



Day by Day

The mission of Christ House is to provide comprehensive health care to sick, homeless men and women from the District of Columbia, and to assist them in addressing critical issues to help break the cycle of homelessness.

COMING TOGETHER OVER A WALK AND COFFEE

One Year-Long Volunteer's Experience

By Chris Tansey

I was sitting in the chapel with my head in my hands. The combination of losing my grandmother the week before and having a falling out with two of my close friends was weighing heavily on my heart, and I felt like there was no one I could talk to. While contemplating my situation, I realized that I promised a patient a morning walk and a cup of Starbucks coffee. I reluctantly pieced myself together and went to the front of Christ House to find the patient.

As we walked, I asked him about his family. His first cousin had raised him as his mother since he was a year old because his mother had severe heart problems. It was not until he was significantly older that he found out that his cousin was not his real mom.

Later on, because of differences within the family, this man had been tricked into missing his mother's funeral. The family knew where she was bur-

ied, but wouldn't tell him. This bothered him for the last thirty years and spurred on his drinking and most likely his homelessness. Throughout his account, I no-

ted his eyes watering.

The two of us, a 23 year-old Caucasian man, and a hobbled, 55 year-old, formerly homeless African-American man sat together sipping coffee. Despite all of our "differences" I felt that we had much in common. I had a strong feeling that I could open up to this man. Trying to stay composed, I told him how the death of my grandmother had hit me hard. He sat and listened. For the year I had known this patient I had

never seen this side of him. He was usually boisterous and cocky, someone who would crack jokes incessantly. However, that was only one side of him. Beneath the surface, he was caring and insightful.

The love we have for family and friends and the loss we feel when they are gone is not specific to one race, age group, or socioeconomic class. It is a universal quality that binds us all together. Working at Christ House with these thoughtful and compassionate men has exposed this reality to me.

"This was an amazing experience, I would do it a million times over."

**- Katie Nietzsche,
Nursing Assistant**



Chris, our year-long Activities Coordinator took patients on many outings. From bottom left: a trip to a fall festival, a beautiful day in a local park, and an outing to the National Cathedral.



Below: Patients and members of the Kairos program enjoy themselves at a Washington Nationals baseball game.



KAIROS FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND FISHING

On Sunday, July 6th, the Kairos Program celebrated its first Friends and Family Picnic at Rock Creek Park. The men in the Kairos Program invited their friends and family to a picnic with food, games, and entertainment.

The Kairos community, staff, and guests enjoyed it. People used the picnic as a time to catch up with one another. The men in Kairos especially enjoyed getting to see friends and family mem-

bers, some of whom they had not seen in a long time. The Kairos Program hopes to turn the picnic into an annual event.

On Saturday, July 12th, Kairos went on a fishing trip on the Po-

tomac River. The men enjoyed themselves by relaxing and catching fish. In between catching catfish they told their life stories.

The picnic allowed them to relax with others whereas the Kairos fishing trip allowed them to bond with each other.



In-kind Needs

Our clothes closet is in need of new and gently used men's casual clothing, especially:

- Disposable razors
- Khaki pants and jeans, sizes 30 - 36
- Lightweight sweatpants, sizes M and up
- Shorts, sizes M and up
- Short-sleeved polo shirts, sizes M and up

If you have some new or gently used items you would like to donate, please drop them off during regular business hours (8:30am – 5pm) or look on our website for more information.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION NIGHT

On Friday, May, 16th more than 150 volunteers attended Volunteer Appreciation Night at First Baptist Church. The theme for this year's annual event was "In love, serve..." (Galatians 5:13). The event honored and celebrated all of the volunteers that

donate their time and services to make Christ House a better place.

- 1,660 individuals contributed 37,046 volunteer hours
- 101 volunteer groups provided and/or served 555 meals



Top: The Kairos Men's Choir provided musical entertainment during the night. Bottom: This year's table centerpieces reflect the theme, "In love, serve..." (Galatians 5:13)



The Kairos Gospel Choir and the Alpha Dog Blues Band provided the musical entertainment for the night. Staff members showed their appreciation and gratitude to

the volunteers by helping to serve and singing, "This Little Light of Mine."

It was a fun filled evening enjoyed by all. Thanks

again to all our faithful volunteers!

REFLECTING ON THIS YEAR'S EXPERIENCE

Christ House staff and the members of the Kairos community would like to say thank you to our 2013 – 2014 year-long volunteers. As a way to say thank you we hosted a farewell party on Wednesday, July 23rd. We will miss our volunteers and their work with our patients, staff, and Kairos Program members. They are also going to miss the laughter and fun times they had while bonding, sharing reflections, and living

together at Emmanuel House.

During their time here they have grown in many ways. In their reflections they have shared personal stories, feelings of growth, and things they have learned along the way.

As we say farewell to our year-long volunteers we would like to share some of their reflections with you.

We wish our year-long

volunteers the best as they go on to their next adventures.



Alison, Case Management Assistant: I found my second year to not be like my first.

This year I really found my groove because I could identify a problem, know what to do, and see the results from me foreseeing the problem. I have also grown in my personal confidence. This second year confirmed that I want to pursue a career in social work. I will be attending Catholic University to obtain a Masters degree in Social Work.



Chris, Activities Coordinator: I took the patients to the Anacostia Community

Museum and we had time left so we decided to go to the National Mall. I took a wrong turn into Virginia and one of them said why don't we go to Theodore Roosevelt Island. When we got there we realized how spiritually beautiful it was. These men who had been through tough times just let go of their troubles and acted like innocent kids.



Katie, Nursing Assistant: I learned a lot about poverty in the city; the amount and kind of suffering

patients go through. I lived in the city but I didn't quite grasp it. This experience has shaped me both personally and professionally. My favorite moment is when people who can't walk get up and take their first steps; I like to cheer them on by clapping. I am going to UNC at Chapel Hill and I hope to continue helping and serving the underserved.



Luis, Kairos Program Coordinator: I have learned about relationships and opportunities. I have formed

meaningful relationships with the men in the Kairos Program and I will truly miss them. I will also miss the other year-long volunteers because I have enjoyed getting to know them while living with them at Emmanuel House. I remember in one of our reflections I shared how all people do not have the same opportunities and that though change can occur it is difficult to achieve.



Magda, Unit Clerk: I am looking forward to coming back next year. This

year I was mostly doing nursing administrative tasks like making patients' appointments and checking on them when they came back. However, next year I will have more interaction with the patients as I help out with their physical therapy and wound care. In coming back next year, I hope to continue growing more humble and more loving.



Rita, Nursing Assistant: Homelessness used to be a social issue but now I have

learned to see it in a more personal way. While caring for the patients I got to know them which added more depth to what it meant to be homeless. This experience has made me more knowledgeable and passionate especially since I can see the things that need to be changed. I want to attend medical school and work toward that change.

5th Annual Memorial Day BBQ



The 5th annual Memorial Day picnic was greatly enjoyed by all! Patients, volunteers, Kairos, staff, and family celebrated the day with fun, food, and activities. We hope to see you at next year's Memorial Day BBQ.



Christ House is Hiring

We are seeking a full-time Clinical Nurse Manager to supervise the nursing assistants, medical services assistant, and unit clerk, coordinate staff scheduling, procurement of medications and medical supplies, oversight of medical records, and provide occasional nursing coverage, including some weekends, evenings and holidays. For more information please see the Job Opportunities page on our website at <http://christhouse.org/about/employment.html>

Meal Group



A meal group can be an individual or a group who is willing to bring a meal for 60 residents

once a month or donate the cost of one meal for 60 people. If you are interested, please contact Dave Long at david.long@christhouse.org or call (202) 328-1100.

The Advance Advancing hope in Christ's name
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

christhouse.org



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