



## INSIDE:

Page 2 **In Loving Memory of Russell Theo Witt**

Page 3 **Coming in from the Cold**

Page 3 **Donor Appreciation**

Page 4 **Spring Into Action**

## What the Homeless Need- A List of Helpful Items

- Socks (Good Ones)
- Map with information on local shelters and resources
  - Notepad with 2 pens
  - Reusable water bottle
- Anti-fungal creams (For Athlete's Foot)
  - Feminine hygiene
    - Trash bags
- Sleeping bag and tent
  - Home cooked meal
- Non-perishable foods (beef jerky, cereal bars, peanut butter crackers, dried fruit, tuna/chicken salad cracker kits, chocolate, mints, etc.)
- Food for their pets (baggies of dry dog food and snacks, maybe a small toy)
  - Gloves, hat, scarf
  - First aid (bandaids, antiseptic cream, etc.)
- Chewable multivitamins
  - Lotions, shampoos
    - Sunscreen
    - Tissues
  - Lip balm/chapstick
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
  - Wet wipes
  - Warm coat
  - Comb and brush
    - Tarp or tent
    - Nail clippers
- Your compassion, support, and encouragement

## Searching for Affordable Housing

Jill Beach - Board Member

The link between homelessness and poverty is well known. Poor people are frequently unable to pay for even the basics: housing, food, childcare, health care, and education. If limited resources can only cover some of these necessities, something may have to be eliminated. If you are poor, you are only an illness, accident, or paycheck away from living on the streets.

Since 1980, housing affordability has been the key driver of homelessness in the US. This nationwide crisis has grown from the following challenges:

- Decreases in affordable housing
- Insufficient wages and benefits to keep up with rising rents
- Increasing numbers of households paying more than half their income for rent.

Rising rents (over 11 percent in the last 5 years) and less availability are associated with climbing rates of homelessness. In 2018, the national vacancy rate --or percentage of apartments in a given market that are available to rent-- fell to 7.6 percent. This was the



lowest vacancy rate in almost 25 years. This means that rents have continued to rise as the vacancy rate has continued to fall.

According to Zillow - the leading real estate and rental marketplace - sponsored research on the size and root causes of the nation's homelessness challenge, communities where people spend more than 32 percent of their income on rent can expect an increase in homelessness. Even with subsidized rents and incentive programs, many landlords refuse to accept government-backed housing vouchers. Housing assistance can make the difference. Sadly, demand for assisted housing exceeds the supply. (continued on pg. 3)

# In Loving Memory

## RUSSELL THEO WITT

Russell, a resident of The Haven, passed away on March 20th. He was born in Florida and was the father of two deeply beloved children, ages 7 and 14. The following are some memories Haven residents shared of Russell:

"Very optimistic; he always tried so hard"

"Greeted everyone enthusiastically"

"Always told people that he was "living the dream"

"Had severe arthritis and was in constant pain"

"Was a good friend – would do anything for you even despite his own handicap"

"Was finally scheduled to have knee replacement surgery which would have

been in April"

"Sang awful loud songs in the bathroom"

"Was kind to everyone and



is very much missed"

"Had no filter and was one of the toughest people I have ever met"

"Always told people that "it's a beautiful day"

"Was like a family member to all of us"

We are so grateful that The Haven was here for him.

He was not outside in the cold. He was surrounded by people that loved him. He had a bed to sleep in and not a park bench.

The following poem was from his memorial service held on April 6th:

You toiled so hard for those you loved. You said goodbye to none

Your spirit flew before we knew; your work on earth was done.

Your loving smile, your gentle face; no one can fill your vacant place.

Your life was love and labor; your love for your family true. You did the best for all of us.

We will always remember you.

"I have had my voucher for a month—I have looked in both local newspapers and the list for all the low income housing buildings and have only had 2 callbacks in a month to say that they had nothing. Another took my money over a year ago and refused to give any idea how far I am on the list. I am a veteran, senior citizen on social security, and homeless. I have served in the military and have a clean record so I should have better chance than others. God help those that don't have even one of these."

-Haven Resident

"The homeless living and dying on the streets of our cities are a standing challenge to the moral legitimacy of this nation. Right now the homeless are the shame of America."

-Bob Hayes Counsel to the National Coalition for the Homeless.

# Coming in from the Cold

As we move into the warmer months, we want to give special thanks to all the donors and volunteers who made Code Purple a success this year! Snow days are an exciting time for the children in our community to get out their sleds, build snowmen, and have snowball fights. However, when temperatures drop below freezing, our homeless community members find themselves at risk of frostbite, illness, and even death from trying to survive out in the cold. For these children and adults, snow days can be a time of anxiety and danger, rather than joy and cheer. To help those community members, Code Purple provides a space for people with no other options to come in from the cold for a warm bed and some hot refreshments on those frigid nights.

Unfortunately, The Haven does not have the funding or capacity to provide this life-saving service on our own. We want to first thank Brevard Community Church for providing a space to house our friends and family in need.



We also want to say thank you to our "stand out" Code Purple donors who went above and beyond with their significant financial contributions to make this effort work. Thank you to Land Of The Sky Association Of Realtors and First United Methodist Church! Of course, thanks to all of you who donate time or money to help your community.

Thank you all for making Code Purple a life-saving success!



## Donor Appreciation

We would like to give special thanks to the following organizations that went above and beyond to be The Haven's top 5 benefactors in 2018: Community Foundation of WNC, Audrey Love Foundation, Connestee Falls Community, Lake Toxaway Charities, and Land Of The Sky Association of Realtors

## Searching for Affordable Housing - Cont.

Only 1 in 4 families eligible for a voucher receives any assistance. Most poor families and individuals seeking help are placed on long waiting lists. The average wait for Section 8 vouchers is 35 months, and this wait can extend up to 8-10 years.

The cost of housing in Transylvania County is higher than the US average. The median home price is \$210,300 and the average cost for a studio

apartment is ~\$700/month. A person earning minimum wage would have to work at least 75 hours a week to afford an average rental.

Solutions to homelessness include building affordable housing, paying a living wage, and increasing access to support services. Such services include: affordable health and mental health care services, reliable transportation to work and school, and quality

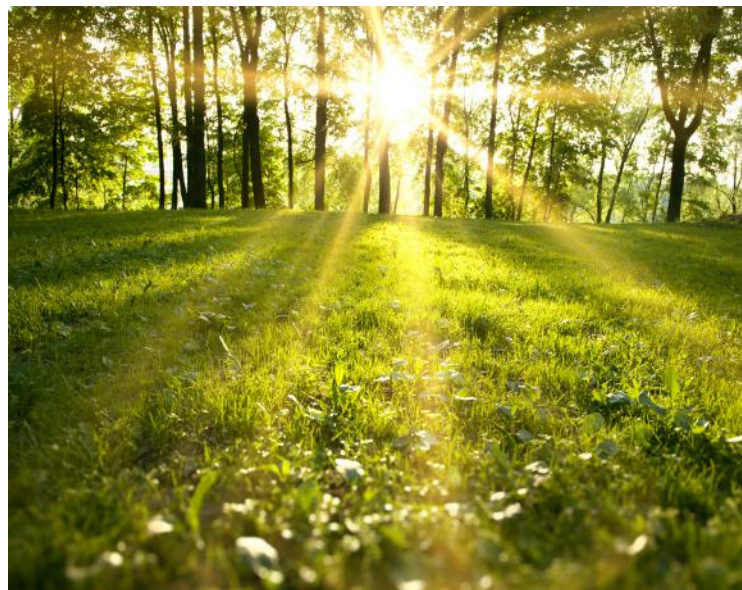
affordable daycare for children.  
How can you help?

The State of the Nation's Housing offers a solution: government advocacy on all levels. Without a strong national commitment to affordable housing, current trends are unlikely to reverse. Federal, state, and local governments have the power to affect change. By changing laws, policies and funding levels, we can help end homelessness.

# Spring Into Action

Every Spring is a time of renewal and rebirth. It seems the blossoms coming out, the birds singing, the sun shining a bit longer each day, are all wonderful metaphors for what we go through at The Haven each year. After getting through the cold, hard winter months... a time that brings new hardships for homeless people and new faces to The Haven's doors... we look forward with hope to what the year will bring.

As the year progresses, we will bring you up to date on our yearly fundraisers and outreach events. In the meantime, we would love for you to reach out, come visit us, and we would love to hear from you if you have any ideas for how you might like to help the homeless in your community. Please give us a call or come by if you want to hold an event to benefit The Haven, have things you think we might be able to use to help our residents, if you want to know how your dollars help us help the community, and, especially, if you would like to volunteer your time. We desperately need volunteers right now, as the natural comings and goings of life have seen us say goodbye to several of our "regulars".



For More Information Call (828) 877-2040  
or Email [admin@HavenofTC.org](mailto:admin@HavenofTC.org)

## BRICK BY BRICK

The Haven of Transylvania County, PO Box 25, Brevard, NC 28712

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 37  
BREVARD NC

*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](mailto:admin@HavenofTC.org).*