



Christ  
House

HEALING AND HOPE FOR HOMELESS PERSONS

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# Day by Day

## Patient Spotlight: A Great Place to Start



*In preparation to get his photo taken, Will pulled out his phone and speaker and played “Summer Madness” by Kool & the Gang.*

This winter we had the privilege of speaking with one of our Kairos Permanent Housing Members about his journey to Christ House and his time here. This is Will’s story, told in his own words.

“When I came here last January, I had frostbite from sleeping outside. My toes on my foot started looking blueish black. I was preparing myself for the worst. I thought they were going to cut my toes off. Luckily, that didn’t happen. It got better and better. John McCarthy [Nurse Practitioner] does a great job taking care of your feet. I met

John about the same time I met Henry [Kairos Program Member] in Kairos 20 years ago. I grew up in Mt. Pleasant, but had family in the Adams Morgan area. I graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in DC back in 1982. I went to the University of the District of Columbia for a couple years. I didn’t have a major, so was undecided.

I couldn’t keep a steady job because of my alcoholism. When you don’t have any income you pretty much go to the streets. I never wanted to be a burden on my brother. I had another friend who helped me out. I still keep in

contact with my friend.

I came back to Christ House again in June - what happened is I fell and broke five bones in my spine. Luckily, I wasn’t paralyzed. I needed a walker at first but then went to a rehabilitation place and they sent me back here, which was a Godsend. Everyone here is wonderful. They treat you really nice. It’s been a wonderful place for me to be.

I had issues sleeping when I first got here, I think because of my injury I was in a lot of pain on the first day.

(continued on p. 2)



The mission of Christ House is to provide comprehensive and compassionate care for people experiencing homelessness with acute medical needs in DC, and to offer assistance in addressing the critical issues to help them break the cycle of homelessness.

I was unable to really provide for myself. Slowly but surely it worked out significantly for the best. I exercised my body, went to physical therapy, which helped a whole lot. I don't have to go anymore now. I go to New Day [Christ House's in-house recovery program]. The emphasis is recovery and spirituality. They go hand in hand. The meetings are good. They keep us on our toes. John Bush [Addictions Counselor] is easy to talk to.

I like the diversity here, which is cool. Everybody here is pretty much down to earth. That's what I like about it. Real down to earth...nobody is above anybody else.

When I was a patient, we'd go on walks - to the drum circle in

Malcom X Park, we'd go to the zoo. We went to football and basketball games - that was nice. And, let's see, we had little get-togethers. I enjoyed it. Talent shows. The walks were nice.

### What is your favorite type of music?

"I like different kinds of music. I like Sting, Reggae, oldies Motown. If it makes me groove to it, I like it."

I can't do too much dancing 'cause you can't go to too many places right now. When the spring starts, I'd like to go to the drum circle again at the park.

I like the multiculturalism, the musicians, people come and you don't have to be a professional musician. You can just come use the conga drums. They have picnics up there. I dance there.

I was connected with the Kairos Program, which is a nice place. You have your own space, can cook your own meals. A little bit of independence. Now, I feel I don't have as much pain like I did. I like my independence for the most part. That feels good. 'Cause this is a great place to start, I'll tell you that right now. The staff is great. Really great."

*\*This Kairos Member's name has been changed for privacy.*

## A Year in Numbers: 2021

**168** | patient admissions

**42** | Kairos Permanent Housing Members served

**157** | AA/NA meetings held

**1,978** | patient transports

**200** | pastoral counseling sessions

**29,120** | meals served

**625** | hours of patient activities offered

# The Point In Time Count

## Measuring Homelessness in the US

Each January, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducts a Point-in-Time (PIT) Count to estimate the number of unhoused individuals in districts that have been approved for funding. Volunteers walk through neighborhoods gathering data through observation for the count. Continuum of Care (CoC) Organizations also provide data on the number of unhoused individuals in their facilities.

The PIT Count is the primary source of data used by the US Government to track demographics and needs of people experiencing homelessness throughout the country. This survey collects demographics of people experiencing homelessness including age, gender, mental illness, chronic illness, substance use, history of institutional involvement, income, veteran status, and more.

The PIT Count can be considered incomplete for its inability to quantify unhoused people staying in hospitals, homes of friends or relatives, or less conspicuous locations, such as 24-hour food facilities, or abandoned buildings. Data has also been difficult to collect in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which will also impact this year's count.

Christ House staff, Year Long Volunteers (YLVs), and local volunteers join the PIT Count every year and set out across Adams Morgan to survey

unhoused community members. In groups of 3-4 volunteers, the Christ House team joined others across the nation to conduct the PIT survey this January. Unhoused neighbors accepted gift cards provided by the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, and socks, blankets, and gloves which our volunteers brought along for distribution. The individuals accepted information on health-related resources that our volunteers provided through conversation.



YLV Lauren shared “I was initially nervous to walk around from 10pm - 2am at night in unknown areas, but found that the count was surprisingly easy – particularly because there were so few people outside.” Lauren’s experience is worth noting – there were very few people outside. Conducting the PIT Count during the winter can

lead to undercounting. More individuals may be granted a bed or couch to crash on during the coldest time of year. For individuals experiencing homelessness on the streets during the winter, the best place to put a tent or blanket may be out of sight. Additionally, YLV Charlotte shared that there are challenges to collecting data for the PIT and that “there could be varied responses based on how the survey questions are asked.” Even if volunteers are consistent in their survey questions, the counts are conducted slightly differently from city to city, making it challenging to compare data.

Due to the structure of the PIT Count and the obstacles already present when counting unhoused individuals on a given night, it is even more difficult to estimate how many individuals experience homelessness in a given year. Last year’s PIT Count shows that 3,865 individuals were experiencing homelessness in DC on January 27, 2021. Of these individuals, 72% were male and 85% were Black or African American. The total percentage of Black or African American individuals in DC was 46% in 2021, painting a clear picture of the racial disparities of homelessness. While there is much room for the PIT Count to improve in accuracy, it does provide a glimpse into the homelessness crisis across the nation and who is most affected. If you want to read more about last year’s count in DC, visit: [Community-partnership.org/homelessness-in-dc](https://community-partnership.org/homelessness-in-dc). The data from the 2022 PIT Count will be released in late spring.



## Join our monthly giving program

Christ House's Circle of Healers provides a steady, reliable source of income to deliver medical services, allowing us to respond to our most urgent needs and plan for the future. As a monthly donor, you help reduce Christ House's administrative and fundraising costs (we'll only send you an annual giving statement), and you have the ability to log into your account to make any necessary changes at your own convenience.

Scan the QR code here to sign up for monthly giving -->



## Are you looking for a way to volunteer your time? Donate meals to Christ House!

Christ House relies on the generosity of our community to sustain our mission. We are accepting meal donations for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Meals must include a primary protein, carbohydrate, and fruit or vegetable. To arrange a drop off, please contact our Food Services Manager at [colin.hammond@christhouse.org](mailto:colin.hammond@christhouse.org).

**"One of the best parts about Christ House is the good food. Every meal is a surprise!"**

**-Current Christ House patient**

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**Christ House**

