



HOMeward

WINTER 2018

You helped Armstead find his voice

At Health Care for the Homeless, Armstead Hetherington is a bit of a celebrity. On any given day, you'll find him chatting or laughing with staff and clients or participating in one of several advocacy groups. His big smile and bright eyes make him a draw in any crowd.

For years, Armstead shied away from being in the spotlight because he was missing most of his teeth. "I couldn't eat right, and I was always in pain," he says. "I didn't want to smile or even open my mouth around people. It was so embarrassing."

After two decades of substance use and living on the streets, Armstead came to us in 2009. Within months of seeing our care providers, he had a new heart defibrillator and engaged in regular therapy sessions. And in 2014, he secured housing. But it wasn't until he received partial dentures in spring 2015 that he felt his life really started to change.

"Dental care gave me my confidence back, and when you get your confidence back, you can move forward," Armstead says. "Everyone was surprised when they saw me for the first time with teeth. 'Wow, you're handsome,' they said. It changes the way you think about yourself and present yourself to others."

Today, Armstead encourages and supports his peers as a member of the Consumer Relations Committee of the Health Care for the Homeless Board of Directors. This winter, he is enjoying the more tedious aspects of moving to a new place. "I just got new furniture, but I've got to figure



Armstead used to shy away from public speaking. Now, he advocates for access to dental care for all.

out how to put it together. That's a good problem to have," he says with his signature smile.

Your support powers the transformative dental work happening at our three dental suites across Baltimore City (at Fallsway, in West Baltimore and at the Our Daily Bread Employment Center). In 2017, 1,400 of our clients received the dental care they desperately needed—thanks to you. But our goal is to ensure that 100% of our clients have access to dental care.

We can only provide that care if you and others help to push for Medicaid adult dental care coverage in Annapolis (see page 3).



MARCH 1

Save the date for our annual lobby day.
See page 4 for details.

Charles finds new “family” in West Baltimore



Thanks to you—our West Baltimore clinic restores hope and health to Charles and hundreds of others.

Two years ago, Charles Johnson was staying in abandoned row homes in West Baltimore with no insurance, no income and nowhere to turn for health care needs. “I’ve been pulling my teeth out with a pair of pliers and a wash rag,” he said back then. “And I don’t have my top teeth now.”

On December 9, 2015, you created new hope and opportunity for Charles—and hundreds of his West Baltimore neighbors. That was the day Health Care for the Homeless opened its West Baltimore clinic, what Charles now describes as “a godsend.”

“I started coming here as soon as they opened,” he says. “They’ve helped me with everything. Helped me get my life back together and build my self-esteem. They helped me start caring about my health.”

Since launching our clinic in a wing of Bon Secours Hospital, Charles and nearly 2,000 others have found relief, encouragement and the kind of personal care they need to get healthy. And West Baltimore Medical Director Dr. Tyler Gray predicts that we will reach more and more people in the years ahead.

“There’s a reason people come here, even from across town. We’re a small, multidisciplinary team and clients see the same familiar faces each time they come,” he says.

Charles credits the West Baltimore team with the ambition he feels today. At 57, he finally has disability benefits, he’s starting treatment for hepatitis C and he hopes to eventually own a home.

“The people here genuinely care, and they’re persistent,” Charles says with a chuckle. “They are like the family I never had.”



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Join Heartbeat— a group of committed monthly supporters building a future without homelessness.

giving.hchmd.org/heartbeat



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Get an inside peek into the lives you change every day. Sign up for our email list.

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email-signup](http://www.hchmd.org/email-signup)



LEARN

We’ll come to you! Invite us to your school, church, business or club to talk about the challenges facing our neighbors without homes and what we can all do to help.

[www.hchmd.org/invite-us-your-
community](http://www.hchmd.org/invite-us-your-community)



Through partnerships—and your support—people like Jimmy find home.

A new home, a promising future

Jimmy Tyson grew up on the water in Arnold, MD. His dad, a successful pharmaceuticals salesman, told him if he became a plumber, he'd never be broke. That advice proved true. For a time.

Jimmy left home at 18 to launch a career that would land him a plumbing superintendent's job at a Baltimore hotel, then his own company with four employees. What Jimmy did not anticipate was that years of verbal abuse from his father would take a toll on him. Even as his success grew and he started his own family, he struggled emotionally and fell to substance use. He lost everything. For five years he lived in a tent not far from where he grew up, in the woods outside Glen Burnie.

During that time, Jimmy traveled regularly to Health Care for the Homeless and held onto his tools—determined to get his life back on track. "I want to be productive again," he explains. Thanks to your support, he is getting that chance.

In October, Jimmy moved into Sojourner Place at Argyle Avenue, a permanent supportive housing development for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness created in partnership with Episcopal Housing Corporation. "It's hard to even describe to somebody what it's like," he says. "It's a new start for me in my life. And I'm grateful to have it."

Jimmy says his return to a stable, full life will take time. "When I was living by myself, I kind of dropped out of society." Trusting others became tough. "And some of those things take a while to come back." At Sojourner Place, Jimmy has the supportive services and the community in place to help with the transition.

Your ongoing compassion and commitment are critical to expanding housing opportunities for neighbors like Jimmy. Twelve apartments at Sojourner Place are just the beginning. Read more about how your support and our partnership with Episcopal Housing ended homelessness for Jimmy and 11 others at www.hchmd.org/news/set-keys-and-new-start.

Dental care is health care

Brushing up on oral health with Dental Director Parita Patel

Q: Medicaid doesn't cover adult dental care in Maryland, but lawmakers and advocates are expected to push for an adult Medicaid benefit in 2018. How would that change access to dental care?

I've seen low-income adults go decades without addressing their oral health because they don't have insurance and Medicaid won't cover their care. And when they finally do see a dentist, it's because the pain has become unbearable. If Maryland required Medicaid to cover limited or extensive dental care like 30-plus states already do, then low-income adults could get preventative services like x-rays, exams and fillings.

Q: Why is dental care important?

There's a direct link between oral health and chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, as well as low birth weight for expectant mothers. The ability to chew and eat affects our overall health. Eating lots of vegetables and fruits isn't possible without teeth.

Q: How does oral health affect other aspects of a person's life?

Our smiles are one of the first things others notice, and they affect our confidence and our speech. For people experiencing homelessness, for example, it is vital to feel confident and speak clearly while looking for a job. A job could make the difference between gaining and losing housing.



Dr. Parita Patel oversees services at our three Baltimore City dental clinics.

Trust Tierra: Our clients do



Peer Advocate Tierra Bolling (left) brings life experience to help clients like Ellis get healthy.

Tierra Bolling connects with our clients in a way that few can.

As a child, Tierra watched both of her parents struggle with substance use, and she knows first-hand what it's like to experience homelessness. Tierra's early years taught her that hard times don't define your future. Change is possible.

"This doesn't have to be what your life is like," she reminds her clients.

While many staff members across Health Care for the Homeless have experienced homelessness and bring that to bear in their work, Tierra's peer advocate role was specifically designed to bridge the client-staff gap.

As staff members who have confronted the same challenges our clients face, peer advocates are uniquely positioned to support people on their path toward health and housing. After all, who better to walk you through a challenge than someone who has been there and back?

While helping folks like Ellis (pictured) with grocery shopping, laundry or even to find and keep housing, Tierra has found that they open up to her. "I am relatable, compassionate and I listen," she explains. Clients often confide their most intimate struggles with Tierra.

"A lot of them feel more comfortable talking to me than they do to their providers," she says. "They feel safe with me."



THURSDAY, APRIL 26 | CLIENT ART SHOW

Enjoy a free evening of art and community, featuring our clients' own work. 5–7 p.m.

Register at www.hchmd.org/client-art-show

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

CHOCOLATE AFFAIR

Saturday, February 3

Join us 6:30–10:30 p.m. for an evening of delicious food, delightful company and good works. Buy tickets at giving.hchmd.org/chocolate2018 or call 443-703-1345.

FALLSWAY TOUR

Thursday, February 15

Your chance to see our downtown clinic in action. Tour starts at 9 a.m. RSVP to cbauer@hchmd.org

LOBBY DAY

Thursday, March 1

Ready to rally? Join us in Annapolis to advocate for policies that prevent and end homelessness. RSVP at www.hchmd.org/lobby-day