



THE OPEN DOOR

guiding the journey from homeless to home

Presbyterian Night Shelter | Spring Newsletter 2024



QUISIA GOT HER DREAM JOB THANKS TO YOU

Quisia has always enjoyed taking care of dogs and cats. “I just like being around them,” she says. It’s been a long journey to get to a place where she can work with animals every day, and it’s thanks in part to you.

Quisia left her job as a galley hand in the oil industry and moved to Texas with family to find more stability. She found work with a staffing agency, but the job required nonstop work, and without any days off, Quisia’s health suffered.

She kept searching for more sustainable work that could pay the bills, but the part-time work she found

wasn’t enough. Without that crucial income, she lost her home.

It was your generosity that made it possible for Quisia to land at Presbyterian Night Shelter’s Lowdon-Schutts Women’s Center, where she learned about UpSpire.

“UpSpire is great. They really try to get you a job”

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Through the social enterprise, she started working at the Fort Worth Humane Society — a job which allows her to care for the animals she loves so much.

“I’m happy with UpSpire. I’m shocked, that they’re this good,” she says when she compares the experience to her other recent jobs.

“UpSpire is great. They really try to get you a job,” Quisia says. Now, she has worked at the Humane Society for over six months, and is looking forward to many more!



Thanks to you, Quisia gets to work with her favorite furry friends at the Humane Society every day.



Now a lead landscape driver, Stacy has a bright smile to share with everyone.

YOU HELPED STACY ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Stacy’s expression fills with love as he recalls the time he spent growing up alongside his brothers under the care and guidance of his mother.

The family was exceptionally close, he says, pausing before explaining that his mother and brothers passed away within a few years of each other.

As he attempted to cope with the unbearable loss, Stacy developed a substance abuse disorder, which grew until he ended up incarcerated.

During his sentence, Stacy says he found his faith through services held in the prison, and he came out ready to change his life. That’s when friends like you helped guide him along the journey to a new life.

At a job fair, Stacy learned about UpSpire, Presbyterian Night Shelter’s

social enterprise that lowers barriers to employment and provides jobs with benefits, competitive pay, and supportive services. He seized the opportunity, and within two months in the program, he’d earned a promotion, as well as Employee of the Month. Now a lead landscape driver, he trains new employees and leads by example.

“I’ve been clean for two years now, and my life is completely better. . .”

Inspired in part by friends like you, Stacy hopes to progress in his career so he can help people transition into a better life. “There’s good in everybody,” Stacey says, adding, “all somebody needs is to know that somebody actually cares.”

“I’ve been clean for two years now, and my life is completely better,” Stacy says in thanks for your generous partnership!



SPONSORED BY LOCKHEED MARTIN

JOIN US FOR A DAY OF SERVICE

We are welcoming additional sponsors for this year’s Day of Service presented by Lockheed Martin, which will take place on Saturday, October 26, 2024.

This is a big day to both honor our Veterans in Patriot House, as well as tackle some big work projects on our campus — like painting, tree trimming, and more.

If you or your organization would like to be a sponsor for this event, please contact our Director of Volunteer Engagement, Judi Glover, at jglover@journeyhome.org.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT ON SHAWANDA

Shawanda is a people person. She loves encouraging, supporting, and uplifting everyone around her, whether it’s her two sons or her coworkers and employees at UpSpire.

She started as an advocate for veterans at the Presbyterian Night Shelter’s Patriot House, drawing on her own experience as an Army veteran. Her dedication to the role led to new responsibilities and soon she transitioned into HR at UpSpire.

“I realized [UpSpire employees] are looking for hope,” she says. And she’s taken it upon herself to ensure anyone looking for that hope can find it, right in her office.

In a day, Shawanda might schedule a safety training, source an article about personal hygiene in the workplace, and explain the benefits employees have

at UpSpire like a retirement plan, insurance, and paid time off.

She recalls helping one employee apply for, and set up, his 401k. It was his very first retirement account, Shawanda guided him through the process with enthusiasm and compassion.

“The job here just really [keeps] me grounded,” Shawanda shares, explaining how her work helps her keep perspective on the challenges in her own life while also motivating her to do more to help our neighbors. It has also motivated her to find and create even more partnerships and opportunities for UpSpire to expand into other fields, like office work.

We are so grateful to have you on the UpSpire team, Shawanda! Thank you for your dedication to our community.



In her role as a job coach at UpSpire, Shawanda changes lives every day.





Toby Owen
Chief Executive Officer

DEAR FRIEND,

The risk of homelessness doesn't always end with placement in an apartment, or even a house. Sometimes, the hardest part about regaining stability isn't getting housed — but *staying* housed.

Without sustainable employment, it can be nearly impossible to overcome the barrier of living costs like rent. And without training or opportunity, landing a gainful job can be a difficult target to hit.

Thankfully, our neighbors experiencing homelessness and hardship don't have to navigate this journey alone. Partners like you are there to help, through Presbyterian Night Shelter and our social enterprise, UpSpire.

UpSpire addresses these critical barriers by offering employment, training, and opportunity to anyone ready to show up on time and work hard for a stronger future.

The program offers quality benefits, meals, and clear pathways to sustainable employment in industries like landscaping, janitorial, litter abatement, and more.

In 2023, we moved 58 UpSpire employees out of homelessness — including Quisia, who you met on the cover of this issue of *The Open Door*.

It's because of your generosity that Presbyterian Night Shelter can provide this critical resource, and so many more, to help end the cycle of homelessness in North Texas. Thank you for your partnership!

With gratitude,

Toby Owen
Chief Executive Officer

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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.