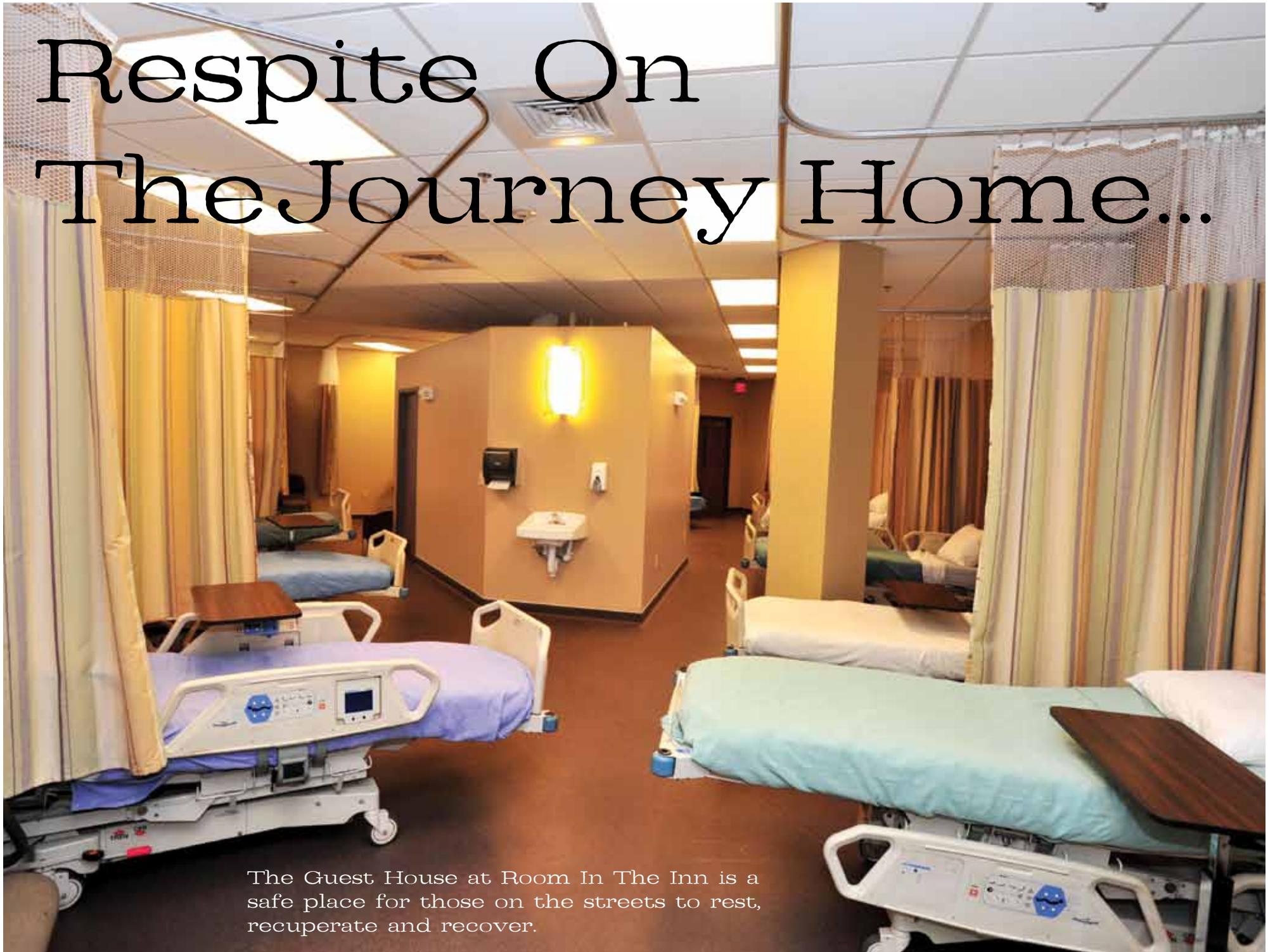




VOL. X ISSUE 1  
SPRING, 2012

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

# Respite On The Journey Home...



The Guest House at Room In The Inn is a safe place for those on the streets to rest, recuperate and recover.

**T**he Guest House is a place for healing. Not just physical healing, but mental and spiritual healing. It is a safe place where those who are struggling with life can come for rest and refuge. Our mission is rooted in biblical passages about curing the wounded, the sick, and the dying. Since its inception, the Guest House has most often welcomed those addicted to alcohol and other drugs. We see addiction as a medical and social issue rather than a criminal one, something to be addressed with the individual instead of by law. Today the purpose of the Guest House remains the same, but on a larger scale. There are four different categories of beds: 1) for individuals who are publicly intoxicated; 2) for those pending treatment; 3) for those currently in treatment; and, 4) for pre and post-surgery care, wound care, or recovery from minor illnesses (such as the flu).

As with other programs on Campus, we could not run the Guest House without the help of volunteers such as Dr. Jud Rogers. When a guest needs stabilization of a chronic condition like diabetes, or has wounds that won't heal, Dr. Rogers is our best resource. He says "One of the things I enjoy about volunteering is that it is a way to connect with a vulnerable part of our community."

We also offer case management. Our goal is for each person to leave our care with more stability than when they arrived.

Joyce Kavocs, Assistant Superintendent for Program Services at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute says: "The Guest House program provides the opportunity for patients discharging from MTMHI to engage in programs aimed at eliminating chronic homelessness and recovery from addictive substances and mental illness. They specialize in working with individuals without insurance and little to no income. The Guest House is certainly a valuable resource to MTMHI and the greater Nashville Community."

The beds used for medical issues help guests with a variety of needs. These are beds for those who would otherwise have gone home to recuperate if they had one.

There are beds for those pending alcohol and drug treatment. During their stay we offer pre-treatment groups and individual case management to keep them engaged until they are placed at a treatment facility.

# The Guest House

by Tammi Newton,  
Recovery Community Director

There are beds available for those who find placement in out-patient treatment.

Finally, there are beds for those publicly intoxicated who would otherwise be sleeping on the streets or in jail. These guests are offered the opportunity to seek treatment. Our hope is that once sober, the guest will accept our offer to stay and receive services. Because of our partnership with the police department, this program saves our community thousands of dollars a month and gives the participant an opportunity to seek help for their addiction in lieu of jail time.

The Guest House is definitely a special place. Every day the guests report how much they appreciate three hot meals, rest, and the healing process. We believe that process grows out of God's healing love. For as the Psalmist prays: "God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds..," we too pray, "O Lord, my God, I cried out to you and you healed me..." (Ps 30:3).

Tammi Newton has been Room In The Inn's Recovery Community Director for three years. She is a licensed therapist and has been in the social services field for 19 years.

# THE NEED FOR RESPITE CARE

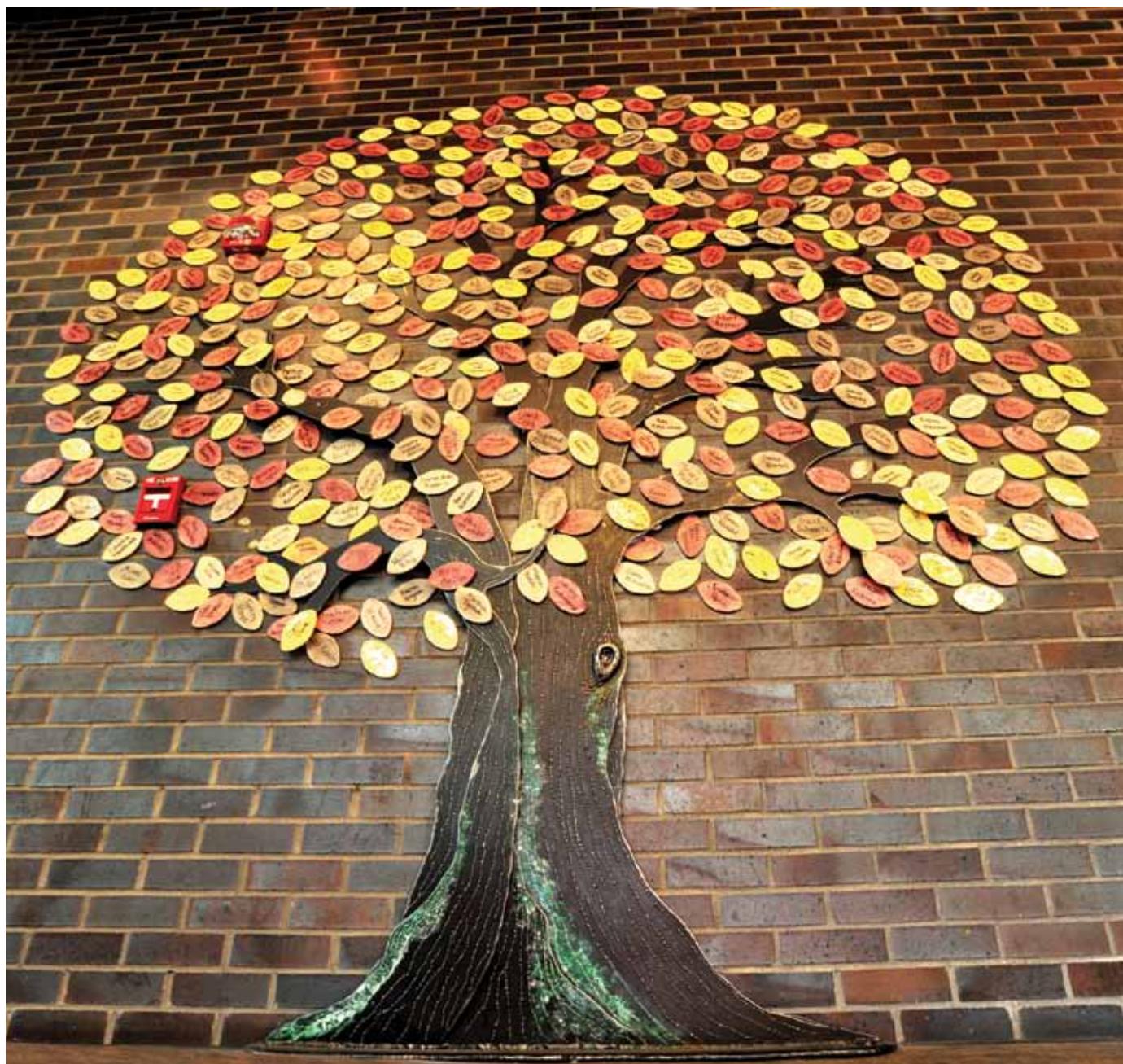
by Charles Strobel, Founding Director

Immediately upon entering our new facility, you will see our Memorial Tree that has on its leaves the names of over 650 individuals who have come through Room In The Inn since our beginnings in 1986, and yet died without getting off the streets. They are a reminder that the crisis of homelessness is the crisis of death. Our Guest House Programs highlight our struggle to prevent their dying.

Back in 1991, the Metro General Sessions judges approached us about the problem of overcrowding at the Metro jail. They said that the "drunk tank," as it was commonly called, was always filled to capacity. Publicly intoxicated people constantly were being arrested and booked for a four-hour stay. The judges asked if we would receive them instead. We agreed, and the Guest House was created providing Metro Police an alternative to jail for the publicly intoxicated. Since then it has been a refuge for

thousands who the police bring to us but who are not under arrest, as we want to treat them as a medical and social problem, rather than a criminal one. In addition to being a sanctuary for the publicly intoxicated, a side benefit for the community is the cost savings. What once took the police two hours for booking, now takes only ten minutes and those hours that are saved can be reinvested in other law enforcement efforts. Moreover, a stay at our Guest House costs less than a stay in jail.

In time, other individuals who were in a medically fragile condition were also welcomed for recuperative care, and a more formal Respite Program evolved. Like so much of our history, what started small has grown to the point that we have increased our original 20 beds to 65 in our newly renovated building. Meanwhile, the struggle to prevent the dying of so many grows as well.



## WE MOURN

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.

Denise Lomax  
Dorothy Upchurch  
Jeffrey Burgess  
Jeff DeHart  
Hans Soto  
Ricky Teasley  
Dennis Sparrow  
Eugene Harris  
Bobby Horton  
Roy Hall  
Earl Majors  
Donald Sage  
Robert Potter  
Quinton Ganter  
Richard Gagne  
Deborah Harris  
Debra Mock  
Richard Steele  
Willie Shoemaker

Douglas Johnson  
Joseph Powell  
Charlie Potter  
Calvin Holmes  
Tim Page  
Hugh Hunt  
Dr. Mary Jo Howland,  
Room In The Inn  
coordinator, for St.  
David's Episcopal Church  
and  
James Vaughn, long  
time volunteer at  
People's Church.

IF YOU CAN  
ONLY READ  
ONE STORY,  
READ THIS...

with us, he has had his social security disability approved, his medications stabilized, and, through the Mental Health Cooperative, he has obtained a case manager who helped him locate appropriate permanent supportive housing.

John is just one example of the many individuals that come to Room In The Inn, seeking refuge in our Respite Program. Here, we attempt to alleviate some of the mental and physical ills or traumas associated with an individual experiencing homelessness.

# LOVE HEALS

by Lauren Russell, Recovery Community Case Manager

John came to Room In The Inn seeking respite. Sick. Alone. Unable to care for himself. And homeless. How does a person get to a state of such fragility and homelessness? There are many reasons, usually a domino effect of one reason after another. An unfortunate event, addiction, mental or physical illness, trauma, living paycheck to paycheck until the sudden job loss (or other financial hardship) finds you at a dead end. For John, a 41-year-old man; small and stout in stature, with a warm, childlike smile, our Guest House meant a safe place to stay and a great deal of care.

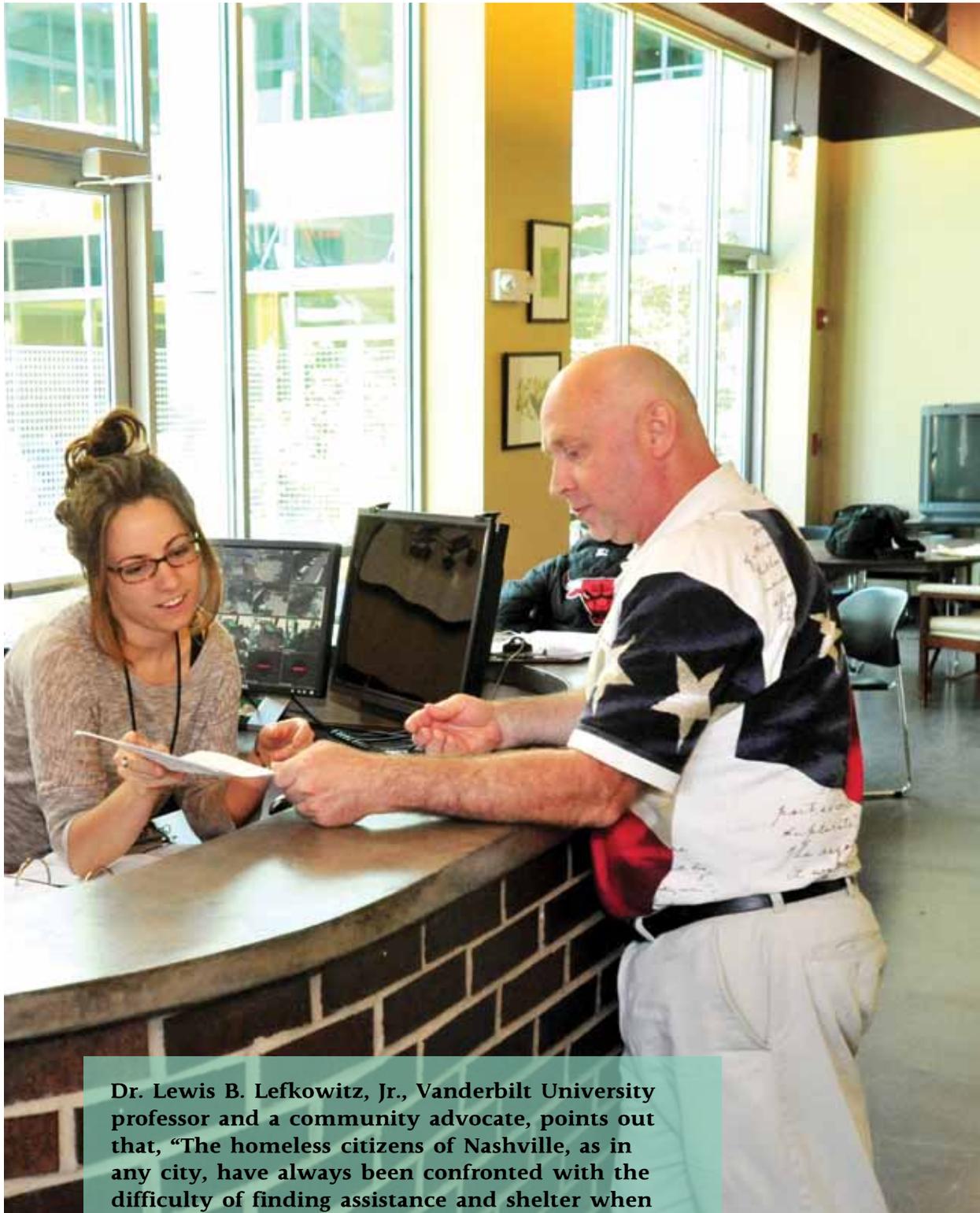
John suffers from developmental disabilities, and although he is on the high-functioning end of the scale, he also has diabetes. Up until a year and a half ago, John lived with his elderly mother. When she died, he was cared for by his sister. But months after his mother's death, John suffered a stroke that caused brain damage and affected his motor skill control. John's sister began to realize she could not properly care for her brother. In frustration and exhaustion, she brought him to the hospital saying she could not take him back.

That is when John's social worker at the hospital contacted Room In The Inn's Guest House to see if he could be admitted to the Respite Program. Since John has been

Tammi Newton, Guest House Coordinator, had this to say about John's case: "John's story is definitely one of the reasons recuperative care for the homeless was created. He was very sick and his situation would have not improved without the dedicated staff of Room In The Inn and the Mental Health Cooperative. Through our team effort we were able to secure him an income and permanent housing in a program that can provide for him for the rest of his life. That is one of the primary goals of the Respite Program. We don't just put a band-aid on someone's situation; we work hard to find a solution for the long-term."

Not only did John gain access to resources here that helped his health and homeless situation improve, he also found a place that offered him some peace and reprieve from his prior instability. Through the staff and other participants he has found friendship, compassion and loving kindness. Our aim for the Respite Program is to help meet an individual's physical needs, and also provide a safe and loving place for the mind and heart to take refuge and start to heal.

Lauren Russell worked various positions in the mental health and social service fields for five years before coming to Room In The Inn as the permanent housing case manager nearly two years ago. She currently dedicates her time as the Recovery Communities case manager focusing primarily on the Recuperative Care program in the Guest House.



Dr. Lewis B. Lefkowitz, Jr., Vanderbilt University professor and a community advocate, points out that, “The homeless citizens of Nashville, as in any city, have always been confronted with the difficulty of finding assistance and shelter when recovering from acute medical conditions, and when impaired by neglected chronic physical and mental health problems. Even though there is access to primary health services at the Downtown Clinic and public hospitals, truly continuing and comprehensive care is rarely achieved; and, if hospitalized, such patients usually require aftercare, ordinarily provided in the home, a place they do not have. The result is all too often early readmission, and preventable complications.

## INNSIDE

by Rachel Hester, Executive Director  
More and more individuals are coming to us with medical conditions beyond public intoxication. They are walk-ins or they come from hospitals or other agencies needing recuperative care for all kinds of conditions.



Among them:

- \*acute/chronic illnesses (bronchitis, pneumonia, HIV/AIDS, cirrhosis, diabetes, gastrointestinal bleeding, cancer, heart disease, ascitis, esophagitis)
- \*trauma/assault victims (gunshot wounds, stab wounds, orthopedic injuries, head injuries)
- \*post-surgical recovery or pre-surgical preparation
- \*skin conditions (wounds, ulcers, cellulites, exposure/frostbite)

Respite care has significance on two fronts: 1) the benefits to the individuals we serve who are still at medical risk and 2) to the hospitals that discharge them. This program offers a 24/7 bed, rest, meals, medical observation, and healthcare management at the minimum, as well as opportunities for additional ancillary services as appropriate (A&D assessment and referral, social case workers for housing and entitlement services). These basic essentials for anyone recovering from a medical problem that required hospitalization are, unfortunately, elusive to most homeless individuals.

More importantly, by providing Respite, we have an opportunity to live out our core values and offer hospitality and grace to the most vulnerable of our community.



### 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



by Shannon Niswander,  
Case Manager for Permanent Housing

Those of us who work at the Room In The Inn kitchen are tasked with providing nutritious meals for our participants. First and foremost, we utilize any and all donations that come to us to feed the homeless. Partnerships with Bridgestone Arena and Costco provide the bulk of our food donations. Our next most important source of food is Second Harvest. They are able to supply most of the meat we use at minimal cost. We also participate in a USDA program which provides some free items. And, there are many very generous individual donors like Hunters for the Hungry and our Room In The Inn Congregations.

At the downtown campus, we currently provide three hot and healthy meals to between 75 and 100 participants of Odyssey and Guest House every day. We also provide lunches for between 250 and 300 participants three days per week through a partnership with Luke 14:12 and other volunteers. Recently we have added a new volunteer group to our Thursday lunch program; Hunters for the Hungry who have been donating venison.

Matt Simcox of the Tennessee Wildlife Federation and coordinator of Hunters for the Hungry said at a recent February meal, "It is gratifying to see the Hunters for the Hungry program benefiting Tennesseans who need it most. We're utilizing a healthy, renewable resource to benefit our fellow man, and I can't think of a better way to share God's love."

Rev. Amy Dodson-Watts, Executive Director of Luke 14:12 says: "Each week Luke 14:12 soup kitchen serves over 500 of Nashville's hungry and homeless out of Room In The Inn's dining room. Luke 14:12 is intentional about the meals we serve to our guests. Fatty meats and carbohydrates are cheap and easy to come by, but fresh fruits and vegetables are more difficult. Every meal that Luke 14:12

Picture above: Matt of the Tennessee Wildlife Federation and Hunters for the Hungry, serves venison chili.

At right: Kenny, a resident in the Affordable Housing Program..

serves includes an entree, a carbohydrate, vegetables, salad, fruit, bread, dessert and milk or tea. Guests are served dinner-style, utilizing volunteer groups from congregations, businesses and the community. Those who eat at Luke 14:12 lunches receive quality, nutritious food and are served by their neighbors with grace, respect and hospitality."

The common theme of all these different efforts and meals is love in a family style setting. Kenny Elliott, a resident in our affordable housing, sums it up well: "I get it. Early on in the apartments I wouldn't talk to others; just said "Hi" and stayed in my apartment. Then I started going to crockpot cooking classes. I started talking with the guys, especially John Gonzalez, and felt good about having a meal together. It's like family. That's what is important."

Shannon has worked as the Kitchen/Facilities Team Leader for the past 2 ½ years at Room In The Inn, but currently enjoys her position as Permanent Housing Case Manager where she gets to work directly with the tenants in the apartments.



Holly Bernardo, a licensed therapist, is a new addition to the Room In The Inn staff. She works with the homeless women and the men in the Odyssey program. Women who participate in Room In The Inn hosted by congregations, attend a class with Holly each Monday through Friday. This class offers them a number of resources and educational opportunities. While Room In The Inn provides safety, shelter, and takes care of their most immediate physical needs during the winter months. Holly is able to provide emotional support, crisis management, and to be a resource for their psychiatric needs. The women are able to schedule individual counseling appointments when needed. Many of the women in the program have mental health problems that are related to their homelessness. Their families are not able to care for them, and when they are taken to psychiatric

## The th

by Ursula Cunningham, Odyssey Coordinator

hospitals they are only kept for several days. They have long term problems and need structure and education that is not provided so they end up on the streets.

Holly also works with Odyssey men who are in a group transitional housing and post-treatment program at the campus. In this program, the men attend educational and therapeutic classes and groups, and they receive housing, addiction recovery support and job readiness training. In addition, Holly provides individual counseling. Jerry Reinhart, Room In The Inn's Workforce Development Coordinator, sees the importance of counseling in the job search. He said, "Holly's insights from working closely with the Odyssey men are instrumental in their recovery and provide additional support for them. What Holly does is to help build self-esteem, confidence and motivation for men entering their internship or beginning the job search process."

Women in the morning class work on a sewing project.

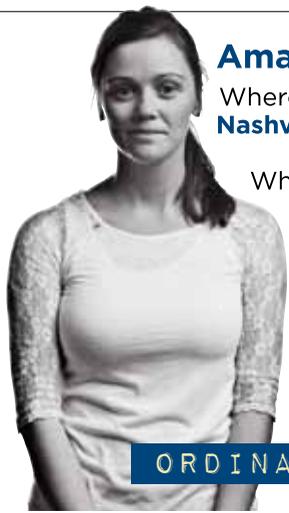
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Many of the men in this program see her weekly but their appointments are made based on their immediate needs. The men appreciate the chance to continue working on their recovery outside of group classes. Donald said about Holly, "You can be open with her, and I was able to use her as a sponsor until I could find one. I really like her style."

Even more specifically, Donnell said, "I've been through several treatment programs, but Odyssey is a step above. It has introduced new things. I can talk to Holly about bad relationships, and she has been able to help me put together what's wrong with having a relationship while I'm working on my recovery."

"As participants work on their recovery, many traumatic and emotional issues surface. Holly brings a consistent, caring presence that helps build a strong therapeutic relationship during the healing process." Mary Wilder, Operations Director.

Ursula has been working at Room In The Inn since 2006 and has been the Odyssey Coordinator for 5 years. She enjoys working with the men in the program because it allows her the opportunity to see hope flourish in the lives of the men as they transition from homelessness to a life of sobriety, independence, and freedom.



### Amanda Jones

Where were you born?  
**Nashville, TN**

What quality do you appreciate most in a friend or neighbor?  
**Truthfulness.**

What does home mean to you?  
**Friends, neighbors, community.**

**ORDINARY**

### Gerardo Duran

Where were you born?  
**Juarez, Mexico**

What makes Nashville home?  
**Friends.**

What does home mean to you?  
**Where your heart is.**

**ETERNAL OPTIMIST**

### Jim Simpson

Where were you born?  
**Greenwood, SC**

What does home mean to you?  
**A place where you can be yourself and relax at the end of the day.**

**HEALER**

# RE-LABEL

**We are assigned many labels as we travel through life. Student. Parent. Employee. Homeowner. Homeless.**

These labels often disguise our true selves and never capture who we really are.

Twenty-six years ago, Room In The Inn opened its doors with no regard for such labels.

Today, as we continue working to integrate the lives of people struggling with homelessness with those of their Nashville neighbors, we offer all who step through our doors the chance to be their own label makers - and to make themselves at home no matter where they've traveled from.



Home is where the is.

705 Drexel Street Nashville  
615-251-9791 roomintheinn.org

### Minister Emma Dee G. Harlan

Where were you born?  
**Vancouver, BC, Canada**

What quality do you appreciate most in a friend or neighbor?  
**Trustworthiness.**

What do you love most about Nashville?  
**The people.**

**CONCERNED PARENT**

### Jay Hankins

Where were you born?  
**High Point, NC**

What do you love most about Nashville?  
**It's laid-back, but never too dull!**

**FOODIE**

### Roger Webster

Where were you born?  
**Maury County, TN**

What does home mean to you?  
**"If I had a home, and I saw someone who needed it, I would offer them food, a shower, a place to stay, and clothes. That's home."**

**TEACHER**

**VOLUNTEER NEEDS FOR GUEST HOUSE: WE ARE ALWAYS IN NEED OF MORE VOLUNTEERS FOR AA/NA 12 STEP CLASS LEADERS, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS, TRAINED WOUND CARE, CHAPLINS AND STEPHENS' MINISTERS.**

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