

April 2026 E-Newsletter

Guiding the Journey Through Diversion

CHANCELLOR HAD COME TO NORTH TEXAS IN SEARCH OF A BETTER LIFE. But when the resources he was expecting didn't pan out, he found himself stranded, afraid he was about to become homeless. He had family in Florida who was happy to have him come back, but with no income or savings, he was unable to purchase a ticket. He didn't know how to get home and time was running out.

Chancellor's story is not unique. Many people who are experiencing homelessness may have loved ones or friends who are willing to provide shelter, they just need to be asked. That is where Presbyterian Night Shelter's Diversion program comes in.

"In the diversion process, our goal is to reunite family and friends," says Jannel McClendon, Diversion Specialist at True Worth Place, who makes it her mission to keep people from falling too deeply into homelessness. "[It] lets the client know that there is somebody out there who is willing to help them get back on their feet, so they're not alone."



Diversion is often the best way to keep an individual from falling too deeply into homelessness. Jannel discusses a diversion plan with Chancellor.

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Ideally, a person is able to utilize diversion before they have spent too much time on the street or in shelters. The way it works is simple: during an intake interview, the guest is asked if there are any family or friends who might be willing to help them get back on their feet. If that friend or relative is identified, the Specialist will call them for a conversation. They confirm that the person is located at the address the guest provided, and ensure that the loved one is willing to be a resource and provide housing. If they agree, the next step is finding the best way to transport the individual or family there, whether by train, bus, or even a flight. Once a ticket is secured, guests are provided sack lunches—enough to last the whole trip. The Diversion Specialist then checks up on the individual within the next two weeks to make sure they got to their destination and that things are going well.

Scan the QR Code to see the video
"Guiding the Journey Through Diversion"



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“[Diversion] is a less expensive tool than housing someone in the Shelter for six months to a year,” explains Betty McIlroy, Vice President of Shelter Services. “If we can divert them within that first 30-day window, then it saves money and it’s more effective for that individual.”

After landing at Medical City, Chansellor was referred to Presbyterian Night Shelter specifically for the Diversion program by a social worker who was aware of it. Upon arriving at True Worth Place, Chansellor met with Jannel, who quickly determined that he was an excellent candidate for diversion. She made a short phone call to Chansellor’s mother, who was more than happy to have him back, then purchased a bus ticket for him to Miami—he was going home.

“Ok, so, they hooked me up with a bus! I will be on the Greyhound,” Chansellor excitedly shares. “I just feel like God has answered my prayers. This program is a godsend, honestly.”

The Diversion program experiences a great deal of success, too, with very few clients coming back to the shelter. On average, the Shelter diverts 20-22 people each month through our Diversion program, getting both individuals and families placed into a home rather than on the street.

“I want people to know that we are here to help,” Jannel says. “I know sometimes people get discouraged because they’re not sure how to go about a diversion. They’re not sure if the person on the other end is going to accept them. We can be that middle person and say, ‘hey, this is where this person is. This is not the best setting for them. They are willing to do the work to get back on their feet, they just need some help. This is a good person; they just need a second chance.’”



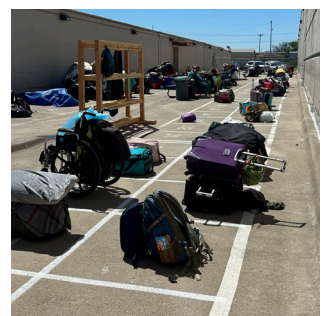
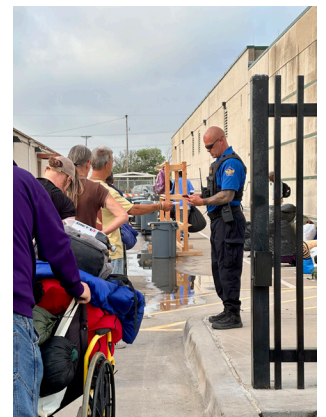
Guests can feel tremendous relief when they have been successfully reconnected with a loved one who will provide housing.

Presidio Courtyard



There’s a new resource available for guests and neighbors of Presbyterian Night Shelter: Presidio Courtyard. This newly repurposed space is located on the west side of the Karl Travis Men’s Center. First opened in March as a pilot program to alleviate some of the loitering and crowding that occurs on our neighborhood sidewalks, Presidio Courtyard is soon becoming a permanent resource for our neighbors in the area.

The courtyard is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am-5:00pm. Individuals are allowed to leave their belongings in marked areas, or on a sturdy backpack rack built by the WOODWORKS by UpSpire crew. Security on site watches over the area. Hydration is important in the hot weather ahead, so a large watering station has been placed in the area, allowing folks to fill their own bottles, tempering the need for bottled water. Soon, a permanent pavilion will be installed to provide needed shade. The Fort Worth Police Department’s HOPE Teams are also directing individuals to this area during daytime hours.



Finding Hope with Miracle Messages

Experiencing homelessness can not only be exhausting and demoralizing, it can also be lonely and isolating as well. But what if there was a way for someone experiencing homelessness to reconnect with a long lost loved one, or even to develop a new friendship?

Miracle Messages is doing just that each week at True Worth Place. Led by our dedicated Shelter volunteer, Marti Lawrence, Miracle Messages is reuniting families and rebuilding lives by connecting unhoused neighbors to long lost family and friends.

A person isolated by homelessness can record a short message to a loved one (or vice versa). That message is then sent out to a network of volunteer "digital detectives" who work to locate that loved one and deliver the message



in hopes that a reconnection can take place. The goal is to help the nearly 1 in 3 people experiencing homelessness who have lost their social support systems.

Shelter guest Bradley (not his real name) recently came looking for help to get a message to his mother. Having experienced homelessness for some time, Bradley had no phone and no way to contact his family. Through an extended conversation, Marti was able to find some family clues, which were then sent to the digital detective volunteers, along with Bradley's message. The message to his mother was simple: I am doing okay. I love you.

Bradley soon received word back that his family had been found. While the digital detectives were able to speak with his aunt, who had delivered the message to Bradley's mother, they also let Bradley know that his mother was suffering from dementia. Although it was not the ideal message he had hoped to hear, it was still a comfort to know how she was doing. Bradley has since reconnected with his family.

WANT TO RECONNECT WITH A LOVED ONE?
OR
MAKE A NEW FRIEND?
OR
DONATE?

REUNION SERVICES
Take the first step to reconnect with a loved one!
Our digital detectives will help you find them and deliver a personal message.

MIRACLE FRIENDS
Match with a phone buddy for weekly calls & texts!
Share stories & laughs with a caring friend, through good times & bad.

We believe everyone is someone's somebody, and no one should go through homelessness alone.

Miracle Messages
miraclemessages.org
1-800-MISS-YOU

Miracle Messages also helps individuals who may not be looking for a particular family member or loved one but is still coping with loneliness, through Miracle Friends, a phone buddy program.

Volunteers are matched with individuals experiencing homelessness and provide weekly phone calls and texts to the individual to check in and say hello.

Individuals who would like to make use of Miracle Messages are invited to meet on the second floor of True Worth Place each Monday afternoon from 1:00pm-2:00pm. If you would like to learn more about Miracle Messages, or would like to volunteer as a digital detective or Miracle Friend, visit miraclemessages.org.



Miracle Messages
Mondays | 1:00pm-2:00pm
True Worth Place
Upstairs Kitchen

It's Volunteer Appreciation Month!

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month, and at Presbyterian Night Shelter, our gratitude is overflowing! Thank you to everyone who gives of themselves through volunteer service, whether that is serving meals, making hygiene kits, tutoring kiddos at our Family Services Center, washing feet in our foot clinic, doing landscaping or maintenance projects around our campus, or ensuring our guests receive their mail at True Worth Place. Volunteers are a vital key to the work we do every day.

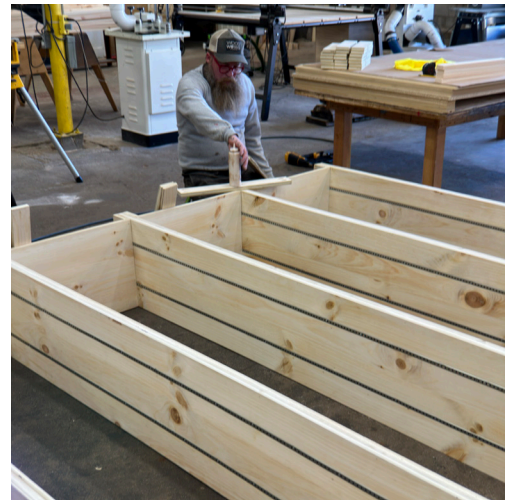
It's easy to get involved through volunteering, too. It all begins by filling out a Volunteer Application and attending an online or in person Volunteer Orientation where you can learn about the many ways you and/or your group can participate as volunteers. And with so many different areas of need, there's sure to be a job that is right for you.

To begin your volunteer journey, fill out the Volunteer Application at www.journeyhome.org/volunteer or email: volunteers@journeyhome.org.



Building the Business

As UpSpire expands with Greater Good Collective, the crew at WOODWORKS by UpSpire has been hard at work handcrafting display units and furniture to be used in the boutique, coffeehouse, and thrift store. The eclectic design will feature a variety of natural woods, including dark walnut, birch, knotty pine, red oak, and pecan. Greater Good Collective is slated to open late summer 2026.



**WOOD
WORKS**
BY UPSPIRE™