THE OPEN DOOR

guiding the journey from homeless to home

Presbyterian Night Shelter | Holiday 2026



A'zariah will soon be a big sister.

Adrianna Found Hope — and Herself

The moment that Adrianna found herself again, everything changed.

2024 was a year of big waves, with no solid ground on which to stand. The storm started when Adrianna was finalizing a divorce, feeling her own pain as well as the impact the divorce had on her daughter, A'zariah (who everyone calls Zari).

Later that same year came news of a diagnosis — her mother had kidney cancer. Then the final wave hit: Adrianna lost her house.

"I lost myself," she says of that time, simply.

Adrianna ended up sleeping in her car. Her mother took Zari in, and each visit to see her family, the 'goodbye' felt harder. But the turning point came just a few weeks later. It started as a regular visit to the doctor while Adrianna had the flu — and that's when she learned her family of two would soon become three.

She decided, then and there, that "this year is going to be different."

"This is not the end game," she shares. "It's a second chance!"

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When she arrived at The Morris Foundation Family Services Center at Presbyterian Night Shelter, Adrianna was in what she calls *determined mode*. "Not just for me, but for my kids."

Adrianna had a goal to become housed before her child was born. That meant hard work between when she arrived in April and her due date, August 17. But she was ready for the responsibility. "It's a mindset," she says.

Supported by Shelter staff, Adrianna enrolled in pharmacy technician school, started a job at the Walgreens micro fulfillment center, and got Zari enrolled in daycare. Without a car, she took the bus and walked half an hour, one way, to see her daughter safely there.

Through the Family and Individual Rapid Exit (FIRE) program, staff put Adrianna on track to a new home. Her first order of business in the new apartment? Making Zari's favorite meal — spaghetti and meatballs.

"I am not the same person I was," Adrianna says, reflecting. She's ready to pour her heart into celebrating the holidays and creating that special holiday magic for her babies.

"This is not the end game," she shares. "It's a second chance!"

Making it Home for the Holidays

The Holiday Season at Presbyterian Night Shelter

The holidays can be a magical time. They bring memories, traditions, special meals, and time spent with the people we love.

For someone experiencing homelessness, however, the holidays can also be a difficult time. Being away from home or family can make the season feel very different.

That is why every year, Presbyterian Night Shelter brings staff, volunteers, and supporters together to make the holidays a little brighter for the men, women, and children we serve.

"It's truly all hands on deck," says Shawanda Kennedy, Volunteer Engagement Manager for Presbyterian Night Shelter.

For Shawanda, holiday planning is no small task. She works to help make sure guests in our five shelter facilities and residents in our four Journey Home Housing communities have something meaningful to celebrate during the season.

And the work begins long before the holidays arrive.

In the heat of summer, when most people are not yet thinking about Christmas, planning is already



Shawanda Kennedy (right), Volunteer Engagement Manager, begins sorting donated gifts as they arrive.

underway. Guests and residents are asked about their holiday wish lists.

"Every child, every parent has something on their wish list," Shawanda says.

But the wish lists are about more than simply giving someone something they want.

A child may wish for a toy but need a new pair of shoes. A parent may focus so much on their child's needs that they forget about their own. That is why Shawanda works closely with program managers to understand what each person or family truly needs. "It's always through the program managers and asking them what the needs are," she says. The goal is to make sure the lists include "the needs and not just the wants."

Thanks to the generosity of donors and friends of Presbyterian Night Shelter, those needs and wishes can become part of the holiday celebration.

Throughout the season, gifts are sorted and wrapped. Volunteers decorate trees and hallway doors to provide holiday cheer for guests. Musicians share holiday songs. Groups spend time doing craft projects and sharing cookies and laughter with children. Others host festive celebrations for guests throughout the Shelter.

"There is a certain connection there during these holidays that I wouldn't trade for anything else."

And, of course, there are special meals.

Presbyterian Night Shelter makes sure guests and residents can enjoy a special Thanksgiving meal and a Christmas meal during the holiday season. It takes many people working together—from staff and volunteers to donors and community partners—to make these celebrations possible.

For Shawanda, that teamwork is one of the most meaningful parts of the season.

"There is a certain connection there during these holidays that I wouldn't trade for anything else," she says.

That connection is important because the holidays can sometimes make people feel even more alone. Shawanda says that is what all the extra effort is really about: "Reminding them that they're not left out; that somebody sees them. [The Shelter] goes to great lengths to make it home for the holidays," she says proudly. "The whole meaning of Christmas comes full circle."



Volunteer groups bring holiday cheer to guests in our Family Services Center.

To support our efforts with in-kind donations or by volunteering, contact Shawanda Kennedy, Volunteer Engagement Manager at skennedy@journeyhome.org

32ND ANNUAL HOME for the Holidays GALA

PRESENTED BY Texas Capital

This year's Home for the Holidays Gala promises to be another spectacular event benefiting Presbyterian Night Shelter! The evening will include amazing auction and raffle items, including a hard-to-find Men's Rolex Deepsea 44mm stainless steel watch on an Oyster Bracelet!

Even if you cannot attend, you can still have a chance to win raffle or silent auction items by registering with the QR code or at https://PNSGala2026.givesmart.com. Silent auction opens Friday, November 27. Raffle winners will be announced at the Gala on Friday, December 4, 2026.



Toby Owen
Chief Executive Officer

DEAR FRIEND,

The true comfort and joy of the holiday season comes from who we share it with. All of us at Presbyterian Night Shelter are so grateful to welcome this season alongside our dedicated volunteers, supporters, and community. *Thank you.*

Our work goes full circle — our community sustains us, and we exist to not only love our neighbors, but to serve our community, especially at a time of year that is particularly hard to weather without resources or support.

As you've seen in this issue of *The Open Door*, we do everything in our power to share the magic of this season with our guests, especially the children spending the holidays with us.

All year long, your generosity has opened doors to possibility, hope, healing, and home for our neighbors. I hope these stories illustrate just how far your impact reaches and how much it means.

Alongside our Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve celebrations, I'm excited to share that our *32nd Annual Home for the Holidays Gala presented by Texas Capital*, will be held on Friday, December 4, with an online auction accessible to all.

I look forward to seeing the festive cheer that will fill our hallways soon, and the lives we'll continue to change in the coming months. Merry Christmas, and be well!

Warmest Wishes,

Toby Owen
Chief Executive Officer

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Presbyterian Night Shelter

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.