



**Pathways Home**

Daily Bread Newsletter | [DailyBreadinc.org](http://DailyBreadinc.org) SUMMER 2024

# WHEN OVERCOMING HOMELESSNESS, COLLABORATION IS KEY! *Meet Claudine*



Claudine stopping by Daily Bread to share her progress.

Most people think that homelessness will never happen to them, but the numbers tell us otherwise. The National Institute for Health reports that 7.4% of the population will experience homelessness during their lifetime. When someone becomes homeless, it’s typically the culmination of a series of stresses and ordeals. It means the individual has depleted all their resources – from their bank account to their personal relationships.

This was the case for Claudine. She was one of the many who never considered the possibility that she might become homeless. Still, a series of events and circumstances, including losing her home due to her significant other’s property tax issue, losing her trailer home to a house fire, no credit, limited employment history, losing all forms of identification in a hurricane, diminishing mental health, a pandemic, her significant other being incarcerated, and an inadequate support system ultimately landed Claudine on the streets. It was a perfect storm that would have led many people to total hopelessness, but Claudine is resilient and utilized every resource and opportunity available to resolve her homeless situation.

Claudine’s homelessness started in Cocoa, where she found her way to the Sharing Center. Because Claudine didn’t have any

identification, which presents a complicated barrier to securing other resources, the Sharing Center referred her to Daily Bread, where, in addition to getting her birth certificate, license, and social security, she had access to a daily meal, shower, clean clothes, her mail, healthcare through Brevard Health Alliance, a phone and SNAP (formerly known as food stamps). Claudine says, “Daily Bread helped me to accomplish the things I couldn’t do alone. They were a consistent source of hope, support, and encouragement, where everyone knows you by name. Daily Bread offered me a way to reconnect to the world I was so disconnected from.”

Claudine also credits many other agencies and individuals who helped her overcome homelessness. She often biked ten miles a day to multiple food pantries, from Holy Name of Jesus Church in Indialantic to St. Vincent de Paul and God’s

*(story continued on pg. 5)*

**inside  
this issue**

- 2 • TRACEY'S MOVE IN
- EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: JEFF HALL
- 3 • CONTINUUM OF CARE
- DAILY BREAD CHAMPION: BERT FOREST
- 4 • LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- 5 • PROVIDENCE PLACE
- 6 • YOUR GIFTS TO DAILY BREAD
- 7 • CHILI COOKOFF
- WORLD DIGNITY DAY BREAKFAST

# Tracey's MOVE IN



Tracey getting settled in January.

We were happy to kick off the New Year by housing Tracey, a 57-year-old woman who had been on the streets for close to 20 years. The root of her homeless situation is unresolved childhood trauma. Tracy and her brother grew up in a household with an emotionally and physically abusive father. When Tracey's mother attempted to remove them from the situation when she was 12 years old, Tracey's father violently murdered their mother in front of the children. The kids ended up in the foster care system, where they did receive some counseling, but it was not nearly adequate for what they had endured. Tracey turned to alcohol for comfort. She was able to work, but when her brother died by suicide, Tracey fell deep into addiction and became homeless. Today, Tracey is warm and dry in her bright one-bedroom. She enjoys making the place her own and looks forward to returning to work. We look forward to opening Providence Place, which will provide up to 200 people like Tracey long-term housing stability, the wrap-around services necessary to transition out of homelessness successfully, and a community of neighbors who are also working toward a better life.



Jeff helping Tracey move into her housing.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: *Jeff Hall*

When Jeff Hall retired from UPS as the Operations Manager at Denver International after 22 years, he knew his retirement plan would not include sleeping late and new hobbies. So, after moving his family to Melbourne, Jeff settled into a part-time job driving for a local company. It was a big transition coming from the fast pace at UPS, and it didn't take long for Jeff to start looking for more opportunities to keep him busy, which was how he came to volunteer at Daily Bread's warehouse during the annual food drives for a few years. Shortly after, he saw a listing for the warehouse manager position at Daily Bread, and he has been applying the skills that made him successful at UPS to our operations since 2018.

Every year, Jeff focuses on a big goal that increases Daily Bread's efficiency—in other words, finding ways for Daily Bread to have a greater impact on our community for less. In the beginning, this meant sitting in the laundry room for a week and monitoring loads of laundry to understand how much detergent needed to be purchased (not as much as previously thought!). It has also included going paperless and creating a menu of 24 meals for a 31-day period to streamline and maximize the kitchen ingredients needed.

Jeff's key to success is relationships. He has a network of distributors as far north as Indiana who call him when trucks get turned away due to a store in Central Florida making an inventory error. When that happens, they call Jeff because they know he's responsive and will take the products off their hands. The result for Daily Bread is keeping the cost of 200 daily meals low despite increasing food prices while quality continues to improve.

"Jeff brings to his role at Daily Bread a combination of expertise and experience with a passion for making a difference," says Executive Director Jeff Njus, adding, "He has transformed our distribution efforts and overall operations, allowing us to be more efficient with our use of resources to help even more of our neighbors in need."

Jeff's goal is to find an outlet for everything that comes his way. This includes providing over 1.5 million pounds of food to 25 local food banks annually. Jeff says, "This is not a job where you will make a lot of money. You have to get satisfaction from helping people; this is my way of helping."



# THE CONTINUUM OF CARE:

## How Brevard is Working Together to Solve Homelessness

Daily Bread is proud to be a member of Brevard's Continuum of Care (CoC). This local planning body coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals in our community. General Membership of the CoC is available to any person or organization working to prevent or end homelessness in Brevard. This includes over 100 members that range from nonprofit organizations like Daily Bread and the Sharing Center, which directly provide services to our homeless neighbors, businesses that work with people overcoming addiction or mental health challenges, and our local municipalities, which are making policies that affect homeless individuals.

One of the CoC's key goals is to reduce the number and length of time people experience homelessness by expanding a diversified outreach approach to meet our most vulnerable populations where they are and growing the Coordinated Entry System for placement into housing. This system will play a significant role in ensuring that those most in need can be housed at Providence Place. Other goals include preventing housing instability and building more affordable housing units.



Bert and his wife of 57 years, Mary Lee.

### DAILY BREAD CHAMPION: Bert Forest

Bert Forest is a retired human resources executive with an extensive resume that includes 19 years at General Electric and a stint at Harris (now L3Harris), which brought his family to Melbourne.

Bert retired in 1999 and has maintained a busy schedule since then. He knew it was important to stay connected and involved, so he launched a leadership development program and consulting business after retiring. He is active with his family, and he and his wife, Mary Lee, enjoy spending time with their four children, ten grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. He walks four times weekly, studies languages, and is president of his Spanish club. Bert also plays the piano in local nursing homes and restaurants and is active in the Holy Name of Jesus choir. So, in 2016, when a fellow choir member recruited Bert for his human resources background to provide employment support at Daily Bread, he didn't need another job. But despite his already active life, Bert has been dedicating two days a week (except for a stint during COVID) to the clients at Daily Bread since then.

On Tuesdays, he researches and compiles a list of available jobs that are suited to the individuals receiving his services at Daily Bread, and on Wednesdays, he comes in to work face-to-face with our clients. That time is spent creating resumes (Bert has written thousands of resumes), conducting mock interviews, job counseling, and visiting businesses to advocate on behalf of our clients.

Bert is relentless in his pursuit and optimism but admits that it can be daunting because of the many challenges a person often needs to overcome to find employment. Many don't have a phone number or email address to contact a potential employer, so he must start with the basics. There are also issues of criminal records, addiction, and mental health to contend with. What brings him back week after week is the idea of bringing hope. Bert says that "homelessness quickly becomes hopelessness" and believes that the act of working with a person conveys, "I believe in you," and gives them the resilience to keep trying. Bert keeps an email he recently received that says, "Hi Bert. I am working now. Thanks for believing in me."

Executive Director Jeff Njus says, "Bert inspires hope for the person who feels hopeless. He is relentlessly positive in working to connect a client with a job that is right for them."

Debra  
to me ▼

Hi Bert, I am working now. Thanks for believing in me.

Debra



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**Executive Director**

Dr. Jeffrey Njus

**MISSION**

To ensure that no one faces hunger or homelessness alone.

**VISION**

A community working together to end homelessness.

**MAILING ADDRESS**

Daily Bread Inc.  
 Melbourne, FL 32901  
 321-723-1060  
 www.dailybreadinc.org

*A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the division of consumer services by calling toll-free 1.800.455.7552 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state registration #ch1772. 100% of the new proceeds benefit the mission of daily bread inc.*

# LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## A Place of Connection

Thank you for taking a moment to read our newsletter and connect with all the goings on at Daily Bread. CONNECTION is the key thing that happens here each day. At Daily Bread we connect our hungry and homeless neighbors to the resources...and the people that can help them move forward, people like Jeff Hall and Bert Forest who you can read about in these pages.

## A Way to Reconnect

In this issue of our newsletter, you'll also meet Claudine, a wonderful person whom we had the privilege to help, along with numerous other organizations in our community. You'll hear in her story the web of resources that can make a difference for someone experiencing homelessness. We have an important role in this web and it is often the role of connector. Claudine described it beautifully when she said, "Daily Bread offered me a way to reconnect to the world I was so disconnected from."

## The Danger of Disconnection

One of the greatest dangers in homelessness is the danger of disconnection. When I encounter someone for the first time at Daily Bread, I often urge them to stay connected. I am not asking them to come to Daily Bread every day but maybe once a week or at least once a month. There is such a danger for someone who is not housed to fall through the cracks, to become isolated and alone, during the time when they most need to stay connected. The smiling face of welcome that a homeless person receives at Daily Bread from a volunteer or staff member can mean the difference that keeps them connected. And that connection can lead to the resources that help them find their way home. Thank you for being part of this web of connection that is making such a difference in our community!

# REMEMBERING

## John Farrell

John Farrell, the former Executive Director of Daily Bread, who was instrumental in establishing St. Stephen's Way – an affordable housing development for families - sadly passed away in March at 80. We are grateful for his ten years of leadership at Daily Bread and relentless advocacy for Brevard's homeless population.



Current Executive Director, Jeffrey Njus, with his predecessor, John Farrell, in January. John continued to serve monthly at Daily Bread as a volunteer with the team from Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church.





# PROVIDENCE PLACE

*We are grateful to those*

who came out to learn about Providence Place – a transformative project for our community. Special thanks to Julie Cole, Daily Bread volunteer and advocate, for hosting us at the Tortoise Island Clubhouse. For more information, visit [providence.place](http://providence.place)



*(cover story continued)*

Pantry at Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Palm Bay. She engaged in resources at Love INC., which provided her with a mentor, classes in faith and finance, an auto buying program that resulted in car ownership, and much-needed assistance in a dental emergency.

*“I hope I have a chance to connect with people who are still out there who may remember me and see that it can be done. I had to work toward it every day for over a year, but it can be done. Daily Bread was a Godsend, and I'm grateful.”*

On occasion, Claudine had temporary shelter from the outdoors through the Dignity Bus, and it was through the Dignity Bus she encountered Delores from Helps Community Initiatives (HCI) at Truth Revealed Church. HCI provided resources when Claudine was on the streets and Claudine credits Delores with helping her find housing once she was established at her job and had income. Today, Claudine is employed full-time for a local market research company and was recently promoted to supervisor.



**YOUR GIFTS TO DAILY BREAD SUSTAIN OUR MISSION:**  
*to ensure that no one faces hunger or homelessness alone.*



We appreciate our friends at Health First, who packed 250 hygiene bags for our homeless neighbors at a recent Leadership Day.



RTX Hispanic Organization for Leadership & Advancement(HOLA) is an employee resource group that supports a multicultural workforce, including the Latinx community, through leadership development, education, and resource provision. Daily Bread was the fortunate beneficiary of supplies gathered and dropped off during a January session at Collins Aerospace.



Big appreciation for Eastminster Presbyterian Church, who regularly gives their time in our dining hall, and recently made a significant contribution to our future at Providence Place.



We are the proud recipient of Embraer's (e)NVEST Community Grant of \$25,000. Thank you, Embraer, for feeding Melbourne's homeless 365 days a year at Daily Bread!

*Thank you* to our monthly donors, who provide a reliable income that supports our operations. These gifts are especially appreciated in the summer when donations and monetary gifts slow down. It is simple to create a recurring monthly gift online at our website: [dailybreadinc.org](http://dailybreadinc.org). For the monthly cost of \$50, or dinner out for two, ten individuals will receive clean clothing and shoes each month.

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**Give with Confidence!**



Candid's Gold Seal recognizes philanthropic organizations that demonstrate a deep

commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusivity and operate from a position of strong financial health.



*We had a  
hootin' hollerin'  
good time*

at our first annual Chili Cookoff on April 14 at Front Street Park. Congrats to our winners – “Papi’s Bacon Blast Chili” for their traditional entry and “Beans and Jeans” for their non-traditional entry. Thank you to everyone who came out, especially the Trailblazer Sponsors: Ascension Catholic Church, Bank of America, Community Credit Union, Four C’s Nursery, and Practitioner’s in Motion.



**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2024 WORLD DIGNITY DAY BREAKFAST**

**WHAT CAUSES HOMELESSNESS?**

HOSTED BY

Join us at the World Dignity Day Breakfast to learn what drives homelessness (it may not be what you think!) and how we can make a difference in our community.

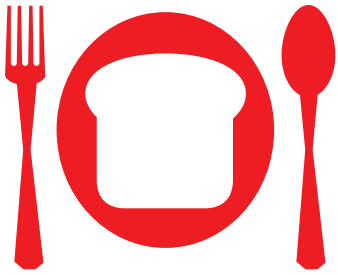


**DAILY BREAD**

- Domestic violence
- Poverty
- Health
- Mental illness
- Unemployment
- Racial inequality
- Lack of affordable housing
- Addiction
- Trauma
- Discrimination



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[dailybreadinc.org/dignity](http://dailybreadinc.org/dignity)



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**Temperatures are rising,  
and so are the needs of our most  
vulnerable neighbors.**

**Save the Date for our SUMMER ONLINE  
DONATION CAMPAIGN! July 15th to July 22nd.**

We need to raise \$15,000 to sustain Daily Bread's  
summer operations!

