



newsletter

Montgomery County's Interagency Commission on Homelessness recently hosted a Community Memorial Service in honor of those who died while experiencing homelessness in 2020 and 2021. I had the opportunity to attend alongside our Communications Associate, Holly Harris. The annual Community Memorial Service is an opportunity for all the organizations in the county serving the homeless to properly memorialize and grieve those who we've recently lost. This year, we mourned eighty-eight brave souls who died while experiencing homelessness in this county. Twenty-six of those who died received services at Progress Place, the shared building where Shepherd's Table, Interfaith Works and Kelly Collaborative Medical all operate. They were well known and loved by our staff and volunteers, and we feel their loss.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, people experiencing homelessness have a shorter life expectancy by fifteen to twenty years. They are more than twice as likely to have a disability compared to the general population and about twenty percent as likely to have a serious mental illness. They are three to six times more likely to suffer chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and HIV/AIDS. Given all these factors, it comes as little surprise that we mourn so many clients every year. Still, I'm certain of one thing: **none of these individuals died unknown or unloved.** Thanks to the County's Services to End and Prevent Homelessness (SEPH) and the thirty agencies like Shepherd's Table working

with SEPH, all eighty-eight of these brave souls were part of a non-profit organization's family. The twenty-six from Progress Place who died were certainly a part of our family. As a donor, volunteer, or community member, we consider you a part of that family, too. The loss of these twenty-six lives is a loss we carry together.

As the names of the deceased were read and their personal stories were shared, I thought about how fortunate we were to have them in our family. My prayer is that their memories will motivate us to do more to end homelessness in our county, and one day, the end of homelessness will be realized.

Sincerely,

Manny Hidalgo, Executive Director



Program Updates

BEYOND THE TABLE EXPANSION

If you've been following Shepherd's Table over the past year, you'll know that we responded to the pandemic by launching a food distribution program called Beyond the Table. The program was launched to take dinners off-site and distribute the meals at two locations in both Montgomery and Prince George's County.

Beyond the Table has been a huge success, serving 26,000 meals since January to meet an unwavering need. As a result, Shepherd's Table officially expanded the program on July 10th. We've moved from offering the meals five days a week to seven, now operating with weekend hours. In addition, we're providing 200 meals weekly to supplement Clifton Park Baptist's program, "Mobile Meals." These meals are delivered by the church directly to individuals



and families who are home-bound.

Around the country, reports show the pandemic has increased hunger among Hispanic

immigrant families¹. While our on-site programs predominately serve adults, Beyond the Table strategically addresses needs among families. Our distribution sites utilize local schools and partner with faculty to spread the word. Seventy

percent of our recipients are members of the Latinx community and over fifty percent are children, stats that reflect the demographic increasingly experiencing hunger. As we collectively rebuild after the havoc of COVID-19, we're more convinced than ever that programs like Beyond the Table are crucial to building a healthy, whole community where no member is left behind.

The expanded hours for Beyond the Table are as follows:

- Parkland Middle School, 4610 West Frankfort Dr, Aspen Hill MD, 20853; Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- Riverdale Elementary School, 5006 Riverdale Rd, Riverdale, MD 20737; Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

FULL SERVICE UPDATE

As Beyond the Table grows, we're also working hard to expand the capacity of our programs on-site. In August, we'll return to offering three daily meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner, in place of the two that have been offered daily throughout the pandemic. We're excited to ensure our guests have the opportunity to enjoy three nutritious meals a day, every day of the year.

Similarly, the Resource Center will adopt the operating hours of 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday starting August 2nd.

Save the Date: October 10th

You're invited to join us on Sunday, October 10th, for an inclusive community dinner where clients and donors alike will sit together at one table. The evening will provide the opportunity to meet the clients we serve and enjoy a delicious meal, featuring dishes by our Chefs as well as local restaurants. We'll have live music and entertainment, hear from several key speakers, and introduce a new advocacy initiative—a significant milestone in the launch of our advocacy work as an organization. The event offers a unique opportunity to engage with our work: supporting our programs and meeting the impacted beneficiaries all at once. We couldn't be more excited to save you a seat.

Thrift for Good

Shepherd's Table is honored to have been selected as a beneficiary of New4You, a thrift store opening in Bethesda (4909 Cordell Avenue) on July 31st! The store is currently accepting clothing donations and will be open for business after July 31st. For more information, visit New4You on Facebook at New4You Thrift Shop or call (301) 656-2002.

Anthony's Story

Anthony had been homeless for one week when he heard of Shepherd's Table. It wasn't his first bout with homelessness: housing had been a struggle since he left home at 21. As a native to DC, Anthony has struggled to keep up with the cost of living in his hometown despite consistently holding a job. It's no surprise, as The District of Columbia (and much of the surrounding area) costs 245% of the national average². When Anthony found himself on the streets this past May, he had just recently secured a job utilizing his culinary training. He was thrilled to land the position but worried he'd lose his new job if he showed up to work hungry, un-showered, or without adequate rest. That's when a friend directed him to Shepherd's Table, where he immediately began receiving free meals. He connected with Jerome Chambers, our Director of Social Services, and entered a housing program through our partner, Interfaith Works. His current goal is to attain

"permanent and stable housing," ideally at an apartment complex in Silver Spring. He cites his relationships with Jerome and his Interfaith Works Case Manager as influential in developing a tangible plan to have his own place. "I've seen my family pushed out," he shares, referencing the gentrification that has displaced many of DC's locals, "I've always been afraid of the barriers, the high cost that makes it seem impossible to afford." By walking alongside Anthony and helping to meet his basic needs, we're working to show Anthony that his dreams are not impossible. All it takes is a little support from a trustworthy community.

In reflecting on his time at Shepherd's Table, he shared, "They've helped me keep my job, and provided an opportunity to have some stability... I don't know what the future holds, but I know I can go to my job and have a place to rest my head at night and food to eat."





Shepherd's Table

TOGETHER MEETING NEEDS. CHANGING LIVES.

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¹Washington Post ²BestPlaces.net