



**connections**  
FOR THE HOMELESS



# MILESTONE CELEBRATION

A Reflection of Our Core Values in Action

**Thursday, May 19**

Lake Street Church of Evanston  
607 Lake Street, Evanston

## MISSION & VISION

Connections serves and catalyzes our community to end homelessness, one person at a time.

In support of our mission, we operate using the following Core Values to guide our interactions between participants, colleagues, and our community.

Equity and Inclusion • Community • Transparency  
Generosity of Spirit • Resilience

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Block Party and Family Fest**

**July 23**

**Milestone Celebration**

**Fall of 2022**

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## **Dwight J.**, Margarita Inn Resident

Honored by Maria Ynot, Shelter Case Manager

We are happy to honor Dwight for his generosity of spirit and transparency. Dwight has been with Connections since 2018. He is a very positive person, and he spreads that positivity to other participants and staff. He is always ready to make you laugh or smile with his great sense of humor.

## **Elizabeth R.**, Margarita Inn Resident

Honored by Maria Ynot, Shelter Case Manager

We honor Elizabeth for her community, transparency, and resilience. While living at the Margarita Inn, she has been very active in supporting the agency's work by speaking out to the Board Members and the community about her homeless experience

## **Zofia P.**, Margarita Inn Resident

Honored by Molly Bartholomew, Behavioral Health Specialist

We are excited to honor Zofia, a Margarita Inn resident, for her resilience and for her contributions to the community at the shelter. She has been an active member of the Art Group. She feels much safer now that she is housed, and she has decorated her room nicely with plants and other décor. In addition, she has started working on her dental health goal and has been attending appointments with Connections' CNA Michell.

## **Semaj B.**, Margarita Inn Resident

Honored by Molly Bartholomew, Behavioral Health Specialist

We are happy to recognize Semaj for his resilience. After a relationship ended and he was without a place to live, Semaj was sleeping on the train. Now that he is housed at the Margarita Inn, he has been able to work on his health and gain stability. He contributes to the community by regularly attending the Art Group. He enjoys staying physically fit, making art, and writing poetry.

## **Joshua K.,** Former Margarita Inn Resident Honored by Andrew Seibert, Operations Manager

We honor Josh for the values of community, generosity of spirit, and resilience. Throughout his nearly two years living in the Margarita, Josh was a helpful participant. He always followed the rules, was willing to lend a hand to staff or other participants, and was grateful for the help he was receiving.

Just a few months prior to moving into his apartment, Josh's son, who had been staying with other family members, moved into the Shelter with him. It was clear from the start that Josh was an exceptional father. Over the past 6 months, Josh has been working tirelessly to get his son enrolled back in school with the supportive services he needs.

## **Andre T.,** Drop In Participant Honored by Ayanna Brown, Case Manager

We honor Andre for his resilience and generosity of spirit. Andre, a father of 5, has bounced back from many different challenges and remains optimistic about the future. His positive attitude carries over to those around him. He often brightens other people's days with a laugh or a joke. He was matched to Rapid Rehousing but unfortunately couldn't locate housing while in the program. Despite the setback, he remained faithful and was able to get a steady job in December 2021. His commute from the Interfaith emergency shelter to work and back can take up to 4 hours each day due to limited Pace services. Despite the long commute, Andre is dedicated to his work so that he can care for his children.

## **Javier M.,** Margarita Inn Resident

Honored by Orlenda Henderson, Case Manager

We honor Javier for community and resilience. He has exhibited resilience by completing assigned tasks to obtain housing, including successfully acquiring an ID. He has utilized community by partnering with Heartland Alliance and Erie Family Health.

## **Angelo E.,** Drop In Participant

Honored by Orlenda Henderson Case Manager

We honor Angelo for his continued resilience. He came to drop-in services very goal-oriented and with his continued engagement, as well as completing all tasks assigned, and the case manager's help, he was able to find housing with a Housing Choice Voucher through the Housing Authority of Cook County. Angelo completed training and regained his PERC card, allowing him to work as a security guard. Within two weeks of moving in, he persevered and was able to secure employment. He is working full-time at American Security, enjoying his apartment, and continuing to do well.

## **RC Home Improvements,** Community Partner Honored by Emeric Mazibuko, PSH Case Manager

We are happy to honor RC Home Improvements as an outstanding community partner. Robert, the owner, is very responsive and is always able to complete the home repairs, no matter what is required. He always treats our clients with respect when on-site doing repair work. Robert and his team just recently rehabbed two units that we own in Skokie.

Robert is our go-to with any repair issues and he does his work with heart and compassion. Sometimes Robert will even donate his work to us sending us free invoices. Robert comes to his work with non-judgment and has built strong and trusting relationships with participants through the years of supporting them in maintaining their apartments. From repairs in Permanent Supportive Housing to our Youth Program to our Administrative offices at Dewey, Robert has been a true partner and we could not take care of our properties without him!

## **Chicago Furniture Bank,** Community Partner Honored by Julissa Flores-Singh, Housing Programs Manager

The Chicago Furniture Bank has been an excellent community partner these past 2 years. As clients move into their own apartments, it can be challenging to find nice furnishings for their new space. Since our expansion in our Rapid Rehousing program, Chicago Furniture Bank has assisted in furnishing over 75 of our households! Whether picking out furniture in their warehouse in-person or through a virtual appointment, the CFB staff is there to assist participants in making their new apartment a true home. From showroom staff to delivery teams, everyone is kind and stays true to their mission. We truly could not do our work without this crucial partnership and look forward to continuing our work together for years to come!

**Donnia W.**, Housing Participant & Volunteer  
Honored by Allison Keller, Housing Case Manager

We are happy to honor Donnia for her resilience and transparency. Donnia considers Connections a good support system and she credits that support for helping her achieve stability. She was selected for a mainstream voucher while in the Rapid Rehousing program, and worked diligently to finish the application, find an apartment, and move in. Since then, she has set up and decorated her home beautifully and continues to engage however she can. She enjoys volunteering once a week at the clothing room at Hilda's Place and hopes her success can provide hope to other participants.

**Olivia G.**, Housing Participant  
Honored by Chris Lempa, Housing Case Manager

We honor Olivia for her resilience. She has worked very hard to provide housing for her family. She has recently secured a stable job as well as supporting her children through school and with employment. Olivia recently graduated from Rapid Rehousing and was able to renew her lease without a subsidy.

## **Shawnadean H.,** Housing Participant

Honored by Johnique Smith, Housing Case Manager

We honor Shawnadean for her generosity of spirit, resilience, and transparency. She has been very transparent about her goals for herself and for her children. She overcame personal challenges and was able to use those circumstances as a tool for advocacy. She would like to grow into a community advocate where she can empower women facing similar challenges. While in TBRA, she has taken advantage of education assistance to become certified in Lactation, Postpartum and Labor Doula techniques. She has also become certified in Phlebotomy and is employed full-time in the NorthShore University Health System, where within her first few weeks of employment she received multiple positive reviews from patients which led to her receiving her first NorthShore certificate award and service pin!

Her goals don't stop there, she is considering other avenues to add to her experience as a CNA and hopes to continue up the ladder in nursing, while also exploring ways to become an entrepreneur.

**Jelisa B.,** Housing Participant  
Honored by Travon Bonner, Case Manager

The Youth Department has the pleasure of honoring Jelisa for her continued resilience. Jelisa has been a participant of the Bridges Housing Program since 2020 when she heard about Connections through a high school mentor. She has displayed bravery in the face of adversity and a willingness to help others. She is working at two jobs now and her current goals are to move into her own apartment and to eventually start her own clothing line.

**Kyle P.,** Housing Participant  
Honored by LaShauna Wilcoxon, Case Manager

We honor Kyle for his equity and inclusion and his resilience. When Kyle became homeless, he used drop-in services at Hilda's Place during the day and slept at Interfaith Action Emergency shelters at night. When the pandemic hit, Connections was able to put Kyle into our hotel shelters. And now, he has been a participant in the Rapid Rehousing program for just over one year. He's currently working two jobs and continues to comply with the program obligations, never missing his rental contribution. He has utilized the tools of this program to his fullest advantage, becoming more

## **Willie R.**, Housing Participant

Honored by Julissa Flores-Singh, Housing Programs Manager

We honor Willie for his community and his resilience. Willie came into our hotel program at the beginning of the pandemic. He has struggled with PTSD and social anxiety. From the hotel, he transitioned to our Rapid Rehousing program where he has been stably housed for 18 months. Since becoming housed and working closely with Connections and service providers, Willie has been able to maintain his housing and focus on his minor league basketball career. Last year he was able to travel to Spain and Mexico to play basketball. Willie recently moved into his own apartment with a Housing Choice Voucher. His plan is to complete a few successful basketball seasons and improve his income so that he will be able to afford market rent housing.

## **Vladimir E.**, Housing Participant

Honored by Morgan Saunders, Case Manager, Youth Services

We honor Vladimir for his resilience. He is an extremely focused and determined individual. He has recently been making strides toward securing employment and is already thinking of ways to invest his earnings. He is dedicated to self-improvement whether it be his health or education.

## **Katrina R.**, Housing Participant

Honored by Johnique Smith, Housing Case Manager

We honor Katrina for her resilience. While in the TBRA program, Katrina was able to secure a full-time position working at NorthShore University Health System and she just celebrated her one-year anniversary with this job. After graduating from the program, she has been able to maintain her unit on her own and is looking forward to moving towards homeownership.

## **Allison Keller,** Staff Honoree Housing Case Manager

We honor Allison, Housing Case Manager, tonight for her generosity of spirit. She demonstrates this generosity when working with participants, but also in all her interactions with fellow staff members. Allison believes strongly in the importance of our work and that shines through in how she approaches her interactions. She is highly regarded and has proven herself by consistently volunteering for tasks outside of her regular case manager role. Allison has many high need families on her case load and she works tirelessly to find ways to support these participants. Her kindness makes her extremely approachable, and participants find the support and stability they need from our agency because of that. Allison has many participant success stories and she is always continuing to learn and grow in her field.

# In Memoriam

Liz Anolick

Mark Perelman

Michael Finnegan

Keith Belton

Shawn Price

Bobby Hayes

Wayne Frierson

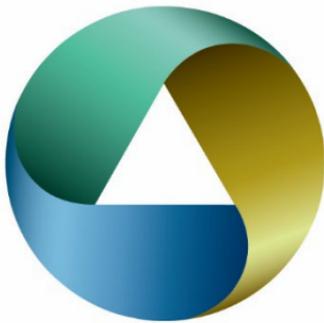
Trisha Menard

Lynn Vierk

Ronald Bryant

Amanda Sabin

Kevin Lewis



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