

Love and Hope in Action

Spring Newsletter



In this edition, we are pleased to introduce two mighty resilient gentlemen who have recently overcome homelessness, as well as highlight another one of our treasured volunteers. We trust you will be inspired as you read the encouraging stories below.

Arnold

Arnold is our true “Mountain-Man” outdoorsman! He first arrived at LAHIA in May of 2020. We quickly realized that we needed to help Arnold, who had lived in the woods for many, many years, with housing if we were able to. Through the determination of the LAHIA staff, Arnold was able to move out of the woods and into his own space in March of 2021!

But Arnold’s eyesight is deteriorating rapidly due to years of unknowingly using a faulty welder’s face shield. He is unable to see almost everything. No matter the weather, he would describe every day as a cloudy, bright blur. However, none of this takes away from his huge personality. Arnold has stories for days and loves to talk about his wild past. As you are reading this, plans are being made to help Arnold regain some of his eyesight back through surgery.



But that isn’t all! In collaboration with some amazing donors, we’ve been able to provide Arnold with a full set of dentures, upper and lower! Arnold is grateful for the help he is receiving from LAHIA, but we often remind him that we are also thankful to be able to assist him in such meaningful ways.

Here is a quote straight from Arnold’s perspective, “Opening a door or a window instead of a zipper, really makes a difference”. Sometimes allowing an objective viewpoint to sink in, really sink in, adds a little clarity... just enough clarity to allow yourself to wonder ~ what finally having a door or a window would mean to you.

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT – Elizabeth Curet



We’d like to shine a well-deserved spotlight on a sweet volunteer who has become a crucial part of our client’s wellness. Elizabeth has been following God’s calling to offer free counseling here at LAHIA since December of 2017, after noticing an ad in her Church’s bulletin. As Elizabeth recollected the moment, she said the advertisement seemed to sparkle as she looked at it. What a gift, to be able to slow a moment long enough to notice, to be present enough to receive the message and then recollect it years later. Fortunately, Elizabeth received and accepted the message! LAHIA and our clients have been the happy beneficiaries ever since.

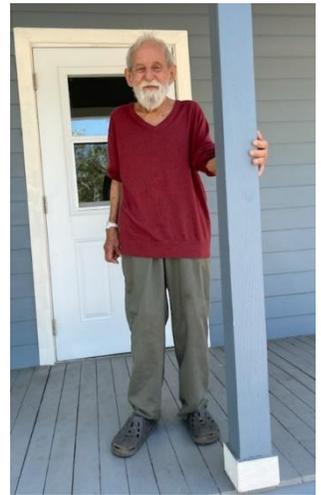
When asked to describe a highlight as a Mental Health Counselor, Elizabeth answered that it is cooperating with the Holy Spirit to bring healing to the traumatized, emotionally wounded souls with whom the Lord brings her way. Another high point of Elizabeth’s life is being blessed with the birth of five children and home educating them for 14.5 years!

When Elizabeth has free time, her hobbies include connecting with her five adult children and eight grandsons, physical exercise - sometimes with her husband - and cooking nutritious meals which she very much enjoys. Something pretty remarkable that deserves mention is that many years ago Elizabeth worked hard to teach her children Latin!

LAHIA is so very grateful for the time that Elizabeth willingly gives for the betterment of our clients. Using wellness tools such as "The Change Triangle" to restore calm, clarity, and peace of mind is such a helpful advantage. When asked to describe Elizabeth, clients and staff used adjectives such as compassionate, caring, passionate and having a huge heart. Elizabeth has a true gift for reaching people and we are incredibly thankful that she was pointed in our direction.

John

This may come as a shock to most, and understandably so -- John has lived homelessly for the past 51 years. When John was referred to LAHIA, he was living on the front porch of a condemned house. It may seem pretty terrible, heartbreaking even, especially after getting to know this man a little, but John has survived in worse conditions, once living under the porch of a house. But to this day, he will tell you that the best shelter for a homeless person is in an abandoned freezer chest. Imagine this scenario if you can. You are alone. It is dark outside and the air is humid. Animal noises assault your ears and the dark hinders your eyesight. All of your belongings, everything that is yours in this world, is tucked into your current living space. The abandoned, overturned freezer you've found has kept you safe against the elements... and for now, you are satisfied. This is the most content you've felt in a long time.



For most, it would be very difficult to place yourself in those shoes. We may even start to judge. It's easy to do. Let's be honest, 51 years is a long time, a lifetime... but please pause your judgment and add in to your perspective that John's past is largely unknown. We don't know the trauma that he may have suffered or the obstacles that he had to overcome. What we do know, however, is that he is as sharp as a tack and a good person! This man comes complete with a set of bright eyes and a beautiful smile that lights up the room, a good person that is no longer homeless!

John has been moved into his very own 1 bedroom / 1 bath house. Through the donations of our generous community and a little shopping of our own, we've been able to provide John with the basics to help get him started in his new residence. In collaboration with other organizations, LAHIA will continue to check in with John. We want the very best for John and we want him to succeed. The transition from homelessness to housing can sometimes be arduous. On move-in day, when it seemed to be a lot, John was asked if he was overwhelmed. He answered simply, "No, it's a beautiful thing". For now, and hopefully for a long time into the future, John is safe, truly content and finally at home.



Thank you for your continued interest and support of LAHIA. We welcome you to share this newsletter with your family and friends. New volunteers and supporters are always welcome to join our mission in assisting our homeless neighbors!

Learn more at www.lahia.org, call us at (772)781-7002 and "like" us on Facebook for updates.
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