

## A Prayer From My Heart

Ms. Naaz Farooqi was scared to go to shelter. Even as she fell further into debt while trying to take care of her children, she refused. Even COVID seemed to scare her less than shelter. She had heard “horrific things about shelters” and was dead set against going to one at her age.

But everything changed the day she entered the Residential Program Center. After all that she had been through, she was able to breathe a sigh of relief. Read more on pages 3, 6, and 7 to see how Ms. Farooqi and other formerly homeless neighbors discovered the “godsend” that shelter can be – and how community support like yours brought them joy and homes.



**Ms. Farooqi Moved in November 22!**

## Hit Me With Your Best Shot



We're grateful that frontline shelter workers and people experiencing homelessness were included in Phase 1-B of the coronavirus vaccine rollout.

Many of our staff and guests received their 1st dose of the vaccine in January, and follow-up dose in mid-February. Hundreds of our vulnerable homeless neighbors have been vaccinated and we hope that many more people in the community will be vaccinated soon, too. We miss our volunteers!

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## A New Home for Kennedy Shelter

We're excited to share that planning is in the works for a new Kennedy Shelter!

One plan is to co-locate a new and upgraded shelter with a new Penn Daw Fire Station where the former Hybla Valley Nursery was on Beacon Hill Rd. The new Kennedy Shelter facility would include apartments for Permanent Supportive Housing.

Last year, Fairfax County Supervisor Dan Storck convened an advisory committee to discuss proposals to redevelop this site (see map below). The committee has met five times and will soon make their recommendations.

The Penn Daw Fire Station is over 50 years old. It was upgraded in the 80s but needs extensive work to meet current standards. The Eleanor Kennedy Shelter began as a Ft. Belvoir pump house over 100 years ago in 1918. It was converted to a shelter in 1986. It too needs upgrades but is limited due to its status as an historic site. The size of the old nursery site and its location on Beacon Hill Road creates a great opportunity for a new fire station and a new shelter.

Actual construction is still a few years away but we hope you will join us in the future as we advocate online and in person for this new community resource. As you'll read in the following pages, safe and accessible shelters can be the springboard your neighbors need to get back to safe housing.

Learn more here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/capital-projects/penn-daw-fire-station-and-supportive-housing>



**Proposed project site at former Hybla Valley Nursery  
2801 Beacon Hill Rd., Alexandria, VA 22306.**

## QPID, Please Hear My Cry



**L-R: Kaeyoni Jenkins, Intake Coordinator; Megan Hansen, Senior Case Manager; Michael; Samuel; Roger Bowman, Housing Case Manager**

Three years ago, Samuel experienced a serious diabetic seizure. He fell, and suffered a traumatic brain injury. He spent the next 3 months in a coma. His parents, living in Nebraska at the time, came back to Fairfax County to be with him. During Samuel's recovery, medical bills piled up and they fell behind on their mortgage. They lost their home this past year. Samuel's mother decided to move to Oregon to live with another son. Samuel's father, Michael, remained in Fairfax to find a place that he and Samuel could stay during his treatment.

Michael and Samuel lived with a friend for awhile, but left when he received an eviction letter for having too many people in the unit. A Google search led them to New Hope Housing. Michael completed shelter intake in September, and had to wait until October for a vacancy at the QPID Hotel Shelter, which had opened in June.

Like many people, Michael never expected to experience homelessness. But when his family did, they were grateful to find community resources to help them back to housing. They went to shelter with goals and everyone on staff worked to help them achieve their goals. Michael & Samuel moved into an apartment on December 21, 2020. Staff helped them get furniture for their home, and they are both eagerly seeking work.

Samuel had been working at Costco for seven years at the time of his injury, and just wants to get back to work! Our Workforce Development Manager is helping Samuel find appropriate employment for his current challenges.

Michael says he's always surprised by the number of homeless people in the "greatest & richest country in the world." But also said that with more community resources like QPID and New Hope Housing, perhaps that could end.

## Keeping Warm This Winter

COVID caused many changes to Hypothermia Prevention Programs this year, but we're glad to share that teamwork did in fact make the dream work!

Fairfax County Hypo programs were hosted in government buildings instead of faith communities this winter. Region One Hypo programs were in the Gerry Hyland Government Center on Route One. Region Two Hypo was in the Lincolnia Senior Center. Programs were open 24/7 from December 1, 2020, through April 1, 2021.

For safety concerns, all sites were staffed by New Hope Housing employees instead of volunteers. (We missed you!) We are grateful to the hundreds of individuals and groups that provided all 3 meals a day for Hypo! Lakisha Smith and Warren Richardson, the Region One and Two Coordinators, want you to know that nothing got wasted and everything was appreciated!

"The food has been awesome!" shared Lakisha. "Volunteers brought pasta, lasagna, baked chicken, and mac and cheese. It was a great variety of food, and guests have been very appreciative. They get all kinds of cakes and desserts – and they get really excited about that!"

Each region hosted an average of 50 people a night this winter, with 15 more at Kennedy Shelter and 20 at Bailey's Shelter in overflow. Guests were great about social distancing and masking. The extra space available at the government buildings made this much easier.

Guests shared over and over how grateful they were to have somewhere to be when it was freezing, to get a warm meal, and to be safe. Thank you all for your support!



**Region One Hypothermia Prevention Staff**

## Volunteer Safety Changes

We're grateful to all of you for preparing meals and volunteering remotely for the past 12 months and can't wait to have you back onsite! Our goal is to have specific volunteer opportunities re-open onsite by the end of April. We will follow CDC guidelines as we make changes including:

- Proof of COVID vaccination,
- No large groups inside; activities will be limited to individuals or pairs,
- Continued safety protocols of distancing, masking, hand-washing, etc.

For more information, contact Sami Smyth [ssmyth@newhopehousing.org](mailto:ssmyth@newhopehousing.org) / 703-799-2293 x 11.

### "Look For The Helpers"

When the shutdown began a year ago, we chose to suspend onsite volunteering. Despite this, hundreds of volunteers called, emailed, and signed up to serve however they could. One of these special people was Shelley Brosnan.

Before COVID, Shelley was volunteering seven-days-a-week for several nonprofits across Northern Virginia through Volunteer Fairfax. Though retired, Shelley often worked 40 hours a week doing food pickup and delivery, and driving seniors to medical appointments. Once her kids realized how bad COVID would be, though, they said "Nope! You're staying home!"

Nevertheless, Shelley persisted. Her children insisted that if she was to volunteer, her service would need to be contactless. She had heard about New Hope Housing through Volunteer Fairfax and her church, Accotink Unitarian, has been involved in the

hypothermia prevention programs. Making bagged lunches for the shelters was a perfect fit so she signed up to make meals every week. Since July, Shelley has made more than 1,500 bagged lunches! Shelley also makes wellness calls and check-ins with seniors in her community to make sure they are doing okay during the pandemic.

Shelley told us she loves to read all the nonprofit newsletters that she gets in the mail because "It's uplifting to know that there are so many people out there helping."

As Mr. Rogers' mother said: "Look for the helpers." Thanks for your service, Shelley, and for lifting us up, too!



Shelley Brosnan & Sami Smyth

## Healing In A Year of Crisis

2020 was a difficult year for many of us mentally. But one shelter guest told us it was the year she was finally able to manage her mental health challenges and succeed.

Ms. T. began experiencing symptoms of depression in 2009. At the time, she was an IT professional, enjoying her life in Arlington. She was diagnosed with depression and began taking medication that made her sick. So she stopped taking it.

In 2013, she began to suffer delusions. One day in the midst of a delusional episode, she felt that a police officer was threatening her so she spit at him. Ms. T. was arrested and charged with assault and battery. She was released on probation, but things got worse. Ms. T. soon lost her job and apartment, becoming homeless in 2015. She began cycling through shelter, jail, and hospitals for the next 5 years.

Ms. T. arrived at RPC shelter in February 2020 right after New Hope Housing took over. She felt ready to make a change. She was surprised to find the staff was very welcoming and friendly. Her case manager, Ryan, took a genuine interest in helping her. He took time to learn about her mental health history. They made plans to inform and prepare staff should Ms. T. experience any delusions while she was at the shelter. Ryan also helped her monitor her medication as her doctor varied the dosage.

She committed to seeing her doctors, and taking her medications. She went to all appointments and when she began to feel stable, chose to work with the housing case manager. Ms. T. moved to an apartment on January 14, 2021!

Ms. T. is taking online courses to add to her IT skills to help get a job as soon as possible. She misses coffee shops and seeing friends. She looks forward to returning to normalcy.

Ms. T. wants to thank everyone at RPC, especially Ryan, Donald, Blue, and Chaunce, and every volunteer who gave furniture and supplies to decorate her new home. She knows she still has a long journey ahead of her, but the support she has received has made all the difference.



**Ms. T. & Donald In Her New Apartment**

## A Legacy of Love

New Hope Housing was one of several local nonprofits that received a generous bequest from Harry & Frances Havens this winter. We're forever grateful for this deeply meaningful gift, especially during this most challenging year.

If you're thinking about making a special gift through your will, trust, or life insurance policy, please contact Jan Sacharko, our development director. He'll be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Contact him at 703-799-2293 ext 27 or [jsacharko@newhopehousing.org](mailto:jsacharko@newhopehousing.org)

## Prayer From My Heart (Continued)

"I could write a soap opera about my life."

Originally from Pakistan, Ms. Farooqi moved to Yonkers, NY, in the 1990s with her husband and three children. She planned to get back to school to finish her degree. However, her husband began drinking heavily and became abusive. Ms. Farooqi tried to hold her family together, but her children were suffering. Things got worse and she got a restraining order.

Life was even more challenging afterward. She worked as much as she could, but had to move around a lot with her children. Eventually they settled in Arlington. The moves and stress took their toll and her children struggled in school. A few years ago, her oldest daughter fell into depression and began to express suicidal thoughts.

Getting her daughter help became Ms. Farooqi's focus. Her daughter refused to talk to therapists or go to a hospital, so Ms. Farooqi stayed home with her. Ultimately, they lost their home. Once again, they bounced between friends' homes, motels, and rentals.

In October 2020, Ms. Farooqi spoke to someone at Arlington Human Services who was "very kind." That person encouraged her to go to shelter, and suggested places her daughter could get help. Her daughter accepted help at a treatment center. Ms. Farooqi went to RPC the next day.

Her first weeks at the shelter gave her time to seek better care for her daughter without worrying where they would sleep that night.

"RPC was like a godsend for me. I was so happy to see inside. It didn't even look like a shelter. People were so nice."

**"It was really a prayer from my heart...after all I had been through, it felt like I had done something right in my life."**

At RPC, Ms. Farooqi worked daily with her case manager Zakia and then met with the Housing Case Manager, Luke. He helped her apply for housing and was amazed when she had a place within weeks! On November 22, 2020, Ms. Farooqi moved to a lovely senior living community. Volunteers and donors gave her furniture and household supplies to make her apartment home.

Ms. Farooqi is happy to have a place to cook homemade meals – but speaks fondly of all the special meals volunteers brought to the shelter. She is grateful that she has received her COVID vaccine. She still has some anxiety because she's often alone due to COVID concerns at her community, and hopes that her daughter improves so that they can find a place to live together.

Deciding to ask for help at the shelter was the right decision for her. Seeing the results now, she said, "It was really a prayer from my heart...after all I had been through, it felt like I had done something right in my life."



**Ms. Farooqi shows gifts received from volunteers for her new home!**

## Join the Fun - April 22 - Celebrity Bingo!

Join us Thursday, April 22, 2021, for a fun-filled night of BINGO online with guest host Monte Durham, host of Say Yes To The Dress!

We'll play 5 games with prize baskets for each – and the potential for a bonus game with bigger prizes! Tickets are \$25 each and are on sale online: [www.newhopehousing.org](http://www.newhopehousing.org)

Sponsorships are available! Contact Jan Sacharko at [jsacharko@newhopehousing.org](mailto:jsacharko@newhopehousing.org) or 703-799-2293 for more information



## Happy Anniversary, Pam!

November 5, 2020, marked 30 years since Pam Michell's first day as executive director. In that time, New Hope Housing has grown from 3 shelters in southeastern Fairfax County to a regional homelessness response system serving over 400 people a day in Northern Virginia.

Though we couldn't celebrate in person, Pam wants you to know that she is personally grateful to all of you for helping the thousands of neighbors who have sought hope and hospitality at New Hope Housing.



It's time to rethink homelessness.

Learn More and Get Involved

New Hope Housing

8407-E Richmond Highway

Alexandria, Virginia 22309

703-799-2293

[www.newhopehousing.org](http://www.newhopehousing.org)