

From the Executive Director **We Do Recover**

At Room In The Inn, we often encounter uncomfortable questions: “Why don’t they just get a job?” “Aren’t you just enabling people?” “Don’t they just need tough love?”

In Room In The Inn’s 40-year history, and in my 20 years as executive director, these questions have filled the air. They seem especially loud at this moment in history, but I consider them gently and try to offer answers that shed light. My response usually begins with an invitation: Please consider that we all have a story. In the humility of considering our own stories, we often open to the fact that others’ stories and pains are complex – and overwhelming. Perceived laziness is more likely exhaustion and resignation. Unemployment is the often the result of failure and rejection not simply on an individual’s part, but by multiple systems throughout that person’s life (systems upon which most of us safely rely). These failures can create overwhelming obstacles not only to employment, but to housing, relationships, freedom from addiction, and independence.

I also ask folks to imagine real scenarios, like: How would you hold down a job without a consistent place to lay your head, wash your uniform, or make your own meal at the end of the day? Those we serve at Room In The Inn get jobs but often lose them. They find a stable place to stay, but it’s temporary. They begin to move forward, but illness or injury, often related to the physical toll of a life in poverty, takes them down.

In these vulnerable moments, Room In The Inn is there. Not enabling, but offering stable ground, respite for healing, and community that recognizes the inherent dignity of every individual. We cherish them. As Father Gregory Boyle says, it’s this cherishing that assures us they’ll come back. He recalls the story of the Prodigal Son, suggesting that when we falter (which we all inevitably do), we return to the place where we are loved and cherished. And in that return, there is hope.

As you’ll see in the following pages, Room In The Inn, like family, stands in that place. We provide opportunities for healing to those coming out of the hospital who deserve to recuperate indoors; to those struggling with addiction, which we believe is a medical and social issue; and to veterans seeking to reconnect to the entitlements they are eligible. Some days, we



find ourselves standing in a place of initial support, providing short-term social detox as an alternative to incarceration. Sometimes we find ourselves at the end of someone’s story, standing graveside at their burial, honoring their dignity with our presence.

As others consider these stories, we hope that answers to the hard questions become clearer – or, at least, new ways to know and love your neighbors become possible. Entering deeper into our community reveals stories of resilience, hope, and common humanity. We carry thousands of stories with us, written on our hearts as we work for better solutions and pray for healing. Just ask.

With peace and gratitude,

Rachel Hester

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Guest House & Recuperative Care



“The Guest House has saved more lives than they’ll ever even know.”

- Madeleine DeMoss, first staff member of Room In The Inn

CAMPUS RESPITE: A MINISTRY OF HOPE
by Charles Strobel

Back in 1991, the Metro General Sessions judges approached us about the problem of overcrowding at the Metro jail. They said that the “drunk tank,” as it was commonly called, was always filled to capacity. Publicly intoxicated people constantly were being arrested and booked for a four-hour stay. The judges asked if we would receive them instead. We agreed, and the Guest House was created providing Metro Police an alternative to jail for the publicly intoxicated. Since then it has been a refuge for thousands who the police bring to us but who are not under arrest, as we want to treat addiction as a medical and social problem, rather than a criminal one.



- THE INTEGRATED MODEL FOR CARE AT THE GUEST HOUSE INCLUDES:**
- Short-term social detox as an alternative to incarceration
 - Recuperative care for medically vulnerable individuals
 - Transitional housing for veterans, operated in partnership with the VA
 - Access to medical, mental health, and addiction recovery services
 - Community living, compassionate care, and pathways to long-term stability
- BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY INCLUDE:**
- Recognition of substance abuse as a medical and social issue that can be treated, rather than a criminal one
 - Reduced strain on law enforcement, courts, hospitals, and emergency services
 - People who are equipped with life skills and ready to participate in civic life
- For more information about our programs, visit our website: roomintheinn.org**

“No one anticipated that rather than hit the pavement to dredge up the next drink, some would want to stay at Guest House, get treatment, a job, and an apartment of their own.”


- GENERAL SESSIONS JUDGE BILL FAIMON, QUOTED IN TENNESSEE TOWN & CITY, AUGUST 9, 1993




Leaders in Hospitality



Judge William “Bill” Higgins and Judge Randall Wyatt were instrumental in their commitment to helping the Guest House succeed. They both passed away on the same day earlier this year.



Ron “Short Stop” McQuaigue was arrested over 500 times for public intoxication. Despite all odds, he began his journey of recovery in 1991 and credited the Guest House for saving his life. He later served on the staff, exemplifying the spirit of Room In The Inn through his own remarkable life and compassion for the many people who passed through the Guest House while he worked there. Charlie Strobel shared at his memorial service that “there would never have been a Guest House without Ron. His radical love for the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lost is his legacy to the rest of us.”



Melvin Scates had a similar story of transformation before sharing his own ministry of radical honesty as Guest House Coordinator for 19 years, where he welcomed hundreds if not thousands as they entered the journey of recovery.

We Remember



The Crisis of Homelessness is the Crisis of Death

by Jeff Moles, Director of Formation

Much of the time and energy of middle- and upper-class Americans is spent trying to prolong life and avoid even the thought of death. Consider the billions invested in cosmetic surgery, photo filters that erase the marks of age, and health regimens that promise to slow or even reverse time. Meanwhile, those in our society who experience poverty live in close proximity to the mortality we all share. In Nashville, this truth is especially stark: people of immense wealth live alongside neighbors enduring deadly poverty.

As Room In The Inn founder Charles Strobel said often, the crisis of homelessness is the crisis of death. It robs people of decades of life. The average life expectancy for someone living on the streets is around 50 years – thirty years shorter than the national average. Early death often comes through exposure to the elements, lack of healthcare, addiction, chronic illness, or violence. Even after people find housing, the physical and emotional toll of life on the streets can linger, leading to premature death. Most of these deaths could have been prevented if homelessness itself had been prevented. Safe, stable housing is not merely a privilege; it is a life-saving human right.

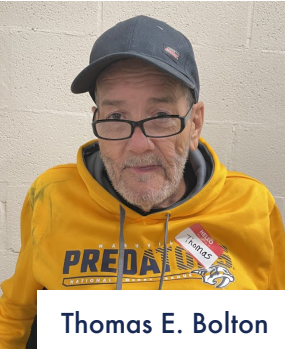
Room In The Inn seeks to be more than a place where people come to receive services. It strives to foster a community where lives can truly flourish. At its best, it not only calls those living on the streets toward stability and healing, but also calls the wealthy and powerful to confront and dismantle systems of injustice and inhumanity. This transformation happens through relationships where learning, support, and love take root. When people who might never otherwise meet share life together, they begin to recognize their common humanity – bound by the same fragile realities of birth and death.

Such a community becomes a sacred space where we can face our mortality honestly and be transformed by the practice of loving one another. The deaths of community members invite us into healthy grief – grief that honors their stories and renews our commitment to building a society defined by humanity, justice, and kindness.

LEFT: We celebrated Día de los Muertos by honoring those who have gone before us. Participants helped to create a beautiful ofrenda, with handmade marigolds and butterflies, where we could reflect on the lives of these individuals and the difference they made in our community.

We Remember

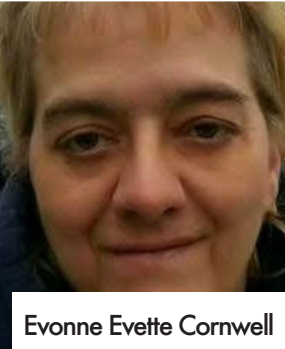
We remember these community members who died November 2024-October 2025. Every name represents someone with gifts, dreams, and a unique story. Each made an impact on the world around them. Please join us in holding in memory these beloved dead while working with urgency for a world in which every person is known, safe, and loved.



Thomas E. Bolton



John Coleman



Evonne Evette Cornwell



Rocky Harper



Gwendolyn Johnson



Jessie James Johnson

Maurice Adams
Darlene Allen
Linda Amos
Krista Anderson
James Michael Anderson
Alex Ardon
Jimmy Dean Ashworth
Beth Bacon
Raymond Bain
Carl Baker
Christopher Barton
Jakaya Baughn
Thomas E. Bolton
Yvonne DeCarlos Bostic
Larry Wade Boyd
Charles Brown
Bylee Burgess
Thomas Burr
William M. Carroll
Stanley Chase

David Church
Rachel Marie Clark
Patrick Clark
James Lloyd Clark
John Coleman
Joseph Colquett
Evonne Evette Cornwell
Sarah Culp
Judy Lynne Davenport
Alvin Day
Jeanette Dengler
James Denton
Darlene DeRosa
Linda Dishon
William Diviney
Tommy Doran
Marion Duerkson
Leonard Fawcett
Debra Flynn
Richard Fowler

Frances Francisco
Michael Frimenko
Cartrel Galloway
Darin Gassaway
John German
Michael Gerrity
Brian Glenn
Teresa Glenn
Terry Goddard
Carmen Gomez
Jose Gomez
Joyce Green
Brenda Gregory
Samuel Hare
Rocky Harper
Sabrina Harris
Robert Jeffrey Harris
David Harris
Sandra Harrison

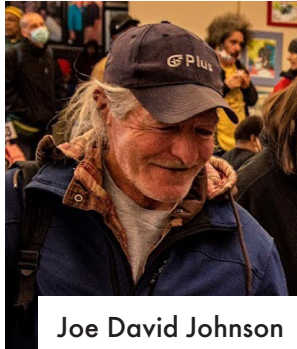
Mamie Hastings
William Henry "Hakeem" Head
Douglas Henson
Christopher Jawell Herbert
Faith Herner
Austin Hester
Richard Higgins
Randall Hogan
Theodore Hollenbeck
Kanei Holmes
Douglas Holt
Mark Holt
Randy Honea
Rickey Hudgens
Tadarius Milan Hunt
DeeAngelo Hunter
Jason Hutcherson
Steven Hymes
Gary Wayne Johnson
Gwendolyn Johnson

Jessie James Johnson
Melissa Johnson
Laron Johnson
Joe David Johnson
Charles Kenley Jones
Diane Jones
Natasha Dawn Jones
Patrick Killian
Charles Everett Kimbro
Kelton King
James Earl King Jr.
Jason Klingenberg
Calvin Landers
Steve Lasmastus
Dennis Ledford Jr.
Greg Lewis
Joanna Lewis
Jerry Likens
Curtis Livingston
Brent Lovely

Linda Macdonald
Ronald Madden
John C. Manasco
Eileen Marhefka
Charles Marshall
Jesse James McAdoo
Glenn McCray
Edward McGregor
Seleana McKay
Curtis McNeil
Alan Merrill
Arthor Nall
Johnda Nichole Nottingham
Timothy Orrick
Donald Parker
Michael "Scott" Parker
Edward F. Parsons
Randy Patterson
Michael Payton

Charles D. Petty
Jack L Phillips
James Polson
Charles Walter Pope
Wendell Houston Quarles
Calvin Eugene Reams
Zion Reese
Anita Lynette Richey
Curtis Riley
Greg Rivers
Donald Robinson
Aaron Robison
Susan Rocha
Thurston Rucker
Jerry Michael Salazar-Mantilla
Donald Scruggs
Valenna Spikes
Lisa Spranger
Hubert Stepp

Ray Stevens
Danny Summers
Reinaldo Szczensy
Brenda Taylor
Leslie Woodard Taylor
Jeffery Thompson
Inez Turley
Ernest Turner
Richard Wakeland Jr.
Margaret Weaver
Douglas Jay White
Jessie Whitworth
Deborah Williams
James Douglas Williams
Linda Williams
Zachary Williams
Alvin Mark Wilson
Willie "Paul" Windom
Michael Woodin



Joe David Johnson



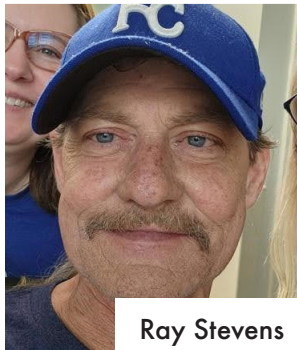
Kelton King



Greg Lewis



Thurston Rucker



Ray Stevens



James D. Williams



We Remember

CALL THE NAME

Call the Name, an initiative of area faith leaders and Room In The Inn, ensures that no one in our community is buried alone, honoring each person's dignity and worth through this ministry of presence.

To learn more about this initiative and join our community of Nashville faith leaders and volunteers by signing up for the Call the Name email list, visit roomintheinn.org/we-remember.



MEMORIAL TREE

The Memorial Trees at Room In The Inn honor hundreds of members of our community who have died since our founding in 1986. Each leaf is handmade with love and each person added to the tree is remembered in a monthly memorial service held in our chapel.



Faces of Room In The Inn

"I'm a Room In The Inn Ambassador, I've been here 14 years, I love this place. I feel like this place has saved my life... As far as the Room In The Inn goes, they helped me so much. I'm 21 years clean... I feel like this is where I want to live my life for the rest of my life."

- WILLIAM B.



"I have been homeless before. I got locked up, and then I went to treatment, and and then they had the Veterans program over here at Room In The Inn. I wanted to work here to help the veterans – not only the veterans, but everybody. My favorite part of my job is, when a person comes to Room In The Inn and they're dependent, helping [them] find themselves and then having a sense of independence when they leave. It makes me feel good because a lot of guys when they came here, they didn't have hope. When they leave, they're able to recognize the process."

- DWIGHT P.



"I'm allowed to celebrate my recovery even as I serve others that are recovering! The love that's poured out from the participants to me is just so special – they call me by name and I call them by name and that's so important here."

- SHEILA D.

Buddy is a longtime member of our permanent supportive apartment community. He went through many of our Room In The Inn programs at the beginning of his recovery, and now he introduces many people to recovery in a Recovery Class that he teaches each week with his sponsor.

- BUDDY C.



"I started off as a Jesuit Volunteer because I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. And then quite literally everything changed in my life, and a lot of that is because of Room In The Inn."

- ANNIE M.

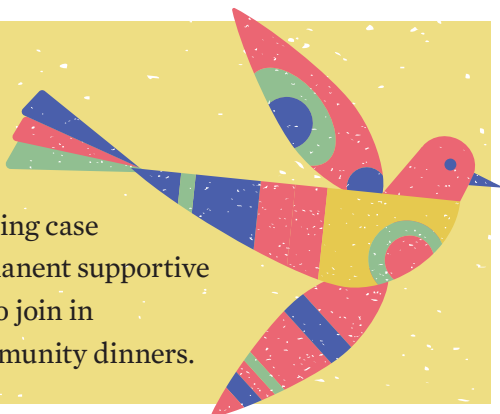


This year, we mourned the loss of beloved Room In The Inn staff member David Bodenhamer, who died on May 19. It would be impossible to count all the lives that have been changed for the better because of David's compassion and service since he first joined our team in 2009. He said, "I work here so I can extend the same grace that was extended in my life."



Veterans Program: Room In The Inn offers a 6-9 month transitional housing program for our veterans which includes support in securing employment, connections to recovery resources, medical resources, and participation in community events with the ultimate goal of permanent housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing Community: Our downtown campus includes 48 efficiency apartments and ongoing case management for residents. This program allows us to offer an uninterrupted on-site path from the streets to permanent supportive housing, thus directly connecting emergency services with long-term solutions. Apartment residents are invited to join in community with ongoing engagement, volunteer opportunities, post-housing skills development, and weekly community dinners.



Gift Guide

Here's a look at some of our favorite merchandise - perfect gifts for anyone on your list! All proceeds fund Room In The Inn's mission of offering community and support to those who call the streets of Nashville home. Available at roomintheinn.org/shop or by scanning the code below.



The Inn Crowd
t-shirt, \$15



The Kingdom of the Poor by Charles Strobel,
Paperback \$20



The Inn Crowd
hat, \$25



Do you know how GOOD
you are?
t-shirt, \$15



Do you know how GOOD
you are?
hat, \$15



Southern Magnolia
candle by Highland
Rim, \$20



Love Your Neighbor, Y'all
zip-up hoodie, \$40



The Inn Crowd
beanie, \$25



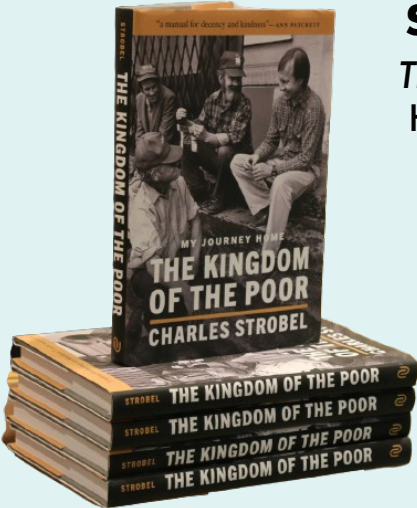
Love Your Neighbor, Y'all
tote bag, \$15



Love Your Neighbor, Y'all
luggage tag,
\$10



Do you know how GOOD
you are?
sticker, \$1



The Kingdom of the Poor by Charles
Strobel, Hardback \$35

SPECIAL EDITION!
The Kingdom of the Poor
Hardback + Ornament
BUNDLE, \$40



Love Your Neighbor, Y'all
ornament, \$10

Room In the Inn
core values
shirt, Adult
sizes \$15,
Youth sizes
\$12



Sweatshirts, hoodies, hats, and more are available to order on our website! Place your order today using the QR code:

