

# KEYnotes

NEWS FOR HOMEWARD BOUND SUPPORTERS



## Meet Our New CEO, Simon Dwight

*“Homeward Bound is more than just the team; it’s all of you”*

Dear Friends,

It is with great pride and excitement that I am writing to introduce myself as the new CEO of Homeward Bound of WNC. As you may know, my plans to join the HB team and move to Western North Carolina have been long and, at times, very challenging. However, I couldn't be happier to join the team and arrive in the community to provide support at this unprecedented time.

I fell in love with this community and organization many years ago, and this opportunity is a dream come true. I am so thankful that I get to be part of the story as we rebuild together. I am sure that the future of our community is very bright.

I am a few days into my role, and I've already found being around the staff, volunteers, and residents inspiring. Homeward Bound is made up of an incredible group of people.

I have dedicated my career to ending homelessness. I began as a volunteer at a night shelter before becoming a support worker in a complex needs hostel. After several years on the front line, I became the CEO of a non-profit, which I led for eight years.

For the last five years, I have been working as a Specialist Advisor to the UK government, with a specific focus on policy and delivery that builds partnerships between government, non-profits, and community groups to end unsheltered homelessness.

Alongside my professional roles, I have a strong interest in academia and won scholarships to study at Cambridge and Harvard Universities. My research primarily focuses on the role of relationships in ending homelessness. I continue to believe that bridging the worlds of academia and practice will help us continually improve the systems we build to help people out of homelessness.



We are in a challenging time, but the strength and unity in the community and at Homeward Bound are palpable. The team at Homeward Bound has amazed me as I've heard story after story of team members embracing and overcoming the challenges of the last few weeks—they remain unquestionably committed to our residents, clients, and community.

It's because of them that I have never been more convinced that by working together we can end homelessness.

**“Homeward Bound is more than just the team; it’s all of you—our supporters, volunteers, government leaders, clients and friends.”**

Thank you for all that you've already done and will continue to do to support our work. I'm looking forward to meeting you all in person.

Thank you,

Simon

# Compass Point Village Celebrates One Year!

*Reflections from our staff and community partners*



*Jenny at Compass Point Village's Grand Opening*

## **Jenny Moffatt, Housing Services Director**

"The grand opening event was such an amazing moment for me. After spending almost two years working on the project, which had many setbacks, it was just surreal to see the property filled with people celebrating this huge accomplishment for our community. It was a really special day.

All the firsts have stood out: the first lease signing, first Thanksgiving dinner, first Christmas carol singalong, first cookout, and first monthly birthday celebration—all of these were super sweet moments I'll hold onto for a long time. For sure, a few client moments stand out as well. Those first few weeks watching residents bursting with pride to show me how they decorated their apartments were real tear-filled moments for me.

Watching one client in particular, Ed, who had no friends or community when he moved in, go from sitting in the courtyard alone to being encircled by new friends, both Homeward Bound staff and residents, seeing him relax and enjoy the new community—those are true stand-out memories for me. I really can't imagine any work accomplishment in my life I could be more proud of than being a part of this project."



*September 21 marked Compass Point Village's first move-in*

## **Judi Schultz, Appalachian Mountain Health**

"Housing these folks and integrating accessible services consistently improves outcomes. We are building a community, building trust, and we are a constant presence. I love it because this model—combining these resources—is really rare.

Taking a chance on a high-acuity population that is typically difficult to reach takes adjustment, but over the past year, we've seen not only community support coming in but also strong relationships forming among the residents at Compass Point Village. They're connecting in a way that's meaningful and helpful to their overall well-being."



**Appalachian Mountain Health visits Compass Point Village every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., providing essential medical and behavioral care from their fully equipped van and in our two dedicated provider rooms.**

## **Chief Mike Lamb, Asheville Police Department**

"The Asheville Police Department recognizes the progress made through our partnerships with Homeward Bound and other service providers. We believe our responses are contributing to meaningful improvements for this population of formerly homeless individuals. Through community policing, we're helping connect people to essential services and addressing underlying issues. This collaborative approach not only assists individuals in need but also enhances the overall safety and well-being of the community.

With the introduction of permanent supportive housing at Compass Point Village, we have observed a reduction in calls for service related to law enforcement matters involving those experiencing homelessness across the broader community. We have also noticed a reduction in calls regarding individuals who live at CPV. Those same individuals generated calls regularly when they were unhoused and on the streets."

# Hurricane Helene Updates

*Our community and staff rallied together within hours of the storm*

First, we'd like to thank every single one of our supporters for their efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. We had dozens of individuals and organizations from all over reach out to donate food, water, clothing, and other essentials, as well as eagerly asking where and how they could help. All of this outreach and generosity supported our staff as they reconnected with our clients across Asheville and Buncombe County.



## AHOPE Day Center

The AHOPE Day Center reopened the following Monday after the storm to provide our unhoused community a place to connect and access essentials, including food, clothing, drinking water, coffee, and restrooms. AHOPE has water while under a boil advisory, which is expected to last until mid-December.

## Outreach Team

Our Outreach Case Managers have done an amazing job reaching out to our unhoused neighbors who were displaced or unaccounted for during the storm to connect them with resources and concerned family members.

## Compass Point Village

Our residents at Compass Point Village are deeply grateful for the donated generators, gray water tanks, canned goods, drinking water, and pet supplies. Dozens of community members stepped up, delivering these essentials directly to our carport. Your generosity has allowed all 86 residents of Compass Point Village to maintain a sense of normalcy until water and power were restored.

## Clients Housed Across Buncombe County

Within hours of the storm, our Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-Housing Case Managers reached out to their clients, performed wellness checks, delivered essential items, and connected them with clean water stations, food supply hubs, and other resources.

Unfortunately, two unhoused neighbors died and eleven housed clients were displaced because of the hurricane. Our teams are working tirelessly to support each of these individuals and their families, addressing immediate needs and coordinating new housing arrangements.



**SSVF Outreach Program Manager, Alix at AHOPE distributing clothing to our unhoused neighbors. Many of our unhoused neighbors lived near rivers across Buncombe County and lost all their possessions during the storm while seeking shelter.**



**AHOPE & Outreach Case Managers teamed up to reunite a family with their three dogs that went missing during the hurricane.**

# “From the darkness to the light”

*Kathaleen’s story of survival and healing*

**Disclaimer:** This story contains potentially triggering content.

Kathaleen is from Central North Carolina and is 49 years old. At 16 years old, her life changed when she was raped at a party by four white boys. At the time, her grandfather and father were members of multiple racist gangs. The boys, who knew her family’s connections, said they did it as a punishment for speaking to a Black schoolmate earlier at the party. The same schoolmate found her and stayed by her side until she got help.

**“I didn’t want to be like those boys,” says Kathaleen. “I left home and started bouncing around. It was hard having no money, having to steal to eat, and not knowing where to sleep every night. I didn’t want to be a part of my family’s gang, but if I had stayed, I probably wouldn’t have been homeless.”**

Kathaleen had a son, and spent nearly two decades searching for a stable home until she was offered to live with an ex and his girlfriend, Jane. At that point, her life seemed to be improving. Her son was able to move in with his girlfriend, taking some weight off Kathaleen’s shoulders. Unfortunately, her ex went to jail and began a close friendship with Mike, an inmate in the same gang Kathaleen knew from her childhood, and the two of them, along with Jane, began planning the most malicious chain of events.

When Mike was released on bail, Kathaleen was kidnapped and locked in a room for three days without access to a toilet, food, phone, or medication. She was then sold and sex trafficked for drugs. This went on for months until Kathaleen’s son began planning a way to get her out of the situation.

While they were moving between motels, he convinced her traffickers that she collapsed in a bathroom. Scared of being “left with a body,” her traffickers allowed her to go to the hospital. When she arrived, Kathaleen secured her escape and checked herself in under a mental health crisis.

**“It was pretty hard,” she says. “But I knew I was on my way. I wanted to get clean, I wanted my kids back, I wanted my life back.”**



**Kathaleen has a passion for painting and sharing her artwork.**

Kathaleen spent the next two years trying to heal and recover, moving between medical and psychiatric units in 17 hospitals until she moved to Mission Hospital in May 2023. While there, a concerned nurse reached out to Helpmate and RHA Health Services. When Kathaleen was discharged from Mission, Helpmate paid for her to stay in a hotel and contacted Homeward Bound. Three months later, Kathaleen became one of the first people to move to Compass Point Village in October 2023.

**“I don’t go out much, and when I do, I don’t go alone. I was afraid I’d be taken back or killed. Those feelings and emotions were holding me back. Then, I moved here, and I’ve just blossomed!”**

One year later, Kathaleen’s physical and mental health has drastically changed. She’s been sober for two years, her diabetes is under control, she’s losing weight, and her IBS has disappeared. She’s also grateful for the support of her Case Manager, Sunni.

As a survivor of domestic violence and sex trafficking, Kathaleen values the safety provided by Compass Point Village. She urges the public to believe those who come forward as victims or survivors of human trafficking.

**“Compass Point Village has helped me from the darkness to the light. I can hold my head high and know that better days are actually coming.”**

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P.O. Box 1166  
Asheville, NC 28802  
(828) 258-1695  
homewardboundwnc.org