

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT

Jessie Figueroa, Resource Development Director | (828) 793 - 0072 | Jessie@HomewardBoundWNC.org

Abby Nelson, Development Officer | (828) 782- 0016 | AbbyN@HomewardBoundWNC.org

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Homeward Bound of WNC Receives Grants from Dogwood Health Trust and WellCare of North Carolina

ASHEVILLE, NC –

Homeward Bound of WNC, a nonprofit in Buncombe County working to prevent and end homelessness through permanent housing and support, has been awarded a two-year \$700,000 Stronger Operations Grant from Dogwood Health Trust to provide General Operating Support, and a one-time \$100,000 Community Reinvestment Grant from WellCare of North Carolina to support Permanent Supportive Housing. These investments will have a positive impact on the lives of neighbors experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in Asheville and Buncombe County.

The general operating support from Dogwood Health Trust is critical to sustaining and strengthening all of Homeward Bound's programs and services, as well as investing in our organization's long-term strength and resilience. This includes support for our AHOPE Day Center, which serves as the front door to our services; our Prevention programs that help people avoid entering homelessness; our Rapid Re-Housing programs that quickly connect individuals and families with short-term rental assistance and support; and Permanent Supportive Housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) provides safe, stable homes paired with supportive services to highly vulnerable, chronically homeless individuals. These individuals have experienced extended or repeated episodes of homelessness and typically need a higher level of care due to complex, long-term health conditions that result from living in shelters, on the streets, or in places not meant for human habitation.

Housing provides the foundation for people to manage chronic health conditions, build consistent routines, and access care without the barriers of instability or isolation. In many ways, housing simultaneously promotes health and prevents the onset of new illnesses. Thus, the investment from WellCare of North Carolina not only helps people move into safe homes—it supports long-term health, healing, and hope for our most vulnerable neighbors in Buncombe County.

“At WellCare of North Carolina, we know that housing is directly tied to health,” said Troy Hildreth, CEO of WellCare of North Carolina. “By investing in Homeward Bound’s work, we’re strengthening the foundation for healthier futures across Buncombe County. This partnership reflects our commitment to addressing the root causes of poor health and creating pathways to stability and opportunity for those most in need.”

About Dogwood Health Trust:

Dogwood Health Trust is a private foundation based in Asheville, North Carolina with the sole purpose of dramatically improving the health and well-being of all people and communities of 18 counties and the Qualla Boundary in Western North Carolina. Dogwood Health Trust focuses on innovative and equitable ways to address the many factors that contribute to overall health and wellbeing. With a focus on housing, education, economic opportunity and health and wellness, Dogwood Health Trust works to create a Western North Carolina where every generation can live, learn, earn and thrive, with dignity and opportunity for all, no exceptions. To learn more, please visit www.dht.org.

About WellCare of North Carolina:

Headquartered in Raleigh, WellCare of North Carolina provides government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors, and individuals with complex needs primarily through Medicaid as one of the state's Medicaid Prepaid Health Plans (WellCare of North Carolina), Marketplace (WellCare of North Carolina by Celtic Insurance Company), Medicare Advantage (WellCare), and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans (WellCare). WellCare of North Carolina is a wholly owned subsidiary of Centene Corporation, a leading healthcare enterprise committed to helping people live healthier lives. For more information, visit www.WellCareNC.com.

About Homeward Bound:

Homeward Bound of WNC's mission is to prevent and end homelessness in our community through permanent housing and support. Our work is anchored in the belief that housing is a human right. Our AHOPE Day Center serves as the front door to services for individuals experiencing homelessness. We offer prevention, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing to help neighbors find stability. Since 2006, we've moved over 2,658 people into their own homes. In 2024 alone, 96.5% of people in our Permanent Supportive Housing Program remained stably housed and did not return to homelessness. Visit HomewardBoundWNC.org to learn more.