



Fall 2019

HOTEL INC

Helping Others Through Extending Love In the Name of Christ

homeless 2 housed



homeless 2 housed — Original artwork by "Sara"

Everyone living on the street has their own story. They never think it would happen to them or plan to be there.

This is the story of Ray and Sara (not their real names) based on an interview with Executive Director, Rhondell Miller.

Sara, 30, had escaped domestic violence and was at an emergency shelter. Ray, 45, was living with family. He suffers from depression and anxiety. When her length of stay was up at the emergency shelter, Sara was asked to leave. Ray didn't want her living on the street alone so he left his family member's home.

Life outside meant sleeping under a tarp that was a makeshift tent, in a box trailer (with permission) and enduring the cold, rain and heat. And always, there was fear. Ray shared of how they slept with one eye open in fear of attacks and stayed guarded looking out for each other's safety. He described it as the most fearful time of his life and how it can lead you to be paranoid of people and sounds. Sara reiterated how they were always trying to sleep where no one would find them so they would feel safe. This meant moving all of their possessions often, sometimes daily.

They learned of HOTEL INC from others on the street and found their way to us early April of this year.

Sara loves to draw and be creative. She keeps a notebook with her at all times and often some Play-Doh to keep her hands busy and help calm her mind. *(continued on Page 4)*

As the holidays approach, people take time to consider what they're thankful for and many choose to donate some of their time, attention, and resources to others. Your support during this year's National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week will help purchase and remodel 2 homes in 2020 for transitional workforce housing!

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Affordable housing is important for a thriving community. We are asking our community to invest with us in making our Affordable Housing initiative, *Rebuilding Futures*, a reality for many of our neighbors. Visit hotelincbg.com to learn more about our Affordable Housing Initiative and 11-week Preferred Tenant Program.

Our goal of \$125,000 breaks down as follows:

- House purchase \$55,000
- HVAC Service & Tune up \$350
- Roof repairs/replacement \$1500
- Pest Control/Termite Inspection \$350
- Laminate Flooring \$3500
- Door locks \$650
- Landscape \$250
- Pressure Wash/Clean gutters \$585
- Paint and supplies \$250
- Smoke detectors \$100
- Kitchen appliances \$1500
- Washer/Dryer \$800
- Furniture \$1500

Total: \$66,585 per house

(may vary depending on purchase opportunities, conditions, and in-kind services)



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15th
Proclamation at City Hall

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16th
Awareness Walk at Circus Square Park
Registration at 9:30 AM • Walk at 10 AM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17th
Designated Offerings at Local Churches
Video and Bulletin Insert Available Online

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19th
Brown Bag Lunch at First Christian Church
11 AM - 1 PM (1106 State Street, Bowling Green, KY)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21st
Lunch & Learn Tour at HOTEL INC
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM (Must Register to Attend)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22nd
Final Donation Drive at WBKO Television



Special Thanks to Tony & Jayne Pelaski



hotelincbg.com/hhweek



With the close of every year, we often say farewell to a Board Member or two. This year, we will be bidding farewell to **Andy Wilkins**. Having joined the Board in 2013 to fulfill a vacant term and then serve his complete term of six years, he is required to step down as per our bylaws.

Andy has been a pivotal member of the Board during his entire tenure. Since I became President in 2018, he has been a tremendous help to all that have been involved – myself included. Without Andy, I feel it is safe to say that our Housing Plan would not be nearly as far along as it is now. He has brought his experience and connections within the Bowling Green real estate community to the table, and has been an advocating voice for the program since it was first being developed.

We are beyond lucky to have Andy continue to serve along side us on the Housing Committee, as well as lead our team in the upcoming City Shapers program.

Andy, on behalf of the Board, staff, volunteers, and myself – thank you for your years of service and support. It has been an absolute pleasure serving on the Board with you, and your guidance and experience have been invaluable.

— Kevin Gregory
President, HOTEL INC Board of Directors

Manna Mart to offer *Solution Investment Partnerships*

Over the past year we have intentionally focused on a realignment of the food pantry to become a cohesive part of our organization. This has included an assessment of pantry utilizers, volunteers, board members, vendors and leadership. From the results we had a better understanding of need to address friendship, ownership and measurable outcomes.

In friendship that is each of us (staff, volunteer, and program participant) listening to each other, seeing each other as people who bring experience, gifts and skills to the table, and sharing many things we have in common.

Through ownership recognizing that a person who is experiencing food insecurity, economic poverty or homelessness knows what they need to overcome their current circumstance. They may not know all of the steps needed to get there but they have goals and dreams for their families. This led us to have more round table discussions, asking our neighbors to share with us what they needed to be food secure. Within each conversation leaders began to emerge, sharing what they had struggled with and were working on that was helping their families. Some smiled with excitement and shared they would no longer be needing a

food pantry! They shared resources and we listened.

Each need that brought them to the food pantry was and is solvable. Some can be solved within a few months others will be a journey of a few years. For many individuals and families they may not know where to begin and can often feel overwhelmed or alone in the struggle. So we asked about bringing in partners to offer some of the resources and knowledge they shared they needed. With smiles, nods and “yes that would be great” we are now offering *Solution Investment Partnerships*.

Solution Investment Partnerships will be available for up to 120 households per year. This will include a commitment from HOTEL INC and the household that we will work together on the solutions they need to not be food insecure. To be able to provide what they desire for their families. The partnership will include a risk assessment that will help us to prioritize the partnering households, solution based classes, access to the food pantry, round table discussions to continue to work through processes and policies, everyone helping to explore creating a co-op and an individual plan created to navigate their needs

or barriers that hinder self-sufficiency.

While transitioning over the past few years to becoming more of a development and long term solutions based organization we will continue to serve people in a time of crisis as well. Recognizing and having in place identifiers to distinguish between an emergent need or a chronic situation will allow us to serve with our neighbors in a more holistic way.

New Faces



Alan Casada (L) & Harold Bucy (R) are working directly with program participants in the Housing Department as Housing Navigators.



Kyra Tuley (L) is completing her 500 hours internship for her Masters of Social Work degree from WKU.

Jacklyn Hodges (R) is serving 150 hours with us this semester as an Administrative Intern as a part of her education at WKU.



Linda Peltz joined us in August as our Bookkeeper.

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“When the people on the street told us about HOTEL INC, we made our way here and walked in to open arms. I thought we would be able to go somewhere and we did. The services provided was what we needed and were non-judgmental,” said Ray. Not a day went by without drugs and alcohol being offered to them on the streets. Ray, who has been in recovery for 15 years, took each day one at a time. He found a job the week before coming to HOTEL INC and shortly after so did Sara. They were both employed in seasonal jobs but that allowed them to regain some stability while still working to obtain housing again.

They each enrolled in the *Preferred Tenant Program*. This included 22 hours of education over 11 weeks, completing assessments, creating their housing stability plan and meeting weekly and bi-weekly with their housing navigator. The staff and volunteers could see their confidence growing and the shyness slipping away. Housing Stability Coordinator, Elisabeth Fielder-Hix says, “They did everything they wanted to do for themselves including Ray obtaining a permanent job and Sara beginning to explore employment services with LifeSkills, applying for permanent housing, keeping their medical appointments and using the tools they were learning each week in everyday life.”

When asked how they felt the *Preferred Tenant Program* had helped them, Ray replied, “It helped us to improve our responsibility and our general life is better.”

Today Ray and Sara are living in one of HOTEL INC’s *Transitional Housing* units while waiting for their permanent housing to become available. They are still working on their case plan for some short and long term goals and will receive after care once in their permanent home. Sara is excited for the holidays as she has never had a turkey on Thanksgiving. She grew up in foster care and is looking forward to having a home to decorate this year. Living with autism and experiencing homelessness she became determined after escaping domestic violence to calm herself and focus on overcoming her situation. She is thankful to have met Ray and says, “He helps to keep me focused and calm.” Sara is working on reunification with her child.

Since moving into the *Transitional Housing* apartment Ray has had some struggles with adjusting, as he put it, back to “being human.” At the end of our interview, Ray shared, “There are some things we still do that take us back to the ‘tent way of thinking.’ Having neighbors and not having our stuff stolen is different in a good way. Being in a home this winter will be special. We will be warm and safe.”

The **Preferred Tenant Program** saw 12 graduates during our 3rd quarter celebration. Graduates were eager to



share their milestones that included: renewed health, employment, reunited families, healthier habits, increased credit scores, affordable, permanent housing, transitional housing and higher education.

Staff and volunteers were blessed to witness and enjoy community being built through employment leads and references, team building, prayer, encouragement, and friendships. Please continue to pray for these 10 households. Each are working on goals, volunteering, and further stability for themselves, their families, and their communities.

— Elisabeth Fielder-Hix
Housing Stability Coordinator

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