

Samaritan House Newsletter

September, 2009

Issue 3, Volume 1

A Message From The Director

With all the problems with our economy, healthcare and seemingly every other aspect of society right now, when something really special happens, it brightens up our days and makes us pause to realize there is a lot of good going on. Those special occasions happen at Samaritan House often.

I invite you to take a look at the story of one of our guests on this page. She is a marvelous person, bringing happiness to everyone she meets. Her story is not alone. The Samaritan House staff and volunteers have been blessed with many like her.

I remember Luther, a kind hearted man who only five days before he came to us was diagnosed with terminal cancer. In the few days he had left, he told jokes to the staff, sat outside to soak up the warm sunshine and tried to be pleasant to everyone. Just before he left us, we were able to help him see a grandchild he had never seen before.

I remember Damon, with congestive heart failure. He was a jovial man trying desperately to get his life back to normal. He had gotten on the heart transplant list and got his own room at McCreesh Place when he left us. Just as it looked like everything would come together, pneumonia took him from us all.

Jackie came to us after gall bladder surgery and was plagued with infections and blood clots. But despite his injuries, he always had a smile on his face and worked to better himself.

Today he has a job and lives in Belmont in his own home.

David could talk the furr off of a bear, but there is no friendlier guy around. He was happy to help out where he could around the house. He was especially good at making computers work. When he left Samaritan House he got a six figure job as an IT specialist at a local company.

Marcelino could not speak English that well. His disease had nearly killed him. Once he started feeling better with us, he did everything he could to help out around the house. The grin on his face spoke a language all its own. He got a job and is doing well.

These are the kinds of stories that inspire all of us at Samaritan House. They show what can be done if someone just gives a helping hand.

Tick...

Tick...

Tick....

If you ask Valarie Williams what makes her tick, she will probably have you put your ear against her chest. That's what she has been doing with a number of volunteer youth groups at Samaritan House recently.

The former foster parent and caregiver came to Charlotte on her way to be with her mother near Wilmington when suddenly she was stricken. "All of a sudden I could hardly breathe and I felt like I was going to pass out," Williams said. After a trip to the emergency room at Presbyterian Hospital, Valerie was told she had to have a heart valve replaced.

The open heart surgery went well but soon she had to leave the hospital. "I didn't know where I was going to go or what I was going to do," Williams said. She was stranded in Charlotte with no place to go. "The social worker told me I was going to go to a place called Samaritan House. I'd never heard of it. But I'm glad I went," she said.

At Samaritan House Valerie was able to rest after her surgery and get her strength back. Soon, she was interacting with the other guests, visitors and volunteers. One day, a youth group from a local church came to the house to help with some cleaning. In just a short period of time, they were all gathered around Valerie who was regaling them with stories and challenging them with mind games like her "A-B-C" game where the players had to remember the chosen words in sequence A through Z. The winners got to listen to her "ticker."

"You should have seen the look on some of these kid's faces when they heard me tick," said Williams. "Some of these boys thought it was the neatest thing!"

Through the month of July, all the youth groups and many of the adults were



Tick - Tick - Tick.... (cont.)

captivated with Valerie and her stories and games. Her laughter and big smile brought sunshine to every group and helped them understand that to be homeless didn't mean you give up. "I have a lot to live and be thankful for and I like sharing that with others," Williams said.

When it came time to leave Samaritan House, Valerie's spirit was demonstrated again. In addition to sharing her joy with others she had also been working on getting herself a place to live. She had disability because her heart would not let her work. She went

through all the paperwork to get the disability transferred and her other services relocated. Then on August 1st, she moved into her own small apartment.

"I found out Charlotte was a nice place with a lot of nice people," Williams said. "Now I'm going to call it home."

Upcoming Event

Myers Park United Methodist Church Young Couples Class will host a Golf Tournament, October 18th at the Charlotte Golf Links benefitting Samaritan House
Email: david.s.sanders@ustrust.com for details.



Special Congratulations to Rob Smith and Maria Long for winning our drawing for the original art donated by Mary Erickson, titled "Freedom Park in Bloom." Also a special thanks to the Elder Gallery for hosting our gallery opening in April.

Samaritan House

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Meet the Staff

Carrie Graves is our Culinary Manager and House Mother. She has been an activist and advocate for human rights and the homeless since the 1960s.



Al Platt began working with Samaritan House on a contract basis and



moved up to a full time position. He is our Weekend Overnight Manager.

Betty McCauley is one of our Senior Center Assistants. She assists with correspondence and other office functions.



Creola Sanders is our second Senior Center Assistant. She helps us keep the house cleaned and sanitized.

Brad Goforth is our Executive Director. A retired naval officer, he has 15 years of nonprofit experience.

