



Christ
House

HEALING AND HOPE FOR HOMELESS PERSONS

VOLUME XXXVI, NO. 4 | FALL 2021

Day by Day

I'm Not Superman, but I Have a Superpower

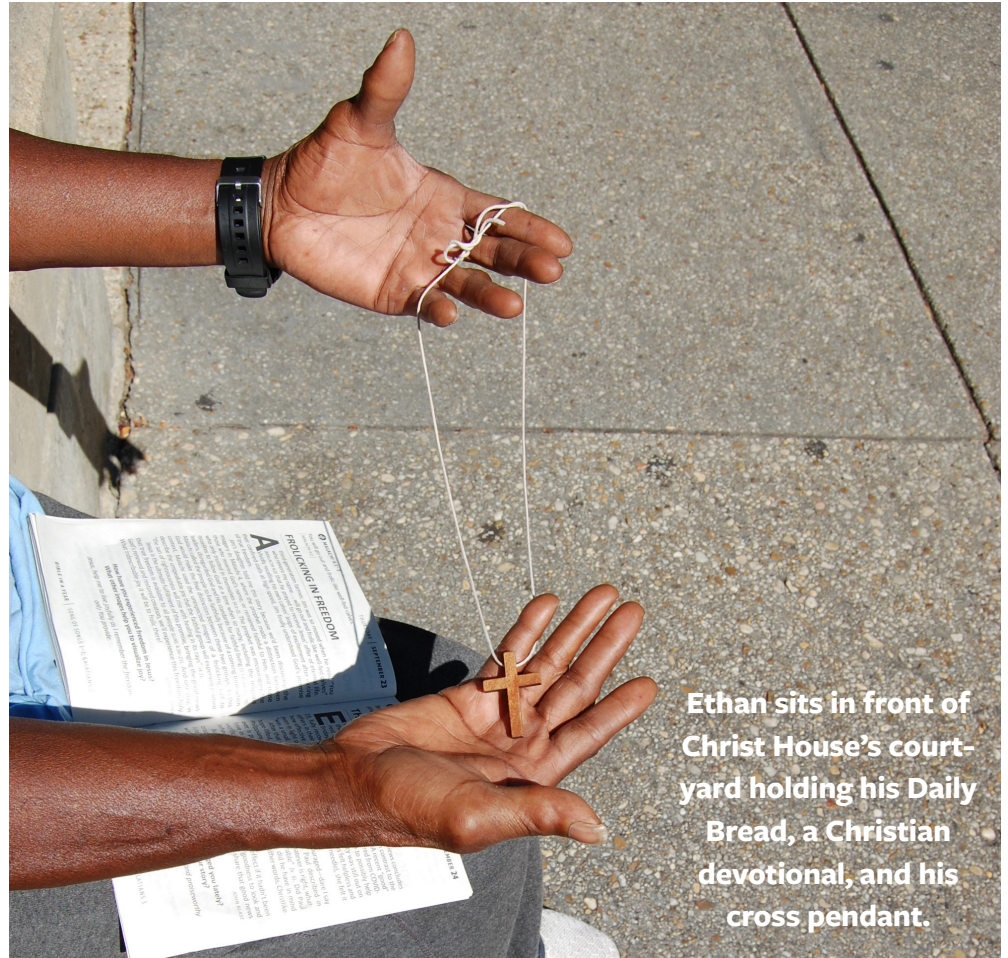
A Kairos Member Story

When a case worker first told Ethan about Christ House, he replied, "I haven't heard of it." The case worker shared that Christ House was a place for men experiencing homelessness with acute medical needs to rest and recover.

"I said 'Okay, sure.' I didn't even think about it. I knew if I went back out [to the streets] I would've kept drinking and smoking which wouldn't have been good," says Ethan. He was staying at the hospital for a short time after undergoing surgery for his fractured ankle.

When he first arrived at Christ House, Ethan says he immediately felt invited: "...the care I was getting, the greeting. I knew I had to be here to heal. I wanted to get away from my addiction." Until the beginning of the pandemic, Ethan had been sober for two years. Then, after suffering the traumatic loss of a loved one, Ethan lost his job, was living in an abandoned building, and started drinking again.

"That night I broke my ankle – it was good it happened. It was a sign from God telling me, 'I want you to get out of this place



Ethan sits in front of Christ House's courtyard holding his Daily Bread, a Christian devotional, and his cross pendant.

you're staying at. Get off the streets and do something else or you're gonna hurt yourself.' I'm thankful to have common sense now, thankful that I was given the chance to come here, and thankful that I accepted I needed help – enough was enough."

During his time at Christ House, Ethan participated in the New Day Program, a nine-week intensive in-house recovery program led by our Addictions Counselor. Ethan shares, "I'm thankful to participate in New Day. When I was introduced...



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

it wasn't mandatory, but that's where I wanted to be. I had suppressed so much anger and emotions in my system and soul. I needed to let it all out. To overcome my adversities in the past and start being joyful."

After his surgery, it took time for Ethan's foot to heal. Christ House's nursing staff provided support every day by rewrapping his foot, which had surgical stitches, applying ointment, and notifying his surgeon when it seemed like the stitches were coming out. After another stay at the hospital, where his foot needed a washout from a bacterial infection, Ethan's foot slowly healed. He regularly went to physical therapy, where he received a band for exercises. They also had him walking up and down the steps a little bit at a time to work on his foot movements. Ethan says physical therapy was very helpful: "I got my equilibrium back. I felt myself getting back together slowly." By Christmas time, Ethan was walking on his ankle again.

In the past year, Christ House medical staff has also provided Ethan with medication for his allergies and high blood pressure, and he is regularly seeing a psychiatrist. After our medical staff evaluated Ethan's ongoing health needs and his commitment to recovery, the Kairos Board invited Ethan to join the Kairos Permanent Housing Program. Ethan has felt real change in his overall wellbeing since he first came to Christ House last year, and our medical team has noticed a real difference as well. Christ House's Nurse Practitioner Mari

Lowe says, "It's been lovely to see Ethan blossom at Kairos and grow comfortable with the community."

Since joining the Kairos Program, Ethan shares that he has a good support group: "The men there are really nice...They all want what I want, which is to be clean, sober, and live a life full of fun without the alcohol and drug use. Since being there, it's been really good. I don't have any depression. I pray more, do my Daily Bread, watch TV, listen to music."

Ethan also participates in the work program at Kairos, where he serves meals in the kitchen at Christ House, sweeps, mops, and wipes down counters and

tables. "When I come over in the evenings," Ethan says, "and hear 'thank you' and men that call me by my name...it's a grateful feeling...an upbeat place. People really care here."

This fall marks one year of sobriety for Ethan. When asked how he is doing today, he says, "I feel 100 percent...Things aren't always going to be perfect, and I had to realize that. I cope better now with a lot of adversities and things out of my control. I had to realize I'm not a Superman, but, in my own words, I'm a superpower. I have a superpower. I'm at peace with myself today."

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



Meeting the Needs of Our Patients

Upgrades to Christ House's Building Offer Accessibility Improvements

Last updated over 20 years ago, the shower stalls for patients receiving care on our medical respite floor have provided an average of 15 showers each day—that's over 4,000 showers so far this year alone!

At Christ House, we continually strive to make our facilities as welcoming and accessible for patients as possible. With this goal in mind, Christ House will undergo renovations to our respite floor showers in the coming months. Our current shower configuration is not easily accessible for some patients who have physical mobility challenges due to the step in between the hallway and the shower stall entrance. This past month, over 71% of the patients on our medical respite floor were using a mobility aid, such as a cane or walker,

to navigate while in our care. Ensuring patient safety in and out of the shower requires extra attention and assistance from our nursing assistants to mitigate any potential falls or injuries.

With generous support from the CDC Foundation in partnership with the National Institute for Medical Respite Care, Christ House has begun planning for renovations to make our showers ADA compliant. Changes will include the removal of the step to enter the shower and the addition of a handrail in the shower, as well as the addition of handrails throughout our respite floor hallway. We look forward to sharing additional updates regarding the progress of our building renovations and the beneficial impact this update will have in serving individuals in need of our life-giving services.



Current shower stall on Christ House's respite floor

Join Us for *A Morning of Gratitude*

Christ House Celebrates the Support of Our Community with a Fall Appreciation Event

Donors, volunteers, and subscribers – from the bottom of our hearts, we want to thank you for your continuous love and support of Christ House over this past year. Please join us on October 22nd at 10am for a virtual gathering where we review milestones of 2021 made possible with your help. Attendees will hear opening remarks from our Co-Founder, Dr. Janelle Goetcheus, the journey of one of our Kairos Permanent Housing Members, and “a year in review” presented by our Development Team. There will be a Q&A

session, and our new Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager will offer ways for you to get more involved with our organization this fall and winter. Please check your calendar and RSVP using the QR code below. We look forward to sharing what you have helped us accomplish and hope to see you soon.



Fall Matching Challenge

Join us in making donations go further during this year's Fall Matching Challenge! When you make a gift from September 22-October 31, your gift will be matched by some of our most generous donors. You can support our campaign by making a gift at: christhouse.org/donate/ways-to-give/ or sending a check to: 2300 18th St. NW, PO Box 21467, Washington DC 20009-9996.

Want to make your gift go even further? Ask your employer about matching gifts!

Many workplaces offer matching gift programs to encourage philanthropy among employees. According to Double the Donation, an estimated \$4 – \$7 billion in matching gift funds go unclaimed each year. Ask your employer about matching gifts to double your impact! Then, once you make a donation, pledge your employer match by scanning the QR code below:

Scan here to pledge
your employer's
matching gift



The Advance Advancing hope in Christ's name
#381215

CFC #34256 | UW #8385

Return Service Requested

www.christhouse.org



1717 Columbia Road, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Christ House

