



March 2022

newsletter

Hello Friends,

As we enter this third year of a global pandemic, we continue to have a lot of hope for our community because every day we see examples of meal guests and clients rising out of the quicksand of homelessness and hunger and leveraging our free meals and social services to create a pathway towards self-sufficiency.

This growth is due in part to the increased development of our Social Services team. Our goal is to see clients journey towards self-sufficiency: a goal that requires us to go a step beyond meeting immediate needs. For a person to experience transformation towards independent living, they need professional,

relational care that comes alongside them and identifies their specific challenges. Our Social Services Team diligently connects with our meal guests and anyone who reaches

out for help. The team provides more than just transportation tokens, toiletries, and mail services. We now offer professional, coordinated case management for complicated crisis situations. We are a safe place for people to create art, engage in community and current

events on Saturdays and Sundays. We are also a health clinic for those who need vision care on Tuesdays and a place to pick out a new outfit for a job or housing interview from the Clothing Closet on Fridays.

Shepherd's Table believes that the path to self-sufficiency and empowerment begins with a meal and a consistent safe space to gather. This year we are excited to expand this assistance through our culinary skills job training program that will combine the efforts of the Social Services and Meal Services teams. It will guide students through a rigorous training program that teaches culinary, social, financial and job readiness skills. We are excited to embark on a new journey with our clients and we are even more excited to do it following the four basic values of Shepherd's Table: community, acceptance, reliability and teamwork.

We could not do what we do without the generous support of thousands of donors and volunteers who are as much a part of the Shepherd's Table community as the people we serve.

Sincerely,

Manny Hidalgo, Executive Director



Join Us in Setting a Bright Table Today!

Need a gift for someone who has everything? Searching for an easy and engaging activity? Looking for a way for your company to give back to the community or honor a client? Throughout the year, individuals, families, businesses, and groups can sponsor a Bright Meal and give the gift of a nutritious, hot meal to our clients at Progress Place. This special meal allows the sponsor to help plan and cover the cost of the menu with the option of also volunteering with your group. It is a fantastic way to give back. Email Daniella Burgos at dburgos@shepherdstable.org or call at (301) 585-6463 x205 to learn more about sponsorship.

Program Updates: Social Services at Shepherd's Table

When we completed our strategic plan in late 2020, it was clear we needed to increasingly invest in social support services for clients. Our goal is to see clients journey towards self-sufficiency, and to operate in this manner, we recognized the need to invest in the right staff. In 2021, we hired Jerome Chambers as Director of Social Services, leading a team alongside Evert Vargas, our Social Services Program Manager, and Tinsae Adugna, our Social Services Program Associate. Together, they comprise our Social Services team and run multiple programs to meet client needs.

When you walk into our building at Progress Place, you immediately encounter the Resource Center: a longstanding staple providing clients with mailboxes, basic necessities and referrals to other services. As a bustling center, volunteers are ready to provide clients with what they need and many of our regular clients stop by daily. Just down the hall, the Clothing Closet creates a store-like experience outfitting clients with free, seasonably appropriate clothing so they can look and feel their best. We're proud to offer the only free eye clinic in the county, working with Dr. Bernetta Davis to provide eye wear

and glaucoma treatment for those without insurance. Additionally, In the past year we launched the Weekend Day Program to provide a safe space for clients to spend time on the weekends. The Weekend Day Program fosters community through activities like movies, cheering on beloved sports teams and guided group conversations centered around shared experience. We partner with CREATE Arts to offer a creative outlet to serve as a sort of art therapy and plan to expand our partnerships to increasingly enrich clients' lives.

Lastly, the Social Services team has begun offering one-on-one case management services for clients. These typically begin as walk-in appointments

where staff assess needs and then help clients apply for things like social security, government-issued phones, meal stamps and

housing opportunities. Each client's journey is documented and tracked as they meet with our staff and over time, make strides towards their goals. While our clients may initially arrive at Shepherd's Table as meal guests, looking simply for an immediate meal, we're eager to serve more than just delicious food. Through case management and each program offered by our Social Services team, a fresh meal can be the entry-point to a larger journey of healing and empowerment.

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Advocacy Program

We have launched our new Advocacy Program to combat the challenges that our clients are facing, educate our community stakeholders and work to create systemic change with policymakers. Please save the date for the **MD Gubernatorial Candidate Forum on Mental Health and Homelessness on Tuesday, May 24th from 7-9pm at the Silver Spring Civic Building**. To learn more, connect with our Advocacy and Community Engagement Manager, Sibyl Brown at sbrown@shepherdstable.org or (301) 585-6463 x202.

Partner Highlight: Silver Spring Cares

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Silver Spring Cares (SSC) has organized to make sandwiches, bake casseroles, fundraise and donate goods to Shepherd's Table. The organization was founded in 2017 to coalesce community efforts to meet real needs in the area. Once the pandemic hit in 2020, SSC identified Shepherd's Table as an organization supporting the most vulnerable in a time of crisis. Executive Director Mónica O'Malley de Castillo has worked closely with our Director of Meal Services, Christina Moore, to understand what we need and rally the community to provide it.

This past winter, their Casseroles for a Cause campaign reaped tray upon tray of delicious broccoli, chicken, mac-n-cheese and veggie casseroles for our clients. The influx of ready-made meals could not have been timelier: the spread of the Omicron variant rendered several of our chefs ill and at multiple points throughout the winter, we operated with minimal kitchen staff and volunteers. Thanks to the casseroles and other generous donations, we were always ready to serve even with a lower-capacity kitchen. We were able to maintain our legacy of never missing a meal.

Amidst the Casseroles for a Cause effort, one of our freezers broke. This posed a serious problem for our operations. When Christina shared the predicament with Silver Spring Cares, they were on it. Working through Neighborhood Ambassadors that organize groups within the community, word of our need spread. In a matter of days, SSC had raised enough money to replace the broken freezer.

Time and time again, SSC has shown up in droves to support this community. This past month, they reached the milestone of 10,000 donations to Shepherd's Table and 100 weeks of service. To honor their work and express our gratitude, we shared thank-you bags with ST branded spatulas, cookbooks, and body scrubs. It's just a small token of thanks to express our appreciation for everything this incredible community does for Silver Spring!



Shepherd's Table

TOGETHER MEETING NEEDS CHANGING LIVES

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