



WelcomeHome
of Chattanooga

Full Circle

SPRING 2024

It's hard to believe that Welcome Home has reached **nine years** this month. In March 2015, we opened our doors to our first resident, Sammy. Over that first year, our volunteers grew and we were able to hire caregivers, thanks to YOU, our community who has lovingly supported us and supports the idea that no one should face serious illness or death alone.

It's about this time of year when I find myself fondly remembering the people who have come through Welcome Home's doors. They are the unique, beautiful souls who make up the colorful and rich tapestry of our mission. We have learned so much from our people—our residents, volunteers, staff and visitors, such as:



Counter-clockwise, from the top, are: Sammy, Union, Mark, and Terry.



- **Union**, who moved in during our first year and was very angry at his situation and with us. Over the first few weeks, though, he became the charming, wonderful man he had always been before life hurt him. He would help ladies out to the balcony, and say the prayer at dinner every night and tell us that he loved us;
- **Mark**, who turns his energy into creating paintings, jewelry, and rearview mirror decorations for all of us. We brag about who has the best "Mark art";
- and **Terry**, a petite woman from Boston, who had a very sassy sense of humor and insisted that two fingers of vodka be kept at her bedside at all times—even in her last days. The memory

of hearing her call out the incorrect name of "Marlene" for our Director of Happiness, Michelle, still makes me smile. A priest would bring communion to her regularly and everyone would gather in her bedroom for memorable services.

We have witnessed so much love, resilience, and reconciliation with friends and family, and have shared lots of laughter, hugs and tears.

The friends who encircle the residents complete our crazy, beautiful family... such as our staff and volunteers—who go above and beyond for our mission with shopping trips, hand holding, music and great food... and the visitors who stop by to say hello and bring generous gifts... and our nursing students and interns who choose Welcome Home for their journey. All of them make Welcome Home a home.

We have served 119 incredible people, and have had well over 500 volunteers, students and visitors.

Over the past couple of years, we have been sharing about our Journey to Quiet Creek with you, excited about creating a whole community of care. This year, though, we are dedicating this edition of *Full Circle* to the **PEOPLE of Welcome Home**. The following pages are just a few of their stories.



Sherry Campbell

Sherry Campbell,
Founding Director



We are all just walking each other home. - Ram Dass

At Home in His Happy Place

Warren was a former cancer respite resident, living in Little Blue. After a few months of treatments, he was able to move out on his own. Warren visited often, and kept in touch with Welcome Home, which he fondly said was his Happy Place. Unfortunately, his cancer returned, but he was able to come back to his Happy Place with us on hospice care. His smile and positive attitude was unchanged. He enjoyed playing bingo on Saturdays and visiting with other residents. When anyone told him they loved him, Warren's response was "of course you do, what's not to love?" Despite his diagnosis, he was happy to be Home. 🏠



Hospice resident, Warren, pictured here with Michelle, Director of Happiness

Families Share Fond Memories

“Welcome Home was such a lovely ministry for my brother and I. It was an actual Godsend. A peaceful respite in the midst of a tremendously hard & taxing life situation. Our love and gratitude go out for each and every single soul/friend/caregiver who reached out their heart, hands and their time to love on, care for and watch over my sweet, special, smart, unique and vulnerable brother in his last and final moments of life here on this earth. I am and will always be grateful to our creator and source of love my Heavenly Father.”

– Marie Robinson,
Jim Crook's sister



Jim Crook enjoys a sunny spring day with friends.

From the first day we moved him in, there was nothing but love in the air. We learned fast that this was not a place for people to die, it was actually a place for people to live whatever life they had left to the fullest.

Welcome Home literally lives up to the name. It never felt like a hospital or a hospice situation. It always felt like home. My dad's attitude went from reluctant to being relieved. We knew that he was in good hands and therefore we all could sleep well at night due to this peace and assurance provided from the amazing staff. The staff fell in love with my dad and his amazing personality and he loved every moment of the attention given to him.

Our family and friends could visit at leisure, decorate his room, sit on the porch, eat, etc. My dad loved talking to other roommates, laughing with the staff and much more. It was really my dad's new home. In this home was nothing but genuine love and good vibes.

From time to time I still visit and plan on volunteering more hours in the future. But to sum it all up, Welcome Home will always be part of the King family and the memories made there will forever be etched in heart.

“I don't exactly recall who initiated the conversation with Welcome Home but we are certainly glad that we crossed paths with this amazing facility and staff. Prior to moving our dad into Welcome Home, he was a little reluctant to go anywhere outside of the hospital, a place he was very familiar with. We knew that dad was passing away slowly, but even then our main goal was to make sure that he was comfortable transitioning. We knew nothing about Welcome Home and had never heard of the services they provide.



Ron King, Jr. with his father, Ron King

We say 'thank you' to Welcome Home for making our beloved Mr. Ronald King feel alive again.”

– Ron King, Jr.,
son of Ron King



Their Selfless Service Enriches Our Community

Around Christmas of 2017, **Darla Skinner** was invited by a fellow church member to help with a service project at Welcome Home, bringing cookies and gifts and singing Christmas carols.

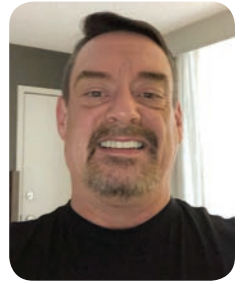


"I was nervous but was also immediately drawn to Welcome Home. That January, I became a weekly volunteer. Over time I felt comfortable enough to interact with the residents. **I am so thankful that I pursued the perspective-magnifying opportunities that have led to my passion... the**

residents! I am a behind-the-scenes-person finding joy in cleaning out under the kitchen sink, organizing the Tupperware cabinet and cleaning out the fridge. My newest passion is being a healthcare advocate for residents who have that need. The joy I receive in supporting those who are in a difficult time surpasses the joy of anything else I've ever experienced. At the end of the day I can say I was able to bring aid to the team, or supplied a need of a resident—a meal, a ride, or a listening ear. What keeps me coming back is knowing that **whatever time or other resource I share with anyone at Welcome Home is never wasted.**"

Bill Sensing became a volunteer in late 2023, hosting the monthly brunch club with his partner. "I was amazed by the mission of Welcome Home.

When a position as a caregiver became available, I applied without hesitation and was blessed to be given the opportunity. I did not realize this job would become the most rewarding I've ever had—but it has! Working here doesn't feel like work at all. In fact, I feel as though I'm spending time with family. These are the most amazing people I've ever had the pleasure of knowing."



Katie Warren joined Welcome Home's board of directors in 2019, driven by her passion for the organization's mission to care for the community's



most vulnerable members. When Katie found out about us, she was intrigued so she and her daughter attended an open house to find out more. Her daughter ended up volunteering for a summer and attributes her time here as one of the reasons she is now pursuing a degree in medicine.

With a background in accounting and a keen eye for strategic growth, Katie has quickly become an invaluable asset to Welcome Home's board. **She was recently appointed as the Board Chair** and, in this new role, she is excited about the opportunities ahead. Katie is fully committed to **leading Welcome Home towards a brighter future**, where everyone feels valued, supported, and loved.



Help us continue to encircle and
celebrate each of the precious
people of Welcome Home!

Celebrating

9

Years!

119

Residents
Served since
2015

Learn more about current needs -
info@welcomehomeofchattanooga.org
423-355-5842
welcomehomeofchattanooga.org
We would love to connect with you!



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