

Housing Matters

United Ministries—Earl's Place

From the Executive Director

The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.” - Maya Angelou

THE VALUE OF A HOME

We hear a lot about home values. We also hear a lot of talk these days about the high cost of rentals and the lack of affordable housing, a challenge that we face with our residents every day. But what about the non-monetary value of a home? A home provides a sanctuary and a foundation, dignity and a sense of self-worth. A place where we can be ourselves.

For most of the men who live at Earl's Place, home, a real home, is something they have not had for a long time. In order to reclaim their lives they are changing everything— people, places and things. Earl's Place is a very important step in their quest to start over. **Thank you for being right here with them and helping us provide a (temporary) home for them .**

Thanks to you, 20 men set up new homes during the last two years. You are the key to the men's successes. Without your support, none of what we do would be possible. It costs just \$18 a day to house a resident, but as they become successful and productive the value to all of us as a community is priceless.

We are excited to share stories of men whose lives you have touched inside this newsletter. I cannot say often enough how grateful I am (we all are) for the compassion and caring you show us.

Thank you for making an investment in the men of Earl's Place— the returns are infinite.



Sheila Helgerson, Executive Director



Earl's Place alumni Victor.

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United Ministries is a housing and social justice organization dedicated to assisting homeless men who want to change their lives and to changing community attitudes toward the homeless.

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Board Member Spotlight

Matt Stubbs Secretary of the Board of Directors

Matt Stubbs joined the Board of United Ministries/Earl's Place in 2013. He is currently employed with Job Opportunities Task Force, a Baltimore-based nonprofit which develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-skill, low-income workers and job seekers.



Board member Matt Stubbs

What attracted you to our organization? What motivated you to help out?

I was somewhat familiar with the other recovery programs in Baltimore that provided temporary housing and how many of the people who completed these short term programs didn't have enough time to truly be ready to back on their own. After meeting with Gene Bartell, a Board member, and Executive Director Sheila Helgerson it was obvious that Earl's Place was different. The men could stay for up to 24 months, they had impassioned and dedicated staff, and there was a feeling of home rather than institution as soon as you walked through the front door. The amazing service that Earl's Place is providing to community had me hooked.

Why is United Ministries' mission to help men experiencing homelessness important to you?

Homelessness is such a significant and complicated issue for Baltimore. We as a city need to better support and combat this issue with programs that meet these men where they are. No one chooses to be homeless but often these men are treated as such. They belong to this city and so they should belong to its people and government. Earl's Place can show that there's more to this group than their addictions or their mental health challenges. Some have families and children, others go on to start families or become great employees. They become productive members of society, pay taxes, work hard and want to be the best person they can. They have worth and that's why United Ministries' mission is so important.

How do you feel you've contributed to the program? What do you feel you've gotten out of being on the Board? Are there goals you hope to attain before you leave the board?

After joining the board I made a personal mission to grow the Giving Every Month (GEM) club. Monthly giving is such an important part to any non-profit's budget. I've added four friends and family members so far. I hope to increase that over the next year. Being on the board has given me the opportunity to learn more about the issues of homelessness and allowed me to help a great organization.

How would you like to see United Ministries grow in the future?

It would be really exciting to serve more residents.

You get a perspective on our work that other people don't have. Were there any things that surprised you about Earl's Place once you were on the Board? Have there been any experiences that have struck you as particularly meaningful?

The stories that stick with me the most are when the men reconnect with their families. Addiction takes a serious toll on the lives of the loved ones that surround that person. To hear about a resident reconnecting with a child after 5 plus years of being an absent father is remarkable. To see that is well worth any donation.

Why should someone consider serving on the board of United Ministries/Earl's Place?

You can make real impact in people's lives.

Would you like to serve along with Matt and change the lives of men experiencing homelessness?
Please contact Executive Director Sheila Helgerson at sheila@umhousing.org for board service opportunities.

Home Again

Behind the Scenes with our Alumni

The residents of Earl's Place love our program because for many of them it is the first stable home they have had in a long time. Through your generous supports our men are able to graduate the program and build new lives and homes for themselves! Though they no longer live with us, the men truly never leave the Earl's Place family. We recently enjoyed catching up with some of our men who have moved forward!

Leon

Leon had been living at Baltimore City's emergency shelter when he arrived at Earl's Place in 2012. **"[If it wasn't for Earl's Place] I would have been a statistic of death...It helped me to get off the street and regroup myself,"** he says.

Fast forward a few years, and Leon is happily living in a one bedroom apartment in West Baltimore. He used his time at Earl's Place to work on his health and maintain his sobriety. The staff of Earl's Place helped him obtain a motorized wheelchair, which increased both his mobility and confidence. His advice to men who are beginning their journey? "If you really accept what you learn from the program you won't [do drugs] again. You'll do your best to stay clean."



Leon describes the peace and quiet of his new home as the part he likes best. He misses the garden at Earl's Place, but he has added several plants, "his babies", in front of his living room windows to make his own green space.

Anthony

Anthony found out that he had been approved for a one bedroom apartment in Columbia in early summer 2014, and he couldn't have been happier. A self-described country boy who was raised in upstate New York, Anthony missed having access to green spaces.



"It's quiet", he says of his new home and its location. **"I get to see all the animals, have the fresh air and the forest. I've got a bike path right out the back door...I am so glad to be out of the city."**

Anthony also has family who live near his new home, an added bonus. During his time at Earl's Place he rebuilt relationships with family members he had not spoken to in fourteen years.

Colin

Colin's one bedroom apartment is as tranquil and lovely as any art gallery in Baltimore. It is located in a mixed income building which Colin applied to on recommendation from the staff of Earl's Place. A professional photographer by trade, Colin has filled his walls with prints both he and friends have taken.

"Two and a half years ago, I was living outside...I love this place because it's my home. I've had enough of chaos," he says.



Colin had long suffered from alcoholism, which led to homelessness, and he had had difficulty finding a program to help that was the right fit.

"When I got to Earl's Place, I wanted to save my life...For all the beauty and the divine intervention in my story, I needed a place to be. I needed a safe place to be, while things got better. Earl's Place is the best shot you're going to have at giving yourself a chance to get right...Earl's Place took away all the excuses I had for leaving other programs."

Ralph and Victor (pictured on the cover)



Ralph with Baby Boy.

One of the most unique features of the Earl's Place program is the relationships that our residents build with one another. Close friendships grow from living communally and supporting one another in mutual quests for housing and stability.

Ralph and Victor met at Earl's Place and got to know each other well. They both spent their time here completing training programs, working, and saving for the future. They decided to look for housing together when the time came for them to move forward. They now share a row house in West Baltimore with their cat, Baby Boy.

Your kindness helps dreams come true. Thank you for being a part of their journeys.

Resident Spotlight

Aunt Mary's Kitchen Table By Earl's Place Resident Nate

In the fall of 2014 Goucher College students in Phaye Poliakoff-Chen's freshmen writing seminar attended our Thursday night house meetings. The students and our residents wrote a number of creative nonfiction pieces together, including essays modeled after NPR's popular "This I Believe" series. In one session our residents were asked to write about the most important kitchen table of their lives. The following piece is a response to that prompt.

I'm sitting at Aunt Mary's old black and white metal table, bet you didn't know you could pull it out on two sides and make it bigger.

I love that table so much because of the love and joy I saw in her face as she prepared our family meals while humming one of her favorite hymns.

The joy our family had being together at that table sharing meals and love and an occasional argument over who would get the bowl or spoon after the cake mix was poured.

Never knew how that chip got on the corner, well, it had to be before my time anyway; the rust told me so.

Even though my story started with Aunt Mary's table, I believe that home and family are an essential part of the foundation for love both inside and outside of Aunt Mary's house.

Because, at and around that table there was love, friendship and conversation. Most of all love!

I remember that Aunt Mary's table sat in a huge kitchen with a large cast iron stove with the big round pipe that came out of the wall, like it grew from it.

It had four big holes in the top and we would take turns going in the basement to the coal chute and wood pile to get both to feed it.

That's how those wonderful meals got made and I fell in love with family members that earlier that day I said I couldn't stand.

And the kitchen became the warmest room in the house.

Hold on a minute, what's that I hear? Oranges, apples, watermelon (sweet to the rind), here comes the Arabber (a street merchant) with his horse and produce cart down Born's Court on the side of the house.

Because, at and around that table there was love, friendship and conversation. Most of all love!

Aunt Mary is getting up in age and for a woman her size she gets around very well, but she doesn't have to go outside because of the window on the Born Court side of the kitchen wall where the Arabber just hands her purchases up to her.

Now who in the world is that? Oh! It's Busterpete, Roy and Reddog at the back screen door for me, yelling can I come out and play.

Sorry, got to go play before dinner at Aunt Mary's table.



Boy, I love this house and Aunt Mary's table.

-Nate Giles
(11/6/14)

(From Right to Left) Nate with Earl's Place friends and residents Vince and Mike.

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**** Visionary (Current or former resident)**

*We sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions;
 please contact our office for corrections.*

Correction to the 2013 Annual Report: We apologize for the omission of Marcia Conlin as a Silver Donor.

United Ministries is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. A copy of our current financial statement is available on request by contacting United Ministries at 1400 E. Lombard Street, Baltimore, MD 21231 or 410-522-0225. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of the State for the cost of copying and postage.

Just \$18 a day provides hope and housing for a man at Earl's Place!

\$ave some. \$pend some. \$hare some.

Will you make an investment in them today?



Earl's Place alumni John, Frank, and Renard.

As you file your taxes if you are due a refund we'd like to invite you to share some and invest in the goodness of a second chance!

Your gift, no matter what size, will help change a homeless man's life forever!

We are always pleased to speak to your congregation or organization. Call or e-mail Eliza at eliza@umhousing.org or (410) 522-0225 to schedule a time.

Talk and Tour

Sunday, April 19th 1–3 p.m.

Join us for conversation and snacks.

RSVP to Eliza or Sheila, (410) 522-0225

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Thursday, October 8th 6-10 p.m.

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