Dear Friends of Tender Mercies,

Thank you for your support of Tender Mercies and for making such a significant difference in our community. 2015 was a year of celebration as we looked back on 30 years of providing a home to thousands over our history by using a model that works – Permanent Supportive Housing. There are always more individuals in need. There are 1,000 homeless individuals at any given time in Hamilton County, including approximately 382 homeless single adults with mental illness. Being homeless is traumatic and dehumanizing. Homeless individuals are constantly exhausted, undernourished, and susceptible to assault. This year, we have been preparing to increase our capacity to serve more individuals and enhance our programs to meet the ever-changing needs of those we serve and our environment.

Our neighborhood has undergone dramatic changes in the past ten years, and the agency’s commitment to being a good neighbor remains stronger than ever. Through well-maintained homes, partnerships with local organizations, and high quality support programs, we continue to thrive in Over-the-Rhine. Our agency remains a vital, relevant, and important part of the solution in addressing homelessness in our community, and we do it through proven and cost-effective means.

In 2015, 91% of our residents maintained their housing and 93% of those who moved out of Tender Mercies obtained their own home or other positive housing arrangements. In addition, we demonstrated an incredibly high level of financial accountability, with 83% of revenues going directly toward programming, while keeping administrative and overhead expenses to a minimum.

As always, our doors are open if you would like to take a tour and see our programs in action. Nothing expresses our mission better than witnessing the stories of hope, courage, and inspiration that our residents demonstrate in their journey of recovering from life on the streets.

Once again, on behalf of the Board, staff, volunteers, and 150 men and women who call Tender Mercies home…Thank you!

Russell L. Winters,
Chief Executive Officer

Our Mission
Tender Mercies transforms the lives of homeless adults with mental illness by providing security, dignity and community in a place they call home.

Our Vision
To become the premiere permanent supportive housing provider in the region.

Values
Security, Dignity, Community, Respect, Compassion, Accountability
Reflections from Our Chief Executive Officer

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Once again, on behalf of the Board, staff, volunteers, and 150 men and women who call Tender Mercies home...Thank you!

Russell L. Winters, Chief Executive Officer

About Us

Established in 1985, Tender Mercies provides permanent supportive housing to over 150 homeless adults with mental illness each year. Tender Mercies helps to prevent a return to homelessness by assisting residents with obtaining disability benefits, job training, independent living skills, education and counseling.

Our Mission

Tender Mercies transforms the lives of homeless adults with mental illness by providing security, dignity and community in a place they call home.

Our Vision

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Values

Security, Dignity, Community, Respect, Compassion, Accountability
Transforming the Lives of Men and Women with Nowhere Else to Turn in 2015

A Safe and Welcoming Home

- 185 men and women were able to recover and rebuild in their safe and comfortable home at Tender Mercies.
- Forty new residents were given a key to their own home.
- Nearly 2,500 lives transformed since 1985.

The Courage and Support to Go Back to Work

- Thirty-one residents participated in job training programs.
- Seventeen residents secured or maintained employment.

Life Skills and Education

- 74% increased living skills knowledge and ability to live independently.
- Six residents earned GEDs.

Time and Talent Fosters Community and Stability

- 2,102 volunteers provided activities, landscaping, building maintenance support, resident items, event support and more.
- 51,912 volunteer hours

“I had no one to turn to and felt like I wasn’t worth anything. I missed my family more than anything when I was homeless. The caring staff at Tender Mercies made it possible for me to reconnect with my family.”—Roberta

Why I Volunteer

Nancy Johannigman has been a dedicated volunteer for the monthly birthday parties for the residents at Tender Mercies for 25 years. She looks forward to the parties because the residents enjoy the fuss over their birthday and being able to celebrate with other residents. It is always an upbeat occasion no matter what is going on in their lives that day. Nancy has noticed that some of the residents hang their balloon she has given them for over a year on the wall of their room. Over the years Nancy has had some residents tell her no one has ever celebrated their birthday, upbeat occasion no matter what is going on in their lives that day. Nancy has noticed that some of the residents hang their balloon she has given them for over a year on the wall of their room. Over the years Nancy has had some residents tell her no one has ever celebrated their birthday, which is shocking to her! The residents are always grateful.

““I have been humbled by their gratitude. I am driven by my faith to volunteer at TM because of a quote from Jesus, ‘whatever you do for the least of these brothers of mine you have done for me.’ I continue to volunteer because I am hooked! My life has been enriched by getting to know the residents.”—Nancy
Survival is All Carol Knew

Carol was forced to learn how to survive as a child. Growing up with parents addicted to drugs, Carol and her eight brothers and two sisters didn’t have a caring home needed for a healthy and promising future. At eight years old, Carol’s aunt rescued her when things got worse. Thankfully her aunt gave her a safe home, but it all fell apart when, at 16 years old her aunt passed away. Carol had nowhere to go and became homeless. She did all she could to make the best of things while living with friends. She became trapped in an abusive and drug filled relationship for 12 years. She finally left with her two young daughters, fearing for their lives. Carol was scared, but worked hard to keep her daughters safe and healthy. She had a steady job at American Airlines for a number of years. When 9/11 and the recession hit, she lost her job. She couldn’t get a job anywhere and without a safety net, she and her daughters had to leave their home. It was terrifying.

Thankfully Carol was able to secure assistance, an apartment in a safe place, and a job. Things were going well and her daughters graduated from high school. Feeling lost without her family, Carol left for Cleveland where one of her daughters moved. She quickly ran out of money and ended up homeless. She was too proud to ask her daughter for help, so she went to a transitional housing program that unfortunately didn’t have services. Again, Carol was lost and alone. So, she went to Columbus to another housing program. It was safe and offered programs to help her regain stability. When they changed their policy to a limit of a 30-day stay, Carol was back on the streets. She returned to Cincinnati in hopes of reconnecting with her family. Not wanting to burden them, she lived on the streets for four months.

Being homeless is like not knowing where you are and feeling like you have no purpose. Add mental illness on top of that and it’s like a black hole with no end in sight. Carol was hungry and lost hope, while dealing with the effects of major depression and PTSD. Thankfully, she found Tender Mercies. Mary Grover, Director of Housing made all the difference. Carol appreciates the luxury of a shower and everything else every day. A safe home at Tender Mercies made it possible for Carol to recover over the past year and re- connect with her family. She is thriving in a work experience program to help her gain the courage and skills to secure a job.

Making the Move to the Community – Stability for Life

To make an even bigger impact on breaking the cycle of homelessness, Tender Mercies recently created an Aftercare Program to assist residents as they move into a home in the community. This program will prepare residents to become self-sufficient and live independently by providing assistance with accessing affordable and safe housing, furniture, and supplies, and ongoing support to address any concerns. In addition, a new team of Peer Support Specialists, provides individualized support to current residents as they continue to relearn daily living skills. These positions are filled by current and former residents as their personal experience with homelessness gives them unique expertise and ability to relate.

Mike Compton, a Former Resident and Peer Support Specialist, Mike grew up in a dysfunctional family. His father was an alcoholic and abusive. Mike has been through more than most people could ever even begin to imagine. He found his brother shot to death and his brother and sister both took their own lives. Mental illness runs in his family. It also hit Mike in his 30s after a job loss and divorce. For 15 years, Mike was homeless on and off. It was demoralizing and Mike lost hope. He stayed in hallways, cars and shelters to stay warm. Mike cried when he got his key to his home at Tender Mercies. He was able to trust people again and earned his GED. Mike was able to move out on his own and continues to do well. His pride and joy are his two daughters and granddaughter, Ava. He loves being a part of the team at Tender Mercies. It means a lot to Mike to have the opportunity to help others like him.
Trapped, Lost and Alone

Kevin, a talented artist and machine shop expert struggled through childhood due to a lack of support from his family. He was discouraged from focusing on his artwork as it wouldn’t allow him to make a good living. Kevin’s father, who was bipolar, was unable to provide a stable home life with caring support for Kevin and his sisters.

For nearly 20 years, Kevin was successful as a scientific glass blower and machine shop manager. Kevin thrived and was driven to complete projects. He designed two products with a company for sporting goods equipment, however his business partner mishandled the first patent, resulting in Kevin not getting any of the royalties. Kevin left the company and filed the other patent. Unfortunately, he didn’t have the funds or resources to launch the product. Kevin’s dreams all slipped away.

For a year, Kevin hoped that he would be able to find a way to sell his product. After a while, Kevin began to get discouraged and didn’t know what to do. He ran out of money and then his relationship of 19 years ended. She couldn’t handle his depression and lack of direction. Like so many with careers that don’t succeed on top of depression, Kevin found himself homeless, living in a cardboard box by the river. His depression worsened as being homeless made him feel worthless without any purpose. Kevin didn’t feel like a person; he felt invisible and didn’t know what to do.

Thankfully, Kevin found Tender Mercies. He has become stable again over the past year by being in a supportive, safe environment with others who understand what he has gone through. Kevin has had the opportunity to enjoy painting, which is a true passion of his that he never had a chance to focus on in the past. He is exploring ways he could display his incredible work throughout Cincinnati.

“We make home mortgages to thousands of people a year and we want to help others like the people of Tender Mercies to have a safe and comfortable home. That’s why we are a proud sponsor of Tender Mercies.”

—Ed Wolterman, American Mortgage Service Corporation

“If I didn’t find Tender Mercies, I would have taken my own life.”

—Kevin
Ruth Found the Courage to Keep Going

Growing up in Lima, Ohio, Ruth endured a childhood full of heartache and loss. Her mother suffered from mental illness without the right treatment for years. Ruth's mother, without fully realizing what she was doing, she poisoned Ruth's food several times. Ruth was very scared and had to focus on surviving.

In 3rd grade Ruth saw a psychiatrist due to disturbing stories she wrote in school. She and her sister raised themselves for the most part as their mother wasn't there mentally and emotionally much of the time. Already having to suffer from pain and sadness, Ruth was raped in her teenage years. This traumatic experience caused a downward spiral that changed her life forever. Ruth was never the same, but she didn't give up.

Ruth's Mom didn't want her around because she thought she was dirty. She found her way to Dayton and put herself through school to become a phlebotomist. There, Ruth met a man who seemed like a good person and had two girls together. Tragically, he got into drugs and became abusive. Ruth was trapped in a world of fear for 13 years hoping he would change, but he never did. After years of abuse and heartache, Ruth left with her children and went back to Lima. She went to school for criminal justice and then worked at a mental illness facility for ten years before health issues forced her to resign.

After recovering from surgery, Ruth moved back to Dayton and took a rewarding job as a case manager. It was cut short when her mom took her own life. She just couldn't get through the days anymore feeling lost, alone, and not part of anything. No one understood and she lost her job.

Ruth moved to Cincinnati to be with her daughter. All was going well until she developed a serious problem with her foot requiring months of physical therapy. Her workers compensation ran out and then Ruth became homeless. Ruth was in shock, in disbelief, and wondered what she did wrong. She was living in her car in the sweltering heat of the Cincinnati summer. Ruth begged for food. Friends and family stopped taking her calls. It got to the point where Ruth didn't want to live anymore, so she took an entire bottle of Tylenol. She went to the hospital after thinking about how awful it would be to leave her grandchildren. No one in the psych unit believed Ruth. They thought she was playing the system.

Ruth was released with nothing. Being homeless is degrading and it isn't possible to get a job without an address, appropriate clothes or a place to shower. Ruth had no one — Tender Mercies was there. When Ruth arrived, she only had one pair of old clothes and one small bag of items. The caring staff at Tender Mercies gave her clothing and toiletries. Even socks, which she will never forget. Socks are such a small item that so many people take for granted. But when you are homeless, a pair of nice, clean socks makes you feel human again. Homelessness happens to postal workers, teachers, business professionals, and athletes. Anyone.

Tender Mercies saved Ruth's life and she will be forever thankful. Now in her own apartment in Cincinnati, Ruth is doing well and would like to get a job. The best part is Ruth's granddaughters come to see her regularly. She is now happy and full of courage because of your compassion and respect.

"I was released with nothing. Being homeless is degrading, people think homeless people should just get a job. It would be great if it were that easy." —Ruth
2016 Awards of Gratitude

Community Partner of the Year
Kroger/Simple Truth

Volunteer of the Year – Molly Grogan (center)

Neighborhood Partner of the Year
Rhinegeist

Sister Kathleen Kelly Lifetime Achievement Award
Nancy Johannigman (left)
“I am enjoying my home at Tender Mercies. It has done wonders for me and I wouldn’t be alive without Tender Mercies. I love being part of the Peer Support Team. It means a lot to have an opportunity to help other people.” — Jeffrey
Thank You for Making Home Possible

Thank you to all donors who made it possible to transform 185 lives in 2015. We value every donor and appreciate your kindness. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of all names listed. However, if your name is listed incorrectly, please contact Development at 513-639-7021 so we can update our records. Donations listed were received from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015.
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Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Whalen
Mr. and Mrs. James L. Whalen
Mr. and Mrs. John A. Whitaker
Mr. Brandon White
Mr. and Mrs. Lance M. White
Ms. Linde G. White
Ms. Marilyn Wieland
Mr. Brad Wilder
Mr. Joe Willenborg
Ms. Jamie Williams
Mr. and Mrs. John Williams
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Williams
Ms. Juli Anne Wilmers
Mr. Gary Wilson
Ms. Julie Winslow
Mr. and Mrs. Stanley A. Witkowski
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Witts
Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Wolf
Mr. Eddie Wolf and Ms. Amy J. Diamond
Ms. Beverly S. Wolnitzek
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wolterman
Wolterman Insurance Services, LLC
Mr. Michael Womick
Mr. Thomas Wood
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woodiwiss
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Woods
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Wright
Mr. and Mrs. David R. Walker
Xavier University
Ms. Catherine M. Zacharias
Mr. and Mrs. John W. Zorio

In Memory Of
Molly Ackerman
Mr. Ryan Anderson
Theresa Barnett
Marian Bartlett
Cathy Bingham
Richard Buck
Mrs. Velma M. Cox
Connie Cronin
Douglas
Deb Dupee
Christine Emmons
John Faig’s mother
J. & N. Freelich
Virginia Frick
Harold Fugate
Mary Rose Geckle
Mrs. Mary E. Geisen
Stanley Goodman
Mary Jo Graeter
Grandmas
Rev. Chris Hall
Doris Hinkley
Mrs. Virginia Holland
Camilla Jesse
Paul Jantieh
Carol Kelly
Rosemary Kennedy
Ruth Ann LaKamp Kimble
Joseph Iacono
Geneva Lindsey
Margie Long
Don Loomis
Chloe Lucas
Cathy Finn Macejko
Nathan McElfresh
Thomas McElfresh
Mrs. Nelda Meale
Nancy Meisel
Mittie Monter
Laura Joy Muntz
Martin C. Myers
Joe Neyer
Shane Nicholson
Paul Ortiz
In Appreciation of Time, Talent and Treasure

President of the Board
Denise Monfort

As I near the end of my final year as President of the Board of Tender Mercies, I can say that I have come to understand the depth of the mission of Tender Mercies. I have gained a new appreciation for the volunteers, friends and donors who have supported our mission every day. Thank you!

We are a family at Tender Mercies and it makes me proud to see how we all come together as a caring community members that donate their time, talent and treasures to our organization – Thank you!

I want to thank our Board of Trustees who provide ongoing support and leadership. I also want to thank our staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to help more men and women in need. I am grateful for the guidance and support of our donors and friends who make it possible for us to continue our mission.

I’m looking forward to my continued involvement with Tender Mercies as we strive to fulfill our mission and serve those in need.

Thank you!
In Appreciation of Time, Talent and Treasure

As I near the end of my final year as President of the Board of Tender Mercies, I can say that I have been so very proud to be part of such a meaningful organization that is making a difference in the lives of those we serve. Our strategic vision and plan for the future are exciting and I’m looking forward to my continued involvement with Tender Mercies as we strive to help more men and women in need.

I am especially proud of our Chief Executive Officer, Russell Winters and all of our staff at Tender Mercies. I sincerely appreciate all volunteers and friends, without whom we could not do what we do. I also want to thank our Board of Trustees who provide ongoing support and responsible governance to our organization in addition to actively participate in meetings, committees and events. The trustees are an engaged group of caring community members that donate their time, talent and treasures to our organization – Thank you!

We are a family at Tender Mercies and it makes me proud to see how we all come together to make our annual events successful, including the Gala of Giving, the Taste of OTR, the golf outing and all other events. These events are a crucial part of making it possible for our residents to rebuild and recover. Thank you to all who have attended and participated this past year.

I am humbled and honored to be part of a group that provides a dinner to our women’s building on Race St. on the 3rd Sunday of every month. We call ourselves the “WOTB” group (Women of the Board) – for obvious reasons! I enjoy talking and sharing a meal with the residents each month.

Please keep Tender Mercies top of mind as you think about donating your own time, talent and treasures – we need volunteers, friends and donors to accomplish our mission. Call us anytime for a tour or visit. We are happy and proud to be able to show you what we do and how we fulfill our mission every day. Thank you!

All my best,

Denise Montfort
President of the Board

“The trustees are an engaged group of caring community members that volunteer their time, talent and treasures to our organization – Thank you!”
A Home for Today, Tomorrow, and the Future

It starts with a key. Men and women come to Tender Mercies with many different experiences and challenges. They all come to Tender Mercies in need of a safe and stable home. That’s what we provide: a private, secure home with dignity and community, support and encouragement, transforming each of their lives.

“My heart was pounding so hard when I got my key to my own home. I was happy for the first time. Tender Mercies gave me my self-confidence back.”

—Patricia