ROOM IN THE INN

Winter 2026

From the Executive Director

Feed the body. Nourish the soul.

There's a quote from Dorothy Day that I really like: "Food for the body is not enough. There must be food for the soul." Her insight resonates with me personally, and, in the context of Room In The Inn especially, this statement holds deep truth and life-changing potential. Simply walking through our campus reveals the many ways to understand what these words can mean.

Here, it's clear that health is not just physical; it's emotional, mental, and spiritual, too. Caring for our neighbors goes far beyond meeting just one type of emergent need. And while addressing immediate, urgent needs is often the first step, what follows is just as critical: attending to the whole person, inside and out.

In fact, even as we first seek to meet those essential needs, like food and shelter, Room In The Inn's staff, volunteers, and partners approach our guests in a whole-hearted and unique way. The "how" of our approach to serving meals, hosting winter shelter, and welcoming people to our Guest House stems from a core value of hospitality.

Everything we do is intentional. Every touchpoint is an opportunity to extend hospitality; every interaction, an opportunity to grow our relationships. And every moment presents an opportunity for us to experience real human development in ways that might surprise you.

This begins with congregations across our area offering overnight shelter during the winter months (for the past 40 years!). It includes restaurant-style table service and live entertainment in our café. It even means yoga and Zumba classes, chess matches, jam sessions, and colorful murals popping up throughout the campus. At Room In The Inn, these are just some of the ways that guests access vital care for their body, mind, and spirit.

You'll read more about some of these offerings in this issue, along with other key programs like occupational therapy, substance abuse services, mental health care, and partnerships with the Metro Nashville Police Department. I hope that in all of this you recognize the value of our human-centered response.



Being well includes being part of a supportive community! Here, Will (left), our summer intern from Montgomery Bell Academy, plays chess against Wyatt (right) in Chess Club.

As always, I invite you to help others and yourself to feed the body and nourish the soul at Room In The Inn. After all, community is our secret sauce — and the special ingredient is you! We hope you'll come join us as we continue to love our neighbors through this winter season.

With peace and gratitude,

Rachel Hester

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Taking a Holistic Approach to Health

At Room In The Inn, we do not care for people just because they do not have a home. We care for them because of who they are, and everything we do is to help them become who they want to be.

That means caring for the holistic well-being of each person who walks through our doors — attending to their physical, mental, spiritual health. We do this by surrounding them with wraparound support and love, not just from our team and volunteers, but also in partnership with experts from around Middle Tennessee who serve our community with the same heart that we do.

Caring for the physical health of our community members is essential if we want to build trust and encourage those who have been left out of society's safety nets to take the next step forward. From offering the dignity of access to personal hygiene, to warm meals served daily with intentional hospitality, we welcome people body and soul. Opportunities to focus on mental health and spiritual growth follow, in the safe space of supportive community built through a commitment to meeting people where they are with respect and love.



The focus of our meal program is hospitality, providing an initial place of grace and an entry point for long-lasting care.

Last year, we shared

123,907

meals with Room In The Inn community members.





Our Hope University educational programming includes opportunities to learn and engage with health, including Morning Stretch, Dancing, and Zumba classes, as well as chances to join in Yoga class with our partners from Small World Yoga, and more!



The Room In The Inn Winter Shelter program is one of the most critical ways we care for the health of our unhoused community members. The wintertime is incredibly dangerous for neighbors who call the streets of Nashville home. The commitment of our congregation partners and volunteers is unmatched when it comes to keeping our community safe in the winter.

110 congregations from around Middle Tennessee provided safe shelter, warm meals, and generous hospitality last winter, offering a total of

15,613 beds to neighbors in need.



You make this work possible. Ways to Join the INN Crowd!

1. TAKE A TOUR!

If you haven't been to our campus in a while, come take a tour! Schedule a time to visit by emailing our team at **volunteer@roomintheinn.org**.

2. VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME!

Join us in community by volunteering! There are opportunities for groups and individuals of all ages, and all skills, to give of your time, energy, and love. Reach out to our team to see where you could plug in: **volunteer@roomintheinn.org**.

3. DONATE!

The programs and services of Room In The Inn are essential to our Nashville community, and they would not exist without your contributions. Make a donation by visiting our website at **roomintheinn.org/donate**. Thank you for loving your neighbors!

THE Inn CROWD NASHVILLE

Our Guest House: Getting to the Root of Substance Abuse

At Room In The Inn, we treat addiction as a social and medical issue. When the Guest House was founded in 1991, Nashville defense attorneys sought out our founder Charlie Strobel because they knew he had a human-centered response to public intoxication. Rather than locking someone away for the night, and then releasing them first thing in the morning into the same set of circumstances that had led them to drugs or alcohol the day before, we are able to take a holistic approach.

Public intoxication is often a symptom of addiction, or substance abuse disorder. Our Guest House allows us to get to the root of the problem. We meet immediate needs — offering warm meals, a safe place to sleep, and supportive community — while talking through treatment options and how to take the next steps forward. Our partnership with the Metro Nashville Police Department makes this program possible. They refer individuals, whom they would have otherwise taken to jail, to our program instead, allowing us to treat them in the way they deserve while also saving taxpayer money. Our Guest House is a forward-thinking program that allows our city to work better together while meeting our most vulnerable community members right where they are and offering the care they need.



ABOVE: *Annie, Guest House Manager, welcomes residents of the Next Steps dorm.*
BELOW: *Chris (left) and Matthew (right) are some of the friendly faces who first welcome people to the Guest House.*

"I love the difference between when people come in, maybe a little scared or anxious, and after they have been there a couple days. They are just so appreciative of our wonderful programs, the staff here, and the ability to be at peace."

- **Chris,** *Guest House team member, pictured at right*



COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

Belmont University's Flourish Mobile Health Clinic

The Flourish Mobile Health Clinic expands access to compassionate, interdisciplinary care for individuals facing challenges to health and wellness. Through mobile services and hands-on education, they bridge care gaps, reduce stigma, and promote healing, hope, and flourishing in our community.

The Flourish Clinic partners with Room In The Inn to provide holistic, coordinated care for our most vulnerable neighbors. They join us regularly on campus to provide health services in coordination with our lunch program.

Meet Our Occupational Therapist!

"I started here as a volunteer in 1996 and was the first hired occupational therapist in 1999 and just kept coming back. I love this place.

Occupational therapy in its most basic sense is skills for the job of living. Here, we help people work with their limitations and barriers in order to achieve the highest level of success and happiness."

- Pat, *Occupational Therapist*



We Remember



The crisis of homelessness is a crisis of death. On average, the experience of homelessness steals years — even decades — of life. On the following pages are far too many names of those we lost this year. Every name represents someone with gifts, dreams, and a unique story. Each made an impact on the world around them. In remembering those in our community who have passed away, our basic affirmation is this: regardless of the circumstances of life any of us may experience, all people are equal in worth. We hold in memory our beloved dead while working with urgency for a world in which every person is known, safe, and loved.

Please join us in taking a moment to remember our neighbors who were part of our Nashville and Room In The Inn communities who died November 2025 - September 2026. As we honor them on our campus, on our Memorial Tree, and in our hearts, we invite you to carry them in your prayers.

Lynette Adams

Robert Alexander

Jawad Al-Sowejit

Gregory Arthur

Harry T. Beard
Veteran; went by the name "Ricky" in the earliest days of Room In The Inn. When asked why, he said, "Sometimes it is nice to put on a new coat."

Jacquelyne R. Beasley

Cortez D. Bell

Charles Booker

Thomas A. Booker
Carried himself with gentleness; worked hard on his recovery.

Vincent L. Boyd
Valued bringing others into our community; many remember his big smile.

William Boyer

Robert Branner

David Brito

Gregory C. Britt

Charles N. Burford
Snappy dresser, kind soul, enjoyed being pampered in foot clinic.

Sherrod Burnett

Paul "Debo" Burns
Proud Father Ryan grad; Notre Dame fan; 16-year apartment resident; shared his story with police cadets and students; loved to talk about his daughter and be of service to others.

Sherry Butler

Gary W. Campbell

Gary Campbell

Reginald Carpenter

Eugene Carter

Tammy Cauley

Eric Cherry

Anthony R. (Green) Christian

David D. Church

Charles Clark

Charles Cliatt

Clifford "Gator" Coleman
A sweet soul under a tough exterior; when he told you he loved you, he meant it. We belonged to him.

Sharon Conyers

Jonathan Cullison

Judy Daniels

(Continued)



To Serve My Soul

by Eric Cherry, 1962 - 2025

And so we surrender ourselves
Unto the hands of time
As we come to look inside
For the truth we hope to find

For this life is but a journey
Through each of the places that we have been
It's the lessons that we have forgotten
And come around to learn once again

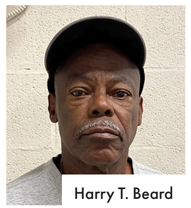
For the truth is in our vision
Through which we come to see these things once again
For it's a measure of yourself
And the message you would hope to send

And so you live your life
Trying not to acquire any baggage
For it becomes a burden on your soul
And so goes the age old adage

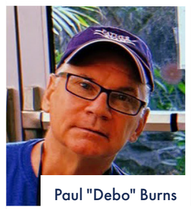
For this life is meant for living
True to your heartfelt desire
For this is such a precious thing
Which soul serving souls require

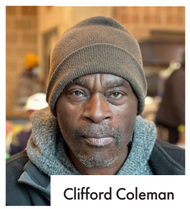
And so you come to ask yourself
The truest of truth filled questions
Of how can I come to serve my soul
With all the best intentions

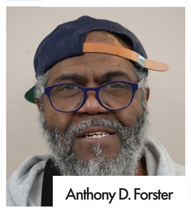
We Remember

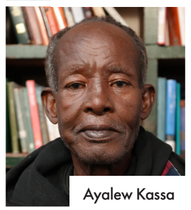

Harry T. Beard


Charles Burford


Paul "Debo" Burns


Clifford Coleman


Anthony D. Forster


Ayalew Kassa

Margaret Davis
Patricia Ann Davis
Sabrina Davis
Darlene DeRosa
John Dillard
Michael Dinnan
Paul Dotson
Marion Andrew Duerksen
Jimmy Ray Dunn
Sherry Dybeck
Donne Ann Edwards
Victor Etter
Joseph P. Fannin
Anthony D. Forster
Sherry L. Fox
Rhonda Frankenberry
John Franklin
Edward L. Fullmer
Sue Ganey
Lisa M. Garrett

Heather-Lyn Gerity
Brian Glenn
Carmen Gomez
Glen Graham
Janet Gray
RoyceAllen Green
Terry Griffey
Charles Grisham
Juan Guifarro
Philip J. Hallisey
Harry Hancock
Arthur Hardemon
Arthur Harris
Joseph Hartnett
Randall M. Hogan
Douglas Holt
Phillip Benjamin Horton
Jeffrey Hunt
William Hypes
George Iames

Victor Igbinedion
Katrina Jackson
David E. Jacobsson
Christina Jennings
Willie H. Johnson
William N. Jones
Ayalew Kassa
Latanya Knowles
Carl A. Knox
Linda Langiotti
Chester Larimore
James Ray Leon
Remembered for his vibrant smile.
Mark Leonard
Dean Levinsohn
Bradley Mackin
Ronald Madden
Edward Madison
Veteran; worked hard at his recovery.
Michael Magee

Juan Martinez
Catrina Mateo
David Matlock
Always said hello, even when he was feeling down.
Donald McFarland
Larry McGill
Kevon McKissick
Perry McMahan
Charissa McNeil
Steven McRay Lucy
Gary Melton
Victory Mencer
Kimberly Milliken
Randy L. Morris
Otis E. Murphy
Arthor E. Nall
Jose Nataren
Luann Nicholas
Follower of Christ, leader, volunteer, and inspiration to many.

Luann Nicholas

1956 - 2026

The relationships Luann formed as a guest of our Room In The Inn congregations were instrumental to her story of recovery, resilience, and leadership. She found a bond with volunteers who welcomed her in during times of immense struggle. Their accompaniment helped Luann as she found her way toward better times – including recovery, housing, and a good job. She went on to share her story in many places, serving as a Room In The Inn board member, standing before ballrooms full of supporters, and even telling her story to President George W. Bush. Luann's greatest gift, though, was how she carried the love she received forward, offering hope to others who were struggling.





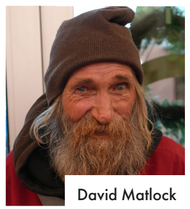
Ronnie Oldham
Patsy Page
Tommy Penn
Johnny Peppers
Rock star at heart; he was always laughing.
Bernadette Perham
John Perry
Ernest J. Porter
Robert R. Powell
Andrea L. Pressley
Sandy Proffitt
Earl Queen
Eric Reese, Jr.
Ronda Reese
Peter Regan
Sesar Relles
Carrie Rempas
Jackie Riddle
Raeanna Roberts
Richard Roberts

Larry Roden
Darrell L. Rogers
Britt Ross
Veteran; hard worker and contributor to the community.
Joshua Rutherford
Jimmy Sanders
Sherrye Sanford
Mark Sartain Jr.
Julie Savoy
Royce L. Sisk
Theresa Skiles
Dennis Smartt
Cecil E. Smith
CW McCain Smith
Darryl G. Smith
Larry James Smith
Larry Wallace Smith
Letreona S. Smith
Sweet and protective of herself; when she felt safe she made sure to tell you she cared.
Paul D. Smith
Tracy Smothers
Valenna E. Spikes
Anquenette Stanton
Mary Strand
Vernon Sutton
Billy Ray Swaner
Dedicated to working on his recovery; remembered as a sweet man.
James Taylor
Johnnie H. Taylor
Alan Templeton
Horace Thomas
David H. Tinch
Alfred Toney
Suzanne Trusty
Jamila Turnipseed

Jim D. "Beetlejuice" Volovlek
Always willing to share a smile.
David "Pops" Walkins
Kristen R. Webster
Stuart West
David White
Winston F. White
Michael L. Wilburn
David Wilkins
David Wilkinson
Zachary Williams
Phillip Williams
Leon Wilson
Always had his cowboy hat on; never failed to check on our staff.
Tracey Wilson
Vanell O. Wilson
Diane Yates
George D. Young

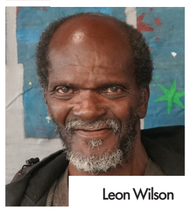

Johnny Peppers


Michael Magee


David Matlock


Kevon McKissick


Michael Wilburn

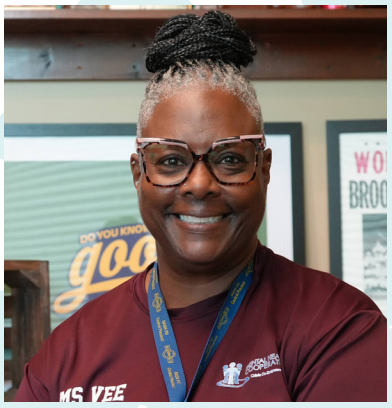

Leon Wilson

CALL THE NAME

Through our Call the Name ministry, we are present for each burial and say a brief liturgy as neighbors served through our city's Indigent Burial Program are taken to their resting place. If you are interested in sharing in this ministry of presence, please contact us at **callthename@roomintheinn.org**.

Please consider joining us at the Nashville Homeless Memorial on December 12th at 8:30 AM, at Riverfront Park, to remember these community members, along with all of our unhoused Nashville neighbors who have died this year. Keep an eye on our social media or reach out for more information: **volunteer@roomintheinn.org**.

A Conversation with Ms. Vee: The Mental Health Counselor Who Responds with MNPD



Malvina Whitley Dye, Co-Response Counselor with Mental Health Cooperative and Partners in Care

"I'm here I do believe because God put me here," Malvina Whitley Dye, known affectionately as Ms. Vee, shared with us. "I work with Mental Health Cooperative, the mobile crisis for Davidson County, and I do co-response, which is with the police. I am the only counselor with Mobile Crisis that does homeless outreach." Guests, participants, volunteers, and staff of Room In The Inn co-create a community of nonviolence through a shared commitment to spirituality, love, hospitality, respect, and hope. Our team is incredibly skilled at de-escalation and conflict resolution. But if someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, we call in the experts, incuding Ms. Vee. She is the co-response counselor who, through the Partners in Care program, rides with Metro Nashville Police Department in central precinct, where our campus is located.

"I want to be here because I feel like I'm needed. The co-response program is the most dynamic thing that I have possibly seen happen in this region. It has even, I think, changed a little bit of how people will look at an officer. Yes, there are still fears, but when there is a person getting out of the passenger side that has one of our shirts on, I think it can shift things a bit. And at least that I've seen, in this precinct, it helps people to be more open. **It helps people get the help they need a lot quicker."**

"I grew up where everybody took care of everybody — *everybody*. And so because I had that raising and teaching around me, I always wanted to help. We've lost that sense of taking care of everybody." For our neighbors who have been disconnected from traditional support systems, Ms. Vee offers the love that she believes everyone deserves, especially if they may not receive it from anyone else. "I always hope that when I talk to people, when I hug people, when I'm trying to even help them, and they just look at me like I'm the enemy, that they can still see that I really actually care about what happens to them. And I always want for God to allow his love in me to pour out on someone else."

Listen to the full interview and hear Ms. Vee tell her story by visiting our website: **roomintheinn.org/40-years-of-stories**



Ms. Vee (second from left) is the counselor in our district who responds alongside MNPD when a mental health crisis is reported. Our Room In The Inn community members have shared love for Ms. Vee because of the love that she shares with us, even in our most difficult moments.

COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

Mental Health Cooperative

Mental Health Cooperative (MHC) believes that every person deserves compassionate care that meets them where they are. Through community-based programs in Nashville and beyond, MHC is committed to serving individuals and families impacted by serious mental illness, especially those facing the greatest barriers to care.

Through regular intake services available at our campus, MHC introduces our participants to mental health support in a safe environment, offering emergency psychiatric services, adult mental healthcare, substance abuse recovery support, and more.

Through their Partners in Care and REACH initiatives, MHC collaborates with MNPD and EMS so mental health counselors can respond alongside Nashville's emergency response personnel to offer appropriate support when someone needs it most.

We encourage you to save the number to the MHC Crisis Line in your phone: 615-726-0125. This is a 24/7 hotline to assist Nashville neighbors experiencing a mental health crisis.

MHC Mental Health Cooperative