

# A HELPING HAND

*Greensboro Urban Ministry Newsletter*

## ***From Hopeless to the Sweet Life***

**By: TaSheka Oglesby, Case Manager**

Who could imagine a man with his own fruitful business, family, and home would be a resident here. After being displaced from his family, losing his home, and losing his job, this middle-aged gentleman thought he lost it all. He spent cool Autumn months sleeping in his car aspiring to one day gain everything he lost.

As a Case Manager, I remember recording his name on our waitlist. I replayed the message several times because I thought he said his last name was Sweety. When he came in for his intake, he corrected me and gave me his correct last name. While Sweety was not his last name his characteristic was very sweet. As he answered the questions and I began to learn who this shattered man was, I learned he was focused on rebuilding his life. He had chosen to include God into his life, and began the process to obtain housing.

Commitment and consistency led him into obtaining a staffing agency part-time job. Due to his work ethic, he gained a full-time position working at a new manufacturing plant. Everything was working in his favor. He met a man who is a skilled carpenter who agreed to renovate an old house for him. After sharing this awesome news, I was a proud Case Manager. This exciting news got him closer to his goal of finding a new house, which would be his home.

Just like all great movies and books, the story becomes more complex. I affectionately call him Sweets and all his good deeds were now trending negatively. Sweets became arrogant thinking he was above the Weaver House rules. He started to come in after curfew which led to missing multiple nights out of his bed. Unfortunately, his inability to maintain daily curfew and no longer staying at the shelter for days at a time warranted him to be exited from Weaver House.

All his hard work for his new job opportunity and strides to housing appeared to be falling apart. While he was no longer a resident of Weaver House, I recently decided to call to check on him and get a sense of where he currently is in his journey. Sweets is well; he is still working and assisting in remodeling his own home and by the end of summer, he will own his very own hand-crafted "Forever Home". Although Sweets came as a broken man, I am glad to say, he is now a mosaic piece of art. From hopeless to a new start and home!





## The Road to Recovery

Over the past few months I have been sharing Darrell Campbell's story, our Director of Potter's House Community Kitchen, as I speak at various gatherings throughout the community.

He and I first met nearly two years ago during my first week on the job. I wanted to better understand food insecurity in our community and how we were meeting that need day in and day out. And I wanted to eat one of Darrell's meals at Potter's House.

Just to give you an idea, everyday over 500 people come to see Darrell and his team for a warm meal, no questions asked. He's most famous for his Fried Fish! Depending on the day, you can always smell it in the parking lot. The meal line extends along the sidewalk beside the building and Darrell runs his operation as good as any restaurant you've ever experienced in town.

But more importantly, I wanted to better understand Darrell's story and his journey toward recovery. You see Darrell's past is one of addiction, incarceration, and near death. He told me as he reached the tipping point of his existential crisis that, yes, he needed food; yes, he needed housing; yes, he needed case management; and yes, he needed spiritual care. We do all those things very well at Greensboro Urban Ministry.

However, Darrell reiterated to me that he needed something more that often goes unnoticed in our work. He needed the time and space to begin his lifelong journey toward recovery; to work on the matters within his control so he could respond better to life on life's terms. In other words, he needed to take the step away from living on the edge of daily survival and toward a new life of purpose, meaning, and hope. And our experienced staff patiently walked every step with Darrell in that process.

Why? Because we believe recovery happens over time, not overnight.

***It's been almost two years since we renovated our food pantry and reopened as the Client Choice Food Pantry. Since the reopening, we have seen a 198% increase in the number of households and a 215% increase in the number of individuals served. Thanks to your generous support, we can meet the increasing needs of households and individuals each month.***

We all know this is true. Anyone who has ever experienced some form of physical or mental health therapy knows that their road of healing can be a bumpy path of progress. There are good days and there are bad days. Some days are filled with a whole range of emotions that often leaves our stomachs churning. And in the end, we all want our recovery to go fast, like everything else in our fast-paced optimized culture, but we know the truth that the work of therapy takes time, daily effort, and lots of patience.

That's no different for our neighbors experiencing homelessness, living with food insecurity, or worried about rent and a possible eviction at the end of the month. The road to health and sustainability can be a rocky road toward progress, filled with heartache and healing, blessing and disappointment, progress and setback. But we welcome all who are willing to begin this journey of recovery with us.

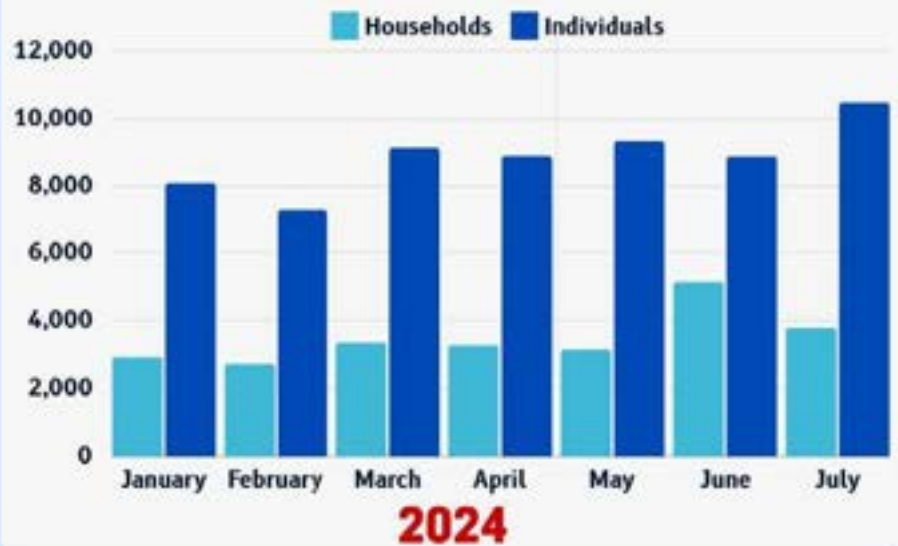
Which brings me back to Darrell's story. Even though today he is employed, housed, and hopeful for a brighter tomorrow, he also knows full well that he is just one poor decision away from being again in need of food and housing instead of giving food and housing. That spirit of humility is why every day, every week, and every month Darrell stays connected to his recovery and faith communities. Darrell will tell you that God's grace and mercy through Greensboro Urban Ministry has been changing his life one step at a time. And that same grace and mercy of time and space is on offer to all our neighbors as they begin their path toward recovery and restoration.

Thank you for walking alongside these stories with us.

Gratefully,

*Brian*

### Clients Served Monthly by Client Choice Food Pantry



# Volunteering by Design

## 2024 CROP HUNGER WALK T-Shirt Design Contest Winner

**Tori Thomas** is a student at Guilford Technical Community College; she is pursuing an applied associate's degree in advertising and graphic design. Before moving to Greensboro, she studied music performance with a concentration in voice achieving a B. A. from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in 2020. Tori's interest and love for graphic design began when she worked for a local Wilmington nonprofit, Opera Wilmington, shortly after graduating UNC-W. She controlled the organization's social media posts and created promotional materials ranging from posters to event flyers.



"When designing the T-shirt for the 2024 CROP hunger walk, I wanted to showcase the Greensboro skyline and encase it inside a honeycomb shape. With this year's motto being "Bee the Change", the honeycomb represents the 700+ teams raising funds across the country to aid impoverished communities. Similar to bees all working together to achieve one goal", Tori said. As Tori finishes her last year before graduating GTCC, she looks forward to creating more work for her community and, hopefully, more nonprofits and organizations that make the world we live in a better place.



Thank you, Tori, for sharing your talents with us in our efforts to raise funds and awareness for hunger and poverty in our community and worldwide!

## Please Join Us for These Upcoming Annual Events

For more information on our upcoming events and how you can participate, please visit our website's event page at <https://www.GreensboroUrbanMinistry.org/events>



Greensboro Urban Ministry's  
**FOOD DRIVE**

Share with our neighbors experiencing hunger and food insecurity



Help restock the food pantry. Your support will allow us to continue serving the increasing number of households needing food assistance!

Friday, October 25  
&  
Saturday, October 26



## FEAST OF CARING

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Lunch event: 11:30am-1:30pm Dinner event: 5:00pm-7:00pm

First Baptist Church 1000 W. Friendly Avenue, Greensboro

Tickets available online beginning mid-October

## Greater Greensboro CROP Hunger Walk

NEW LOCATION!  
BARBER PARK

SUNDAY  
OCTOBER 6, 2024



SATURDAY  
SEPT. 21  
2PM - 11PM

4701 LAND RD.  
GREENSBORO



Make a planned gift to GUM today! Contact Chip Berry, Development Director at [Berry@guministry.org](mailto:Berry@guministry.org) Or call our office at 336.271.5959

## Artist Wins the 2024 Greensboro Urban Ministry's Holiday Honor Card Art Contest

**Karla Taylor** is a talented artist and a graduate of the Savannah College of Art and Design, where she earned a degree in illustration. With a background in textile design, Karla previously worked as a senior designer for Cone Mills, specializing in jacquard upholstery and bedding fabrics. For the past twelve years, she has been a part of the downtown Greensboro community, serving as an artist at Just Be and later taking on the role of Store Director.

When Karla found out about the Honor Card art contest, it was through her involvement with her work, which sells honor cards every year. Eager to contribute to the tradition, she decided to submit her portrayal of the Downtown Greensboro tree lighting event; a tradition that resonates a similar sense of community in many towns throughout the country. Her artwork was ultimately chosen to represent this year's Greensboro Urban Ministry Holiday Honor Card, a recognition that she cherishes deeply.

Karla's deep connection to Greensboro is evident in her work, which often reflects the vibrancy and spirit of the local community. She and her husband, Brent, have been proud residents of Greensboro for twenty-four years, where they have raised their two children,

Abby and Bryson. Karla draws inspiration from the annual tree lighting event in downtown Greensboro, seeking to capture the hope and joy it brings to the community in her art.

The Holiday Honor Card will be available for pre-sale beginning mid-October at [GreensboroUrbanMinistry.org](https://GreensboroUrbanMinistry.org)

