

CCS/CHS Southwest Region

The Story Page

Stories of Hope and Healing

After 20 years, Mr. Bobby is Home at Last

Mr. Bobby is now a resident of CCS Nativity House Apartments in Tacoma. Nativity House Apartments provide 50 units of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless single adults. CCS/CHS staff provide case management services to residents to ensure safety, security and supportive connections.

As Brandee Tillman-Banks took on the role of Respite Program Supervisor at Nativity House, she recalls meeting Mr. Bobby. "I met him when I had to wake him up. He was camped right at St. Leo's parish doors." Brandee's usual routine was to move along Nativity House shelter guests by 7 a.m. with a message of encouragement, **"Kings and Queens, for this is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. I know that you struggled through the night but thank God you got up in new strength."** Mr. Bobby would say, **"That is beautiful!"**

Brandee would eventually learn more about Mr. Bobby as he shared that he has spent "almost two decades struggling with homelessness." He said he was blessed that someone like Mrs. Supervisor "saw him as a human being with a story, and one day a story of victory, a testimony."

In February 2020, Nativity House Apartments received Mr. Bobby's application for housing. Sadly, his initial application was denied because of his criminal record of minor offenses. As Harvard Law professor, Valerie Schneider noted in 2018, studies have shown that individuals with criminal records, even minor offenses, are "routinely denied access to housing," despite these offenses rarely having an effect on whether the applicant would be a successful renter. Due to the disproportionate number of BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) represented in the criminal justice system, post-incarceration barriers to housing echo this racial disproportion that perpetuate systemic injustice.

However Mr. Nick, the property manager, "fought and fought" on his behalf for acceptance into housing. It was with great excitement that Mr. Bobby received the key to his apartment on October 1. Brandee recalls that staff shed tears of joy when they learned that Mr. Bobby would finally have a warm, secure place to call home. It reminded Brandee in that moment, "This is why I am here, and why we press on...HOPE! 'For we know that all things will work together for the good of them that love God and who are called according to his purpose.'" (Romans 8:28.)

While Brandee was unable to see Mr. Bobby the day he received that precious key, she greeted him the following week with a warm 'welcome home' message, **"King, for this is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! You are safe!"**

To read Schneider's article, "The Prison to Homeless Pipeline: Criminal Record Checks, Race, and Disparate Impact," please see the *Indiana Law Journal*, Volume 93, Issue 2.



REAL IMPACT BECAUSE OF YOU

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It has been almost two decades of struggling with homelessness, but Mr. Bobby was blessed that someone like me saw him as a human being with a story, and one day a story of victory, a testimony. He is just an amazing individual and so glad he is now housed!

*- Brandee M. Tillman-Banks,
Supervisor at Nativity House*



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