



## Telling The Stories Of Our Guests

One of our tenets is: We open doors to overcome and prevent homelessness by passionately and intentionally telling our guests' stories to educate others. Each month we share a story on social media that we have written about a guest or an experience that we have had with a guest. We created a space where we can write these stories down before they leave our minds. Below you will find a collection of a few recent stories that happened while we were working with our guests.

We will begin a series of sharing a story with each newsletter. Be sure to follow us on social media to see more stories and content.



### Cold and Homeless

Mr. B came in for a homeless verification letter - a relatively quick and easy service. He was in good spirits and very friendly. Through our intake process, I discovered that he had been living outside. It's been incredibly cold this week, with a low of 17 this morning but it felt like 4 degrees because of the windchill. I asked him if he had a list of cold weather shelters and he said he did. He's a veteran and is going to get housing through the United Way veteran's program that uses our space two days per week. He's been living outside since September and is excited to finally get into his own place. When I asked him if he needed any hygiene items, he told me that he already had some and that he wanted to save them for people who really needed them. Our guests continuously surprise me with their selflessness. That someone who slept outside in nearly single digit weather would opt to save items for people who need them more than he does is incredible. On his way out, Mr. B thanked me and I told him that I hoped he was able to get into his new place soon with his homeless verification letter. "I hope so



### A Pair of Socks

This morning Brenna brought in some really nice and warm socks and gloves. Then later Mrs. G came in and she was sitting shaking in the chair. She told me her feet were cold and when her feet get cold the rest of her follows. I thought about the socks and found that we still had them and gave them to her along with some gloves. She was so grateful for them and she was incredibly sweet. I told her about how I understood the cold because I had been waiting for the bus outside this morning, trying to relate to her and she looked at me and said "Oh, bless you." She was clearly able to feel empathy for my situation even though what she had been enduring was far worse. As I went through the ID process with her, I determined that she had everything she needed except for proof of name change. When I told her that's what she needed, she wasn't upset that she would have to wait longer to get her ID. She said "Ok, how long will that take?" She was pleasant and patient despite her situation. I appreciated how she was a bright spot on a cold day. (1/30/18, Cat)

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too!" he said.  
(1/5/18, Brenna)

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### Helped Me. Thank You.

Mr. R came in almost a year ago and was new to Atlanta. He was a veteran and did not know the services that were offered for veterans or the location of these services. Mr. R has also suffered a stroke and therefore has a difficult time speaking and writing. He came in about 3 or 4 times over the course of three months. He wrote me letters each time asking for specific services and hoping that if we could not help him here that we could point him in the right direction. The last note I received from Mr. R read, "April Campbell. Program Director. Helped me. Thank you". I still have the note in my office and once in a while I look at it and think about how Mr. R has been doing and hoping he has found his way in Atlanta.

Today I went past the room that houses our United Way veterans team and there was Mr. R! He came up to me, gave me a hug and we just laughed. I told him that he looks fantastic, happy really, and he held my hands and had a moment of unspoken joy for being able to see each other. Many times in the work that we do we see a guest, they receive services,

### Payless Shoes

We have had a long time relationship with Central Night Shelter's foot clinic. They hold a medical/foot clinic every Wednesday night and if they determine that a guest needs a new pair of shoes, they refer the person to the OAC. We also had a relationship with Payless Shoes where we could call, tell them that we had a guest in need of shoes and what size, and they would allow us to come and pay for them later. Recently, the store came under new management and we were having difficulty figuring out a new process with them. We eventually determined that the next time a guest from the night shelter needed shoes, I would walk over with him and try and talk to management. I walked over with a guest named Mr. L today. He was in need of a size 14 boot. He had been wearing boots that were two sizes too small.

Despite his uncomfortable footwear situation, we had the nicest walk over to Payless together. He's a plumber and he had been working for the last few months in Key West due to the hurricane. After he finished putting his new boots on and I paid for them, we left the building. He said, "Thanks so much. I am happy to walk you back to the Center if you'd like me to." I told him I was fine and to have a nice day. It was the best part of my day today! (3/15/18, Kimberly)

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and we may not see them again. It meant so much to me to see that Mr. R is doing well and is getting the services he needs and deserves. (1/30/18, April)

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### Seth

Seth graduated from the Main Frame a little over one year ago. At that point, he was staying at a federal halfway house and had no immediate prospects. Currently, Seth is enrolled full time in a community college. He is laying the groundwork to study engineering, hopefully at Georgia Tech. He has a few more classes to go and has thus far earned a 3.9 GPA. In addition, he and a team of other students recently competed in and won a physics/engineering competition making them the champions of the state of Georgia. Though Seth will be unable to join them, his team is travelling to the national competition soon. Seth is also actively engaged in a local chapter of Toastmasters, recently surpassing the level of Competent Communicator.

He told me recently that if someone had told him one year ago that in a year he would have a nearly 4.0 GPA, be finishing his Associate of Arts degree, competing in physics/engineering team challenges, and excelling in Toastmasters, he would not have believed them. It brings me joy to say that Seth would have been wrong to doubt his own potential and great hope as I look forward to what is next for him. (Ahren)

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### SJ

SJ graduated from the Main Frame about seven months ago. During that time, he made a huge amount of progress. Not only did he find work quickly after graduating from our program, he found another paid position and worked two jobs for several months. Recently, one of SJ's employers, seeing both SJ's hard work and untenable schedule, offered him a pay raise and full-time hours so that he could devote all of his energies to the one company.

SJ works hard not only to make money but to manage it. He banks with Georgia's Own Credit Union, taking advantage of their individualized services to meet his financial needs. In fact, when speaking with a Georgia's Own employee very familiar with the work of Central Outreach and Advocacy Center, he shared one of the motivations for his success. He told the employee that he had to succeed because we had been so good to him that he did not want to let us down. That statement touched me deeply and reminded me of the powerful ways that we work together with the Main Frame students. The hard work of finding employment and excelling at his job was all SJ's. We were simply there (and supportive) at a critical juncture to help SJ remove some of the thornier barriers to his success.

(Ahren)

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## How Can We Keep Telling Stories?

Part of what makes these guests stories so special are the ways in which we've been able to assist them. We can only provide that assistance through support from all of you. If you're interested in making a donation, please click the link below. We appreciate your support.

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