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MAKE OUR WISH LIST COME TRUE

Green Doors accepts both financial and product contributions that directly benefit our residents. If you wish to contribute items listed below, please contact us for delivery arrangements.

Our Food Pantry is always in need of:

- Canned meats (tuna, chicken, ham, etc.)
- Condiments (ketchup, mustard, grape jelly, etc.)
- Oil (olive or vegetable)
- Salt and Pepper or Sugar and Sweetener
- Protein drinks like Ensure

Our Houses are always in need of:

- USB Sticks
- Sets of Dishes or Pots and Pans
- Movies on DVD
- Games (e.g. Chess Board)

To make a donation for Green Doors programs, contact Cynthia Williams at 469-9130 or cwilliams@greendoors.org.

Financial donations can be made via our web site at www.greendoors.org or mailed to:

PO Box 685065, Austin, TX 78768



THE COMMUNITY VOICE

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A Story of Triumph-Victor Nelms

"I've been in and out of rehab nine times. But I've been clean, in recovery for two years now. I'm committed to working the steps vigorously every day. The steps are my survival. I've rebuilt my foundation and I'm re-learning how to live again," said Victor Nelms a formerly homeless veteran now participating in Green Doors' affordable housing program at Pecan Springs Commons.

At the core of Green Doors' work is the hope that a person who has reached as far down as Victor has, will have a moment of clarity and be able to see the opportunities available to him. Victor saw the light after so many years of darkness. Victor's story is not pretty, but it is the reality for many veterans who have exited homelessness; and, it is a story that Victor hopes will inspire and empower people struggling with addiction. He is 42 years old, but of the past 21 years of his life, it is only during the last two, that Victor has had the clarity to visualize the life he wants to live and make it a reality.

Victor has battled with the disease of addiction for the past twenty-one years. "Dope was like a veil. I died spiritually. And without a spirit I was nothing." Even when Victor made the decision to join the US Army, he was running from bad decisions and his transgressions related to the disease of addiction. Although clean for the majority of his tour, he still hustled and preyed on the people around him. When he returned from his two-year tour in Germany, he wasn't ready to take responsibility for the opportunities he missed in his life until that point; opportunities before he entered the service like Job Core and Certified Nurses' Assistance Training, nor the discipline and training offered in the service. But now he acknowledges his past for what it is, a series of bad decisions and missed opportunities. Fortunately, instead of fixating on his past, he has learned to trust God and have faith in the journey that God has prepared for him.

Along the way, Victor lost and hurt a lot of people. Most of his relationships had fleeting moments of success and then failed because of the power of his addiction. Victor was most regretful about disappointing his mom. Now, because he has been able to take control of his life, he has mended his most important relationships, including reconnecting with his mom, and is confident in creating new ones.

From the handsome smile on his face, clarity and fire in his eyes, and his clear commitment to fitness, a person would have no idea upon first meeting Victor that he battled with so many demons for so long. Today, Victor Nelms is the embodiment of love, care, honesty, and integrity. And although Green Doors was there for him with a

safe, stable, quality home, Victor did the work of a survivor. It was his perseverance and determination that has kept him off the street, in recovery, and working the steps.

"When I first met Victor, I was struck by how open and honest he is. Also he has a wonderful sense of humor. He had probably one of the most orderly, clean rooms I've seen in my life," said Kate Martin, Green Doors' Community Manager.

After running away for so many years, Victor finally has a place he can call home. And what he has created in his Green Doors apartment at Pecan Springs Commons is just that- a home, with yellow curtains, an immaculate living room, and a dining area ready to serve. There are three beautiful, ripe tomatoes on top of his kitchen counter and he runs into his bedroom to finish getting ready. He just returned from his job at the Salvation Army, the same place where he once sought shelter after a string of drug induced days. When he's at work he often runs into people seeking services, that he met with before on the streets of Austin. Now that he's clean, he hopes to inspire and empower them to rebuild their lives.

Andrea Garcia, Green Doors' Senior Community Manager, said of Victor, "it is hard to convey all the pain and suffering he went through compared to how well he is doing now. The two worlds are completely different. For me, it has been amazing to see his transformation and be a part of his story. I remember when he started in Green Doors' housing programs, he was struggling. Being housed gave him so much confidence, which empowered him to stay clean. What strikes me most about Victor, he is so proud of his accomplishments and at the same time, so humble about them".

Victor's is a story of triumph. And he thanks God for it.



You can help residents like Victor continue on their path towards self-sufficiency by investing your time or financial resources in Green Doors' mission. Look inside to find out more!



INVEST ONLINE www.GreenDoors.org

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Business of Ending Homelessness – Marrying the Head & Heart

I often get asked the question – How are y'all funded?

Implicit in this question is a more fundamental question – how do you ensure that Green Doors is a sustainable organization over the long term? For me, it starts in how we refer to ourselves. We are not a non-profit organization. Rather, we are a not-for-profit organization. The distinction may appear semantic, but it is significant. Green Doors, like other community organizations serving disadvantaged individuals and families, is structured to pursue its mission of preventing and ending homelessness and poverty housing. This is its primary purpose.

However, that does not mean that Green Doors does not/should not pursue a healthy bottom line – i.e., profit. Indeed, we need to pursue profit if Green Doors is to expand and increase its impact in the community, as well as weather periods of economic downturn and instability. Non-profit organizations are unsustainable because they make no profit – whether they are a business or community organization – and stagnate and die. Sustainable organizations – whether they are organizing primarily to make money or serve a public purpose – have to keep a laser-like focus on their financial bottom line over both the short and longer terms.


Unfortunately, the business side of ending homelessness is tough. When Green Doors builds a new housing development for individuals and families struggling with, or at risk of, homelessness we need to: 1) raise funds to build the housing; 2) raise funds to help subsidize operations because residents can only pay a small portion of the rents necessary to cover operational expenses; and 3) raise funds to ensure that residents have access to the supportive services they need to succeed. This business model is very capital intensive. Meaning that, we constantly have to fundraise from a variety of sources in order to be able to cover our costs and meet mission.

As a consequence, Green Doors is run, in many ways, like a for-profit business. We look to diversify our income streams, focus on bringing down marginal costs, budget conservatively etc. And, yes, we strive to make a profit – even though many of our public sector funders require us to have a zero profit operating budget!

Our approach has been fruitful for the organization and the people we serve. Over the last four years Green Doors has been able to grow the number of individuals and families we serve by over 400%, increase our operating budget by over 300%, increase our total assets by over 600%, and increase our net assets by over 70%.

We believe these results speak for themselves.

DATES TO LOOK OUT FOR...



Happy Holidays!

Nov 2010- Thanksgiving Dinner: Donate HEB gift cards in any amount and give our residents turkey and all the fixins'!

Dec 2010- Adopt a resident: Donate gift cards to Toys R Us, Target, Wal-Mart, and other stores in any amount and help our residents, especially our children, have a joyous winter holiday!

This year, we're empowering our residents to create their own winter holidays. Please join us in sponsoring a household with a gift card by contacting Cynthia Williams at 512.469.9130.

GREEN DOORS VISION, MISSION & CONTACT

OUR VISION

Green Doors' vision is that one day, all Central Texas families and individuals will have the opportunity to live in affordable, safe, quality housing.

OUR MISSION

Green Doors' mission is to prevent and help end homelessness and poverty housing for those working to achieve independent living in Central Texas.

CONTACT US

PO Box 685065
Austin, TX 78768
512.469.9130

www.greendoors.org
and find us on Facebook

FEEDBACK

To be added or removed from our mailing list, or to update your contact information, please contact Cynthia at 512.469.9130 or cwilliams@greendoors.org

NEW PROGRAM UPDATE...

Opening More Doors: Housing Rental Assistance – Green Doors' Newest Program

Green Doors is dedicated to the proposition that no one should be without stable safe housing. To that end, we provide affordable, safe, quality housing to individuals and families who greatly need it. Earlier this year we launched Green Doors' newest program, Housing Rental Assistance, as another vehicle for ensuring that our community's most vulnerable members have access to housing. The program offers monthly rental and utility financial assistance to lower income veterans and persons with disabilities and their families. It is focused on increasing self-sufficiency and financial and housing stability. To date, we have been able to help 50 households to access safe, quality housing, many of whom would be homeless without our support. Already in the short time the program has been up and running, we have seen significant impact in the lives of the program participants. Victor, our resident spotlight on the front page, is a beneficiary of the Housing Rental Assistance program and a great example of how people can reclaim their lives when given the opportunity and tools needed to succeed. More to come in upcoming newsletter issues...

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

Inside Pecan Springs Commons

Change is a Comin' to Sweeney Circle – and, has already begun. We see it in the beaming smile of new veteran resident, Victor Nelms. And, we see it in the laughing faces of the children that have lived in Green Doors' properties before we bought them and now after they have been renovated. As many of you know, Green Doors is engaged at Sweeney Circle in a neighborhood revitalization project, Pecan Springs Commons, where we are converting eight existing, substandard, multi-family properties (70 units, 120 residents) in this distressed, high-crime neighborhood block of Northeast Austin into affordable, safe, quality homes for individuals and families that need them. The project is targeted to working poor families and individuals, including veterans who have successfully exited homelessness and persons with disabilities. Green Doors also is especially interested in relocating working poor individuals and families from the neighborhood that lived in the substandard, unsafe housing before – by providing them with the beautiful, safe, energy-efficient, affordable homes they are today.

In the past 18 months, Green Doors has been able to achieve tangible positive results at Pecan Springs Commons. They include:

- Pecan Springs Commons is the 2010 National Winner of the MetLife Community-Police Awards for Neighborhood Revitalization and the 2010 Greenlights for Nonprofit Success, Excellence Award in the area of Collaboration. Green Doors received these awards by achieving the following accomplishments:

1. In 2008, APD reported 828 nine-one-one incidents; in 2009, after Green Doors acquired site control of eight of the properties at Sweeney Circle, there were 349 nine-one-one incidents reported – **a 58% decrease in crime**. Moreover, only 99 of the 349 nine-one-one incidents reported occurred in the second half of the year when Green Doors had begun in earnest its clean-up efforts.

2. In 2008, APD reported six drug houses actively involved in drug trade; after Green Doors acquired site control of the properties at Sweeney Circle and successfully removed problematic tenants and visitors, five drug houses were eliminated, and the sixth has since closed.

- Of the eight properties (70 apartments) being rehabilitated, six properties, 24 units, are completely rehabilitated and five properties have achieved a 4-star-green energy efficiency rating, the second highest rating offered by the City of Austin. Five of the completed properties, 20 units, are almost fully occupied and the remaining rehabilitated property, 4 units, will be occupied within weeks. Renovation of Phase II (46 units) is underway. More information on the progress of Phase II to come soon.

In its effort to create a safe, viable, sustainable community in which neighbors of Pecan Springs Commons feel secure, Green Doors has committed to building outdoor areas to enhance neighborhood relationships. The outdoor areas include: the landscape, the picnic areas, the commercial playground, and the cyber-center/community resource center. The landscape includes: new trees, food forests, orchards, walkable pathways lined by native plants, rain gardens, community gardens and removing 10% of impervious ground cover. By incorporating benches, picnic tables, bar-b-q pits, public art, and a commercial playground into the landscape, Green Doors encourages neighbors to meet and build community.

A 100+ volunteer team from the Real Estate Council of Austin (RECA) transformed the landscape of Pecan Springs Commons on October 16, 2010. More information on the progress and photos of the transformation to come in the next newsletter. For continual updates, become a Fan of Green Doors on Facebook.

