

## "I Had To Take A Leap Of Faith"

Ms. Thompson was in shock. Her husband of 30 years had just abandoned her at her sister's place, never to be seen again. That event began a two-year period of instability and homelessness at age 55.

Her faith, and learning to find something to be thankful for every day, helped her through every challenge. Please read inside on page 3 to see how she's gotten her life on a new track, and set a new goal for herself: to be a first-time home buyer by 2023.



**Robie Thompson & Maureen Murray**

## MLK Day of Service



We'd like to thank all of the volunteers who made MLK Day a special day of service! The Northern Virginia Section of National Council of Negro Women organized an action-packed day with meals from We Feed Our People, toiletry drive by Project Hygiene, and hundreds of donated winter coats from Alpha Phi Alpha, Omega Psi Phi, Kappa Alpha Psi, Delta Sigma Theta, and more! We're grateful to all of you!

Dear Friends,

First – I hope you and your family are all healthy and safe.

My name is Bill Gorman, and it's been four months since I joined the New Hope Housing team as Interim Executive Director. I feel privileged to be here at this time and I look forward to meeting you and thanking you in person for your generosity to us and our homeless neighbors.

I'm writing today to ask for your help. This winter has been one of the hardest we've experienced, perhaps even more than last winter. Even with high vaccination rates among our staff, we've had frequent staff shortages due to COVID exposures and quarantines, and each shelter is full beyond normal capacity. Meeting this overwhelming need has costs and we're spending more to stay open. No matter the challenges, we have to stay open and fully staffed because it's never safe enough or warm enough for anyone to be sleeping outdoors during the winter.

Included in this newsletter is information about our spring fundraiser. If you'd like to be part of this event to help bring in needed funds that way, we thank you. If you prefer to give another way, we value that, too. Unlike last year, there are no more funds coming from the federal government to help. Many of the relief programs for clients are drying up. And so we're asking you to again consider New Hope.

Homelessness has always been a tragedy. It's a deeply personal emergency for the person going through it, and a public health crisis for our community. The COVID pandemic has intensified this resulting in all of us working longer hours in the middle of winter for people in need.

It may not feel this way now, there will likely come a time when all of us see these days and our work together as a privileged moment - a moment in time when each of us discovers that we are uniquely equipped to rise to the occasion under difficult circumstances and become better people in the process. All of us were here to give our homeless neighbors another chance. We are all a part of this work because it is the right thing to do. Thank you.

Peace,

William W. Gorman  
Interim Executive Director



## Home is the Nicest Word There Is

In 2011, Ms. Thompson developed a phobia of going outside and being near people. She had to quit her accounting job and rarely left home. It took a toll on her life and her family. In the summer of 2019, her husband of over 30 years dropped her off at her sister's home and drove off. She thought he was bringing her there just to get a short break. But he never came back, and he sold their house. She hasn't seen him since.

She lived with family for a short while, and spent some time at shelters. But when COVID hit the country, her family told her she could not come back.

When the pandemic began, she was just starting to feel better and planning to apply for jobs. The initial lockdowns actually helped her find the strength to overcome her fears. She figured if fewer people were out and about (because they had a home to be safe), she would be less afraid. "I masked myself up and did what I had to do."



Robie with Kelsey, Employment Case Manager

But it wasn't easy. Few places were hiring a 55-year-old woman with an 8-year gap in work history. She exhausted her savings on a hotel, and soon found herself at the hypothermia prevention program in Fairfax County. A medical condition got her moved to our QPID Hotel Shelter that allowed people private rooms for social distancing. It was not where she wanted to be, but she told herself that it's where she was and she was going to do the work.

**"I had to take one day at a time. If I looked too far ahead, I would get discouraged. I learned to find something to be thankful for every day."**

Ms. Thompson began meeting with her case manager, Maureen, her employment case manager, Kelsey, and everyone on staff who could help. Everyone noticed her determination.

In June 2021, Ms. Thompson moved into her apartment in Arlington, a bus-ride away from her job with Amazon. She has since gotten a promotion and a raise, and is taking courses to get certified through the AARP Tax Aide Program. She works 30 hours a week and is in class all-day on Saturdays, but she says it's worth it as she is also taking a course that can put her on track to buy her first home ever next year!

Ms. Thompson is just one of the 1600 people who have sought safety, shelter, and housing at New Hope Housing this past year. Thank you for your support so they can succeed!

# We're Going Over The Edge!

Attention thrill-seekers, do-gooders, and community heroes!

Here's your chance for a once-in-a-lifetime experience to rappel down the 14-story Hilton Crystal City while helping your neighbors!

It's been a challenging year and we're going big for our spring fundraiser. We are partnering with Over The Edge Global, Keller Williams MetroCenter, and the Hilton Crystal City, to host a unique event. Individuals and teams will fundraise a minimum of \$1,000 each to earn their spot to rappel on May 6th! Unlike many traditional fundraising events, this can be safely executed within COVID safety guidelines - and is tons of fun!

**Register today at [www.OTEnewhope.com](http://www.OTEnewhope.com)  
to go Over The Edge on May 6!**

For more info or to sponsor, please see the form inside or contact Jan Sacharko at 703-799-2293 ext. 27; [jsacharko@newhopehousing.org](mailto:jsacharko@newhopehousing.org)



**Thanks to Our Initial Sponsors!**



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