



THE OPEN DOOR

guiding the journey from homeless to home

Presbyterian Night Shelter | Holiday Newsletter 2023



TRANSFORMING LIVES, ONE MEAL AT A TIME

Think about what it takes to prepare a big family meal — all the food you need to buy, the space you need in your refrigerator, the prep time and planning out the timing of when everything should go into the oven...

Now multiply that effort a few hundred times to serve 1,500 meals a day, and do it for breakfast, lunch and dinner every single day of the year. That's what it's like to operate the meal program at Presbyterian Night Shelter.

Tess Allen knows all about what goes into this very special program. Not only did her time as a guest at Presbyterian Night Shelter change her life when she arrived here six years ago, but the kitchen at Presbyterian Night Shelter has been a surprisingly big part of her transformation.

Escaping domestic violence, Tess moved into our women's shelter. To help her gain valuable work experience and life skills, she, like all the guests in the Shelter's Family and Individual Rapid Exit (FIRE) program, was given an on-campus job. Assigned to help in the kitchen, she immediately clicked with the routine of helping prepare more than a thousand meals per day.

"You have to make that plate something you would want to eat," Tess says of the care she and the Kitchen team put into their work.

Tess Allen hard at work in the True Worth Place Kitchen

(continued on page 2) . . .

(continued from page 1) . . .

After starting the program, Tess worked with her case manager to move into permanent housing, and her work in the kitchen at True Worth Place became her permanent job. Now, after six years, she happily continues to serve alongside both staff and volunteers to make the enormous task of providing all those meals possible each and every day.

A key player who makes it all happen in the Kitchen is Food Service Manager Daphne McGhee. She leads a team of two cooks and four prep staff with compassion and creativity. She cares so much about the guests at True Worth Place that when she started her job 13 years ago, she commuted four hours each way without a car. She's now responsible for running the entire meal service and providing an amazing 43,000 meals every month.

In addition to the 6-person team, the Kitchen relies on volunteer groups who help with everything from inventory to food service at all the facilities on our campus: True Worth Place, Morris Foundation Family Services Center, Patriot House, and Safe Haven, as well as the Karl Travis Men's Center and the Lowdon-Schutts Women's Center.



The kitchen team serves a meal from the True Worth Place Kitchen.

One of the biggest challenges of making the Kitchen work, Daphne says, is figuring out how to plan menus with sometimes unpredictable food donations. "You gotta work with what you've got sometimes," she says, laughing.

Both Daphne and Tess emphasize that they're in this work because they have so much love and compassion for the guests they serve. Tess knows exactly what it's like to come through that line, and she knows how transformative the simple gift of a meal can be.

Only by collaborating and carrying the torch together can we end the cycle of homelessness. We are so grateful for Tess, Daphne, and partners like you who help to keep people fed!



William's gratitude shows through in his smile

William, an Army veteran, met his second wife Kitty while working as a manager in the food service industry. "She was a sweetheart with a fiery temper," he says, laughing.

Although he still carried the memory of his first wife and daughter, both of whom he lost tragically in a car

WILLIAM FINDS HOPE THANKS TO YOU

accident, William and his surviving son carried on with William's motto that, "you can never give up."

After marrying Kitty, she and William had three more children. For 23 years the couple led a happy life together, until Kitty died from a chronic illness in 2021.

Not sure how to cope with the unbearable weight of his wife's passing, William lost his home and belongings. After three months of living outside, he came to True Worth Place, ultimately entering our veteran-specific shelter, Patriot House.

"A lot of us have PTSD and have issues, but the other vets can understand," William said of his time at Patriot House. "It's almost like being in the barracks again when I was in the services."

With a dedicated case manager, William was able to set many life-changing goals, like finding a job and getting approved for a housing voucher.

Having his own home again will allow William to thrive and stay more connected to his grown children. Because of his hard work and resilience, and the generosity of friends like you, William is well along the journey home. Thank you!



Volunteers set out a meal for Patriot House guests

VOLUNTEER AIR FORCE GRADUATES SERVE VETERANS

The North Texas Association of Air Force Graduates is a local group that has volunteered at Presbyterian Night Shelter's Patriot House for many years.

"Our mission is integrity, service before self, and excellence," leader Rick Wright shares. Serving at Patriot House, our veteran-specific shelter, is one way the group loves to give back.

The Association hosts events on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day for anyone staying at the Patriot House.

"It's wonderful we can be a very small part to help people who gave everything for this country," Rick shares.

We are so grateful for this group, including Rob Dooley, the liaison between the Graduates and Patriot House, who helps coordinate events, as well as other services like bike repair and facility maintenance.

This work would also not be possible without Dave and Cathy Almand, long-time volunteers and committed friends of Presbyterian Night Shelter who helped to initiate this partnership and expand our Patriot House events. Thank you all for your hard work!



Patriot House guests enjoy a delicious meal thanks to our volunteers!



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS GALA

Each year, Presbyterian Night Shelter celebrates the holidays with our Home for the Holidays Gala. This year's event takes place on Friday, December 1, 2023, with the theme "Love and Joy Come to You!"

It's sure to be another sold-out event. If you didn't get your ticket, you can still join the celebration and help us raise critical funds by checking out our silent auction!



Scan the QR code to see the many items being offered, and to place a bid — you might even win. It's a great kick-off to the holiday season!



Toby Owen
Chief Executive Officer

DEAR FRIEND,

At the heart of the holiday season is family, gratitude, and love — not to mention delicious food. This year, as we prepare to celebrate, I know I’m not alone in also thinking of how to make this season special for our neighbors experiencing hardship.

At Presbyterian Night Shelter, we are committed to providing meals for our guests year-round, and support in many different ways — and we couldn’t do it without you.

In this issue of *The Open Door*, you’ll meet William, whose life has been changed thanks to you. You’ll also get a tour of our Kitchen and meal service program from Tess and Daphine, who see firsthand the impact friends like you have in our community. Tess and Daphine help to serve over 43,000 meals through the Kitchen every single month.

This holiday season, I hope you’ll consider the ways in which you can share even more blessings with

our neighbors who may not have the food or hope to make this season special.

With a gift to Presbyterian Night Shelter, you can carry the spirit of the holidays into the new year. You can also show your support for our mission by bidding on a silent auction item in our Home for the Holidays Gala.

The theme of this year’s Gala is “Love and Joy Come to You.” To us, this is a sincere wish for everyone who supports our shared mission all year long. Thank you for your contributions, and I wish you a wonderful holiday season.

Warmest Wishes,

Toby Owen
Chief Executive Officer

Larry Anfin
J.T. Aughinbaugh
Cintya Auld
Amy Brown
Brian Carlock
Wade Chappell
Deborah Connor

Sabrina Conner
Brian Coulter
Daryl Davis
Kim Dillon
John Doumany
Stephen Eisner
Courtney Estes

Tiffany Freeman
Sandra Garcia
Jason Grochowski
Meredyth Haller
Emily Jones
Jim Lacamp
Joseph Landeros

Alicia Lesok
Matt Loynachan
Robyn Michalove
Matt Mildren
Richard Minker
Rachel Navejar-Phillips

Frank Neal
Mark Seher
Kathy Severson
Dawn Shepard
Vince Tobin
Burch Waldron, III
Roderick White

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Our Mission:

“Guiding the journey from homeless to home.”

We work to help Tarrant County residents facing homelessness attain stability, independence, and break the cycle of homelessness.