



# HOMeward

SPRING 2018

## Street outreach: Roy and Orlando meet people where they are

Every day many of us walk or drive past people on the streets and in crisis. For outreach workers Roy Jackson and Orlando Stevenson, stopping to help is their full-time job.

Just like you, Roy and Orlando root for those they meet every day: A father bringing money and food to his daughter who is sleeping outside. A man trying to reconnect with his brothers. Couples who avoid shelters where they'd be forced to separate.

Roy and Orlando support and connect people to care. As Roy puts it, "Outreach means meeting people where they are and building relationships. It's about letting them know what options for care are available."

This winter, Roy and Orlando have been visiting a couple living in a tent in North Baltimore who face forcible removal in the near future. They have built up a rapport with the couple, offering them rides to one of our clinics and information about housing options.

A few weeks ago, Roy and Orlando made the familiar drive



*For outreach workers Roy Jackson (left) and Orlando Stevenson (right), stopping to help people on the street is their full-time job.*

up to North Baltimore to help the couple move out of their tent and into a better situation—a local shelter.

"That's the positive of being on outreach," Orlando says. "Knowing that we have a great connection, that clients know us and trust us."

Getting to this place of trust and guidance takes patience, persistence and ongoing support from people like you.

No matter how long it takes, Roy and Orlando don't give up on people. Each day brings a fresh opportunity for better health and home.

"When you manage to help someone get off the street and into housing, there's nothing like it," says Roy. "It's why I'm here."



### Call 211

See someone on the street who needs care? Call 211 to mobilize outreach workers like Roy and Orlando.

# Thanks to you, the Clarkes aren't alone



*Amelia delivers quality care just upstairs from a Baltimore County shelter.*

“I didn’t expect to end up here,” Mr. Clarke says, sitting next to his son in an exam room. “Coming here from a different country, you’re supposed to do better, not worse.”

The Clarkes moved to the Baltimore area from Canada in 2016. They moved into an apartment, relying primarily on Mrs. Clarke’s income. When she lost her job, they couldn’t make rent and were evicted. And they have spent much of this winter staying in the Baltimore County family shelter just downstairs from one of our clinics.

Their teenage sons worry that classmates will find out where they stay and wonder when they can play a school

sport again. Each night, 60–90 children and their families stay at the Eastern Family Resource Center, a family shelter in Baltimore County.

Thanks to our strong relationship with the shelter, and strong support from people like you, we quickly became a resource for the Clarkes. Amidst so much uncertainty, they don’t have to worry now about things like their oldest son’s strep throat going untreated due to lack of insurance.

Instead, they have easy access to flu shots, antibiotics and a sense of reliable, quality care in the same building where they are staying. And that gives Mr. Clarke a sense of optimism.

“Nobody wants to be in a homeless shelter,” he says. “But I tell my sons it could be worse. We have 90 days to find a place. Hopefully we’ll get something soon.”

Meanwhile, we will be just upstairs, ready to care for his family for as long as it takes.

Learn more about the lack of affordable housing in our region at [www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland](http://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland).



## DONATE

This Mother’s Day, donate in honor of the strong women in your life. \$100 covers one day of care at a local family shelter.

[giving.hchmd.org/mothersday](http://giving.hchmd.org/mothersday)



## VOLUNTEER

Prepare and deliver healthy bagged lunches for our clients to eat during support groups.

Email: [donations@hchmd.org](mailto:donations@hchmd.org)



## CONNECT

See our downtown clinic—and the work you support. Tour starts at 9 a.m. on Thursday, May 17.

RSVP to [cbauer@hchmd.org](mailto:cbauer@hchmd.org)



*Clients find a moment of calm during one of our yoga classes.*

## Take a deep breath

*Deirdre Hoey, LCSW-C on yoga as alternative therapy*

### **Q: What is the role of yoga at Health Care for the Homeless?**

Our yoga groups are therapeutic. Some clients have difficulty sharing with people in traditional support groups. Others exist from shelter to soup kitchen and back each day with little or no personal interaction.

Yoga is an opportunity to physically release anxiety but still be part of a group experience. Many clients have also had difficult encounters with the behavioral health system. Yoga—and my presence as a therapist—can be a non-threatening first step toward care. Yoga has been proven effective in the treatment of trauma and depression.

### **Q: Why do you need a therapist in the room?**

Twice a week, our volunteer yoga instructors lead the class. As a therapist, I'm there to help clients navigate the emotions that get stirred up when your mind gets quiet. I also make the process of connecting to other services easier.

### **Q: How do clients respond to yoga?**

Daily life for people without homes often consists of lines, crowds and time constraints. It's all about survival. To leave that outside the door and practice some calmness results in a lot of unexpected relaxation. Clients often say, "I didn't know I could feel this way. I'm going to come back."

## Hope after opioids

Each day, Carlton trekked downtown for heroin. Drugs had landed him 33 years in prison, cost him the support of his family and prevented him from keeping a job.

One day on this daily walk, Carlton spotted our mobile clinic. "Something told me to go in and check it out—I was tired of living with these feelings," he says.

Carlton had been in counseling before, but this time was different. "The feelings I had every day—I never understood them until recently," he says. "At Health Care for the Homeless, I was diagnosed with depression and social anxiety. Now, I'm learning to cope with those feelings in healthy ways."

"Behavioral and physical health are entangled with substance use," says Director of Behavioral Health Jan Ferdous. "So we treat all of those things as one."

Today, Carlton has a new routine. Each week, he practices meditation for his anxiety and attends a support group. Rekindling his relationship with his family will take time, but he's learning to be patient. And it's paying off: Carlton is clean for the first time in 20 years.



*"The Health Care for the Homeless program helps me in ways that no one ever could before," says Carlton.*

# You gave Ray respite from the cold



*Stephanie, Patrick, Ann and Chrissy—just some of our dedicated Connalescent Care staff.*

Last winter, Ray Fitzberger got frostbite on his legs and feet. Doctors had to remove three toes on his left foot. Not long after the surgery, Ray was released from the hospital.

Every day, people we know and love undergo surgery to address life-threatening conditions. If they have no place to go, they get discharged back to the streets.

Luckily, Ray was able to get a bed in our convalescent care program. We provide 25 beds for men and women to rest and heal—in fact, we are the only medical respite program in the Baltimore area for people like Ray.

“People come to us with a big problem, sometimes like frostbite or injury from a car accident, but then we help them deal with other health problems they’re experiencing.

While we work on their medical need, we are able to intervene in other areas of their life as well, so they walk out of here better than when they arrived,” says Behavioral Health Coordinator Phill Sheldon, LCSW-C.

Thanks to your investment in Health Care for the Homeless, we mobilized a nurse, case manager and therapist to help Ray recover from frostbite and to treat him for an acute lung infection.

After 11 months in our convalescent care program, Ray’s foot healed and his caseworker helped him apply for benefits for low-income senior citizens with disabilities. With a little money coming in each month, Ray smoothly transitioned from his convalescent care bed into an apartment in Hampden, where he grew up.

Stable, healthy and housed for the first time in years, Ray finally had the courage to reach out to his long-estranged brother. “He was proud to see me doing well,” Ray says. “When I signed my lease on my apartment, he helped me move in.”

In 2017 alone, you gave more than 160 people, including Ray, the time and space to regain health and stability through the convalescent care program.



*Dave and Karen Bond made a difference in the Fund-A-Need auction.*

## Chocolate Affair 2018: One sweet night

On Saturday, February 3, guests (like you!) joined presenting sponsor CareFirst BlueCross Blueshield for an unforgettable evening. Together, we raised \$630,000+ to help 1,000 neighbors regain health and home.

Enjoy the evening’s featured video at:  
[www.hchmd.org/videos/home-just-beginning](http://www.hchmd.org/videos/home-just-beginning)

## Lobby Day!

On March 1, we pushed for policies to increase access to health care, housing and livable incomes in Maryland...and SUCCEEDED!

Thank YOU for supporting our advocacy work, day in and day out.

Learn about how your advocacy made a difference this session at: [www.hchmd.org/lobby-day](http://www.hchmd.org/lobby-day)



*Dedicated staffer Cyndy—amplifying the voices of our clients on Lobby Day.*