



Featured Resident Story

The featured resident is a mid-fifties female who was a truck driver. She did overnight and long-haul driving, sometimes for weeks at a time. She drove for various companies and at one time had her own truck. This came to a complete halt when she was involved in a car accident in 2005. As a result of the accident she sustained serious injuries to her arms, leg, and neck and spent 3 months in a hospital. After that she moved around, eventually to Brevard to stay with a friend. However, that situation did not go well—she lost all her money and became homeless. In December of last year, she went to a Code Purple location where she met a Haven volunteer who connected her to the shelter. She has now been at The Haven for 11 months.

This resident is bravely resilient and optimistic even though she has had to endure more medical issues. Seven months ago, she broke her femur getting out of a car at a doctor's office and was treated in Asheville for a couple of weeks. She has also had issues with diabetes including a recent trip to the hospital when her blood sugar crashed. Throughout she has remained strong and positive. (cont. pg. 3)

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Changing the Stereotypes of Homelessness

Jill Beach - Board Member

Recently while I was volunteering at the shelter on a Sunday afternoon, one of the residents came in visibly upset. I asked him what was wrong and he told me that as he was crossing the street people in a car made a show locking all the doors when they saw him. He then asked me if he looked threatening. I replied that he did not and the problem belonged to the people in the car, not him. Another resident shared a story of a woman with whom she was volunteering warning her to watch out for the homeless because they were dangerous—criminals, drug addicts, etc. Other residents said that they wished that people would just smile and say “hi” in passing.

In our society, there is an unfortunate perception of homeless people created by mostly false stereotypes and assumptions which can seriously interfere with helping those in need. The truth is that stereotypes hurt people.

Because of this even some people who are otherwise willing to help may believe some of the stereotypes and end up not helping because they've come to think the homeless do not deserve it.



Here are a few of the most common misconceptions.

1. Homelessness is a choice. There are many reasons that someone becomes homeless. People who are poor may not be able to afford the basics of food, housing, health and childcare, etc. They may have lost a job or not been able to find one. A personal crisis such as domestic violence and abuse, traumatic illness or injury, family conflicts, substance abuse, alcoholism, and mental illness are all factors. There are many veterans among the ranks of the homeless who may suffer from PTSD or other debilitating effects related to their service for our country. No one chooses to be mentally ill or born to abusive parents; become disabled, sick or injured; or lose a job through downsizing. (cont. pg. 3)

What You Can Do To Help The Homeless

Alert the Professionals

If you see someone on the streets or forests in a dire condition, let someone know. The Haven has an excellent relationship with the Brevard police and forest rangers who can and frequently do offer the first link in getting help for a person in need. This is especially critical in the upcoming season that is usually marked by cold temperatures and rain. You can also let a homeless person know the location of The Haven and the Brown House beside Brevard Community Church of which offers shelter to anyone when temperatures go below freezing (Code Purple - staffed by The Haven).

Give Small Things

You might keep some items in your car that would be immediately useful to a homeless person: hat, gloves, clean socks, and gift cards or free meal coupons. A hot drink and a granola bar would also be appropriate. Giving money to the homeless is a personal choice and a heart-tugging one for those who want to alleviate poverty. The money will certainly be used but since most homeless people have no way to save, they will spend it quickly which could

feed a cycle of substance abuse. *The homeless need something more than money.* The most important



need is direction which for most means a job and a roof over their head.

Donate

Organizations can do much more for the homeless than the change that you give to an individual. Donations to The Haven help fund training and counseling to help the homeless get back on their feet so they may move forward on bettering their lives. Contributions also assure that those in need will have a safe and welcoming place where they are treated with dignity and respect.

Advocate

Educate yourself about the basics of homelessness. Go to local city and county meetings and speak up in favor of low-income housing and homelessness prevention programs. Contact your local representatives and promote legislation to help the homeless. Speak out

and vote for what matters to you.

Hire

If you own or co-own a company, hire homeless people. If you are not in that position, speak to your Human Resources manager and find out if there are any internships or full-time positions available. Talk to your friends who might have connections to businesses that are actively hiring.

Volunteer

Day to day operations require a lot of help! This includes overnight shifts from 8 PM to 8 AM (you sleep), evenings from 4-8 PM, and Sundays 12-4 PM. If you are willing to oversee residents and assist with their needs, The Haven will gratefully accept your help. Also, if you have a skill set that might benefit the organization (grant writing, graphic art design, fundraising, event planning, accounting, networking, social media skills, etc.) Your help could definitely be used.

Stereotypes - Cont.

2. People experiencing homelessness are lazy and need to get a job.

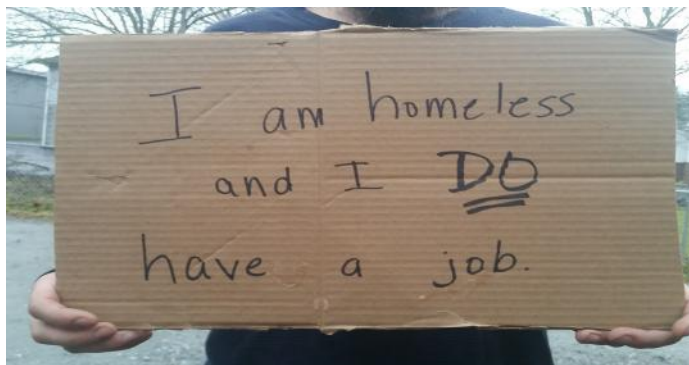
Survival requires actively seeking shelter, food and other necessities, which might not be found on an adequate or consistent basis. Finding a job is very challenging, especially when one may not have access to a phone or computer--lack of a permanent address or access to transportation is a further barrier. Additionally, not all homeless people are unemployed. Part-time or minimum wage employment often does not meet the income needs of an individual or family.

3. People experiencing homelessness are all drug addicts and alcoholics.

Probably the most common misconception of the homeless is that they are alcoholics and drug addicts. It is true that a high percentage do battle with substance abuse—this can be both a cause and result of homelessness. While many struggle with substance abuse, there are numerous others who do not and suffer from any number of issues that have resulted in their becoming homeless.

4. There are ample services and support systems available to help the homeless

A lot of the emphasis on helping the homeless revolves around providing emergency services mainly shelter and food. The problem is that many of these organizations don't have the ability or resources to fully address the



needs of those trying to escape the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

It is a fact that any one of us at any given time could become homeless. I challenge each of you to change your own the stereotypical view of the homeless. Whenever possible, make eye contact, smile and say hi when encountering someone you think might be homeless. If you are comfortable in doing so, introduce yourself and listen to their story. Homelessness can be extremely isolating. These are human beings who have value and feelings. Let someone know that you care.



"Nobody can help everybody, but everybody can help somebody"

~ Denver Moore

Featured Resident Story - Cont.

Despite a gruff exterior, she is kind and thoughtful, always willing to help others at the shelter whenever possible. Her dry sense of humor is frequently on display making her a favorite of the staff and volunteers. Everyone knows she has a good heart as she always goes out of her way to say thank you to anyone who helps her. She says that The

Haven is a great place and she has learned a lot during her time here. The good news is that she recently signed a lease and has moved into an apartment. She is happy that some other former residents of The Haven are living in the same building (The Haven residents form a family-like connection with one another and maintain

these friendships even when they leave). Right now she is managing with a cane but will soon be getting a scooter to help her get around on her own. She is extremely pleased to be making this big step in her life and being on the road to regaining her independence.

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*To help keep printing and mailing costs down, this newsletter is available electronically.
If you would like to receive it by e-mail, please notify us: admin@HavenofTC.org.*

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Your support over the years has helped 711 people (men, women, and children) since the writing of this newsletter to have a safe place to lay their head at night. In 2018 alone, we were able to provide shelter for 84 people, including children, that might otherwise be sleeping in their car, in a tent, or an unsafe environment.

A special thank you to: Community Foundations of Western North Carolina, Audrey Love Foundation, Episcopal Church Women of St. Philip's, Pisgah Forest Rotary Club, Lake Toxaway Charities, The Church of The Good Shepherd - Cashiers, Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd - Mission Endowment Fund, First United Methodist Church, and Sisters of Mercy, and Lowe's for their continued support.

Remember: We are a registered nonprofit, so all your donations are tax deductible.

Thank you!

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