who participated in Room In The Inn programs for years. He has been with us since before we moved off Demonbreun Street to make way for the Bridgestone Arena. After years of being on the streets, Charlie was able to regain his stability and move into permanent housing. Now he is attending classes at Genesis Career College to become a barber and volunteers with a group of fellow students to give haircuts on campus.

Charlie says, "It is a good feeling to give back!!! No matter what or how long you've been out there, you can change!"

Charlie is an inspiration to everyone struggling with homelessness and proves change is possible.

**T**hey come from all walks of life. Business leaders. Country music stars. Formerly homeless. Computer geeks. Homemakers. Lawyers. Physicians. Writers. Artists. Our volunteers come from all walks of life. And this is their story about "The Journey Home."



Noel helps a  
participant  
with GED  
preparation.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

### 2nd Year Volunteer

### Noel Patton

Noel is retired now from a career in a computer related field and it seems he's always asking "what's next?" Noel began his volunteer involvement with Room In The Inn by building two databases: one for the incentive store for participants, and the other for our suspension/reinstatement process. But Noel has done so much more than share his computer expertise! He has also worked in our library and computer lab. He has taught classes, helped with job searches, worked our "Resume Building Power Day," and helped tutor GED students. Wow, that's quite a list!

# & More Often Receiving

## SOMETIMES

## UNCOMFORTABLE

Otter Creek Church of Christ Volunteer

### Danna Arnett

“My husband, Jim, and I have been helping facilitate the Room In The Inn ministry at our congregation for about three years.

Each year, we learn more about how to serve this community. Sometimes I’m very uncomfortable and I am tempted to stay in the kitchen, but when I go out and sit and share a meal with a participant I am blessed in some way.

“One season about two years ago, after I’d lost my dad to cancer, I donated some of his clothes to the Room in the Inn closet at Otter Creek. The night we were hosting dinner, I looked across the room and saw a man wearing one of my dad’s shirts. I went to talk to him and told him he looked handsome and that his shirt looked real nice. He had the biggest smile on his face! It was priceless.”



## AFTER THE FLOOD

First Presbyterian Church, Nashville Volunteer

### Hal Sauer

“We had a guest last year whose house was a total loss from the flood of 2010. He had maintained a catering business in the kitchen of that home, so his business was lost in addition to his residence. If that wasn’t enough, he had to be rescued from the top floor of his home by Red Cross Volunteers in a canoe. He had no flood insurance.

“To make a long story short, he came to our congregation several times the past couple years. Each time he updated me on his progress to buy another home and restart his business. He accomplished this in 2012 - with the help of FEMA and SBA loans and the sale of his land where his house used to be. He bought a home in Hendersonville. He reopened the business at a separate site. He rehired all his former employees and kept all his former clients. Unbelievable!”

## HE’S COME FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Once homeless, Now a volunteer

### DeShone Bell

DeShone has been on both sides of the road on “The Journey Home.”

“The Lord helped me when I was homeless, so I try to bless those in need.”

DeShone and his family were once homeless. They needed help. When they came to Room In The Inn DeShone was given the resources, he says, “to help me find a job interview.” He didn’t get the job, but he did get connected with Operation Stand Down (a partner agency with Room In The Inn that helps veterans).

When asked what he would want someone to know about Room In The Inn, DeShone said, “I remember the lady working the support desk that helped me. This angel gave me Hope, Dignity, Respect, and Love. She let me cry the tears of shame and hurt away. She allowed me to be vulnerable and assured me that I wasn’t weak but strong for seeking help. Though I don’t remember her name, I remember her kind act. This is the most important thing I would want anyone to know about Room In The Inn: You Are Kind because You Care!”

DeShone now volunteers six or more hours a week during the fall and winter working with Room In The Inn at his congregation. He says, “It takes time away from my family, but I try to make up for it in other ways. My family knows the importance of sacrifice and service to others.”

This season will be DeShone’s third year volunteering at Hillcrest Seventh Day Adventist. “And I will continue because I love being of service to people.”



# GIVES “LIFE” TO PARTICIPANTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Lipscomb LIFE coordinator and Professor of History

## Richard Goode

Richard has been a volunteer with Room In The Inn for years, for somewhere around 10 years he cooked breakfast for the overnight guests at Woodmont Hills Church of Christ. Recently he has taken on a new role. He is in charge of coordinating the Lipscomb LIFE program. A partnership to have our residents and Lipscomb undergraduate students come together in the same general curriculum classes and earn credits toward a degree while learning a little more about diversity in our community.

When the classes are in session he spends up to 15 hours per month lining up faculty to teach class, communicating with Room In The Inn, helping our residents come out to the Lipscomb campus to get their student IDs and email accounts set up, and other tasks. Richard says he began volunteering so many years ago at his church because “somebody probably asked me to get involved and it just seemed to be the right thing to do.” More interesting maybe is what he sees now. “The Room In The Inn guys come out to get their student ID’s and get such a kick out of it. There was even a time in the spring or early summer where there was a concert at Lipscomb; the students - Room In The Inn residents and Lipscomb undergrads - came together as a group. Outside of the classroom setting they all went to the concert together. It was great to see them building that community together!”

The partnership between Room In The Inn and the Lipscomb Life program began in the Spring 2012 term. At the time this issue is going to print there are 9 Room In The Inn residents enrolled in classes.



## HIS LAST NIGHT

Brookmeade UCC Volunteer

## Elvis Cherry

“One very cold night 10 homeless men entered Brookmeade UCC. A

few members of our congregation welcomed them, offered them a bed and a hot meal. The dining room was cleaned up, servers went home, and the men and I settled down to watch football on TV. Most of the men went to bed as they had spent the day working day-labor jobs or walking the streets.

“Around 3:00 a.m. a guest came to get me saying someone was having a seizure. The man was having a heart attack. He passed away that night, but not alone, not cold, and not hungry.

“He went on to a better place, but his last night was a good, safe, comforted one, with people who cared about him. I think he knew that. I hope so.”

## AMAZED

St. George's Episcopal Church Innkeeper

## Robert Riggan

“I am always blown away by the positivism and optimism of our guests. If anyone had room to complain, it would be these guys. But that’s not the case. They’re grateful for their accommodations that night and seem optimistic about the future. A lesson for all of us.”

## A “LIFE” STUDENT

Michael Mooney came to Room In The Inn in August, 2010 after detoxing in a Murfreesboro hospital. He began the pre-Odyssey process in October, but was not accepted because he had never completed a treatment program (a prerequisite for our transitional housing program for the chronically homeless). Michael agreed to begin the United Neighborhood Health clinic outpatient rehabilitation program and soon after completing was able to enter Odyssey in February, 2011

Michael came to Odyssey with some significant heart problems...he even had a heart attack while in the program. Still Michael was able to hold down a full-time job at Home Depot and just a few short weeks ago received a good six-month review.

Michael joined the Lipscomb LIFE program at the beginning of this year. During the Spring, he was helping a customer load some things into his truck at Home Depot when he noticed a Lipscomb sticker on the vehicle. Michael asked if he had children that attended the school, or if he was a professor. The customer responded that all of his children had either gone to Lipscomb or were attending Lipscomb and that he himself was on the Board of Trustees. Michael explained that he was benefiting greatly from the LIFE program and that he appreciated the opportunity to prove to himself that he could do this.

The customer shook Michael's hand and said that he would go back and let the board know that the LIFE program is doing a wonderful job.

Unfortunately, after giving this interview on October 12, Michael died during the night. Michael would have been 52 years old on November 4th. He would have been sober three years on December 1st.



Photo: by Mickey Dobo

The Memorial Tree adorns Room In The Inn's downtown campus lobby. On it are hundreds of leaves of clay, each a memorial to the men and women who have died while living on the streets of Nashville.

## WE MOURN

by Mary Wilder

John Henry  
Lawrence Burnett  
James Clinard  
Amanda Cranford (wife of staff member)  
Donna Adams  
Kenneth Carpenter  
Jim Fleming (Chair of Room In The Inn board)

Stephanie Alexander  
Nicolae Craiun  
Scott Fowler  
Michael Mooney  
Dexter Lee  
David Boone (volunteer)  
Robert E. Mitchell

**WE** are no strangers to the realities of life on the streets, so we are not surprised by tragedy. We may be saddened, angry, or discouraged but not surprised. Because our participants encounter violence, fear, isolation, and illness every day, we work together to create a sanctuary in an urban wilderness.

October has been especially tough for the Room In The Inn community. Two of our beloved community members died suddenly. Dexter had taken part in our Odyssey program and had moved on to live in one of our affordable housing units. He volunteered leading 12 Step meetings here and was described as a "pillar" to others new to recovery. Michael had also been a member of Odyssey and was working at Home Depot. He would have had three years of sobriety in December. I was struck by how many of his fellow Odyssey members described him as one of their "best buddies." Both men were 51 years old and died from apparent heart attacks.

As I listen to stories about their time at Room In The Inn, I am amazed by the number of people who touched the lives of Dexter and Michael. They stayed in the winter shelter program, lived in the Guest House, graduated from Odyssey, studied in the Lipscomb LIFE program, attended hundreds of Twelve Step meetings. Each phase of their time with us involved the work of Room In The Inn volunteers, all of whom had a role in supporting Dexter and Michael on their journeys. Every word of encouragement, every hot meal, every class, every moment spent listening contributed to their own mighty efforts towards change and recovery. We can only guess what small actions and words meant the world to Dexter and Michael. We have a saying at Room In The Inn: we can plant the seed but we do not always get to pick the fruit. Despite our profound sorrow, we rejoice that we did get to see Dexter and Michael triumph.

## INNSIDE

by Rachel Hester,  
**Executive Director**

As a college freshman, I was asked by my congregation to volunteer at the emergency shelter program. Given my inability to cook, drive the church bus, or spend the night due to curfew at the dorm, I could not imagine what I had to offer as a volunteer. I came anyway and did the only thing I knew to do...I started talking. What I found was that as I was offering my version of hospitality—and the guests were offering it right back at me.

I could hardly wait from week to week to volunteer. I realize now that sitting and talking and playing board games with our guests was helping us build relationships. We were all on a journey. I remember listening to the stories of perseverance, faith, and forks in the road that didn't always lead to the place they had hoped. Week after week, guest after guest, it became clear that they needed what I needed...and it started with acceptance of who we were at that moment...just as we were.

More than 20 years later, I still cherish that initial volunteer experience as one of the most defining of my life, not for what I gave, but for what I received.

Last year, over 6000 volunteers citywide participated in our emergency winter shelter programs through 177 congregations offering hospitality and hope to those struggling with homelessness. Additionally, more than 250 individual volunteers offer support at our downtown campus regularly.

Volunteers lead most of our classes, they lead our legal clinic, serve meals for 200-300 people at a time, serve in our foot clinic, help in the office, run the support desk, and so many other jobs that are essential to our day to day operations. We simply could not fulfill our mission without them. Volunteers are much more than a statistic they are the heart and soul of who we are.



### ROOM IN THE INN PROGRAMS & SERVICES

**CRISIS SUPPORT** Day Shelter and Emergency Winter Shelter • Veterans' Drop-in Center • Rent and utility assistance • Social detox in partnership with Metro Police

**Hospitality** Documentation • Meal Program • Transportation • Personal care/Laundry • Prescription Assistance • Address/Mail

**EDUCATION** Literacy/Library • Computer skills training • Job coaching • Creative expression/Life skills • Alcohol & Drug Education • Weekly spiritual services

**Shelter** Recuperative care for the medically fragile • Housing for those awaiting or in Alcohol & Drug treatment programs • Transitional housing for the chronically homeless and veterans • Short term and long-term storage • Secure document and medication storage

**LONG TERM SOLUTIONS** On-Campus permanent, affordable housing • Case management • Employment search and placement assistance • Long-term communities • AA/NA meetings

The Journey Home  
705 DREXEL STREET • NASHVILLE, TN 37203  
P: (615) 251-9791 • F: (615) 251-3274  
WWW. ROOMINTHEINN.ORG



**What can you do to volunteer? Here are some staff suggestions:**

**Onsite Opportunities:**

Activity Center: Activities Facilitator, Support Desk, Laundry Program, Shower Program, Foot Clinic, Storage Attendant

Education: Class Instructors, Library Assistant, Computer Lab, Break Room Hospitality, Store Attendant, AA/NA/CA, Workforce Development, Women's Group Leaders

Odyssey Program: Class Instructors, Activities Coordinator, Odyssey Dinner

Recovery Communities: Phone Monitor, Hospitality Coordinator, Life Skills Instructor, Activities Coordinator, Nurse, Co-occurring and Co-dependency Meeting Leaders

Permanent Housing: Evening Activities Coordinator, Case Management Assistant, Gardening

Facilities: Kitchen Assistant, Cleaning Assistant, Café Entertainment

**Offsite Opportunities:**

Sponsor a Donation Drive for: toiletries, socks, art supplies, books, bus passes, gift cards, items for the store

Host a Speaker: invite a member of the Room In The Inn community to share their story and expertise with your community

Serve at your Congregation: sign up to assist with the winter shelter program at your place of worship

Encouragement Gifts: Treats bags to give our guests with words of encouragement, placemats to use during meal times, center pieces for the dining room tables

**BY THE NUMBERS...**



...VOLUNTEERS PROVIDED

**167,052** HOURS LAST FISCAL YEAR

...At MINIMUM WAGE

**\$1,211,127**

Is the amount we didn't have to raise to pay a staff member to provide services



**314** PARTICIPANTS WERE SERVED BY 60 LAWYERS in our Legal Clinic



**3,043**

CLASSES WERE OFFERED BY 1,714 TEACHERS for a total of 43,879 instructional hours



**23,000** LUNCHES Served in partnership with Luke 14:12, area congregations, businesses, and volunteer groups

**OVER 6,250** VOLUNTEERS IN

**177**

CONGREGATIONS & DOWNTOWN

**OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS**

**Out of the box Opportunities:**

Host a Special Event: Poetry Readings, Art Show, Coffee House Nights, Movie Nights, Book Club

Host a Foot Clinic: Invite your community to care for the feet of your congregation's guests during the winter months

Become a Room In The Inn Ambassador: Learn the ins and outs of showing people what services Room In The Inn provides and act as a building docent

Host a Donation Party: Sock Hop to collect new socks, Welcome Shower to collect new apartment items, Birthday Party to collect gift cards to Kroger, Wal-Mart or Target, Health and Wellness Party to collect over-the-counter medications



Mike Fisher and Carrie Underwood talk with participants, Don and Herman, on the night that they volunteered to serve a meal at Room In The Inn's downtown campus.

# Heart & Soul

The Black Hands African Drumming Circle from Colorado volunteered by providing music at the downtown campus.



By Charlie Strobel, Founding Director

Twenty-eight years ago this year I began an amazing journey that I'm still on. I saw men in my church's parking lot who needed to come in from the cold, and I still don't know why I decided to let them in since I was aware of how wrong it could have gone, but I did. It seemed to me that leaving them outside would be more wrong than the risk of inviting them in.

That first night I was alone—but only for a night. From there on out during that first winter a group of caring individuals came to help shelter people at Holy Name Church—before Room In The Inn was any

more than a whisper of an idea.

They were all volunteers, and they came together to clean, and launder, and feed, and do so many other tasks, including the important offering of some friendly conversation. All this we now call the “grace of hospitality.” Ever so gradually and simply, we realized that what we were really doing was loving and caring about people who needed us. That insight was so contagious that by the next winter, Room In The Inn was born as a fledgling enterprise of 4 congregations.

From our beginnings in 1986, everything was done by volunteers.

It wasn't until 1988, that we had a small staff of 3 to start worrying about what else could be done. But I was convinced then, and continue to be, that the volunteers are at the center of our ministry of love. Without them we wouldn't have a heart, we wouldn't have a soul.

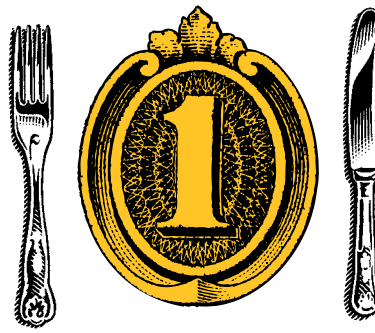
I want to take this moment and express my appreciation to the thousands of volunteers who have helped me stay on this journey by their practice of the grace of hospitality.



### Demetria Kalodimos

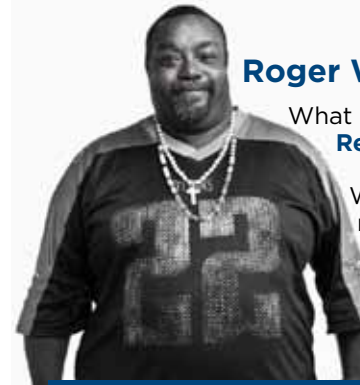
What feeds your soul?  
**Genuine human kindness.**

What is your favorite holiday meal?  
**Believe it or not, first day leftovers.**



# STREETSMART

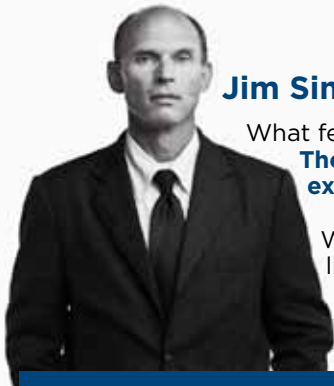
HELPING THE HOMELESS



### Roger Webster

What feeds your soul?  
**Reading my Bible.**

What does "hospitality" mean to you?  
**Serving other people.  
Serving food.  
Washing dishes.**



### Jim Simpson

What feeds your soul?  
**The Bible and exercise.**

What do programs like Room In The Inn mean to you?  
**Hope.**

This November 23rd through December 31st, **StreetSmart** will raise funds for **Room In The Inn** by adding a voluntary \$1 per bill at participating area restaurants.

Thanks to programs like **StreetSmart**—and the generosity of supporters like you—**Room In The Inn** offers our neighbors struggling with homelessness a chance to shed old labels and to restore their identity.

We offer a chance to heal. We offer hospitality and love. We offer a place in which to feed one's body and one's soul.

As you dine out this holiday season, please look for participating StreetSmart restaurants, and consider:

## "WHAT FEEDS YOUR SOUL?"



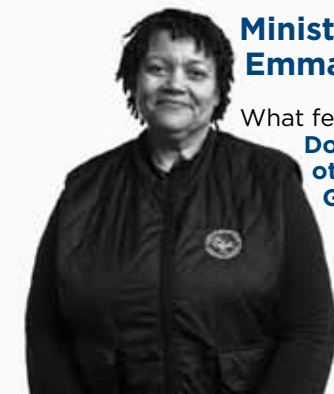
Home is where the is.

705 Drexel Street Nashville 615-251-9791 [roomintheinn.org](http://roomintheinn.org)



### Mike Fisher

What feeds your soul?  
**Being outside in the quiet and wilderness. The Bible. Helping other people - one's faith in action makes you feel good and confirms you are doing what you are called to do.**



### Minister Emma Dee Harlan

What feeds your soul?  
**Doing good towards others and reading God's Word.**

Who is the best cook you've ever known?  
**My handsome husband, an ex-Marine corporal.**



### Jay Hankins

What feeds your soul?  
**Music.**

What does "hospitality" mean to you?  
**Giving someone the safety you have in your life.**

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