



Love And Hope In Action

Winter Newsletter



Teaming Up For A New Start

When you have been sleeping in your car for a year, stretching out on your own bed in your own apartment is “heaven” according to Paul, a client of LAHIA. And when you are living with your best friend, it is even better!

Paul grew up in upstate New York. After 18 years at IBM at its headquarters in Armonk, NY, Paul retired, moved to Florida and became an LPN at Martin Memorial where he stayed for the next 20 years. Most recently, Paul worked for Martin County School System food services. He is currently looking for a new job in the restaurant industry.

Richard was born and raised in New York City. He graduated college with a degree in philosophy (which according to him he has used every day since) and promptly became a plumber which he did for Union 630 in New York City for the next 40 years. After decades working outside in the wind and cold, he abandoned winter weather permanently and moved to Stuart to care for his mother.



Paul was homeless when he met Richard in a convenience store in 2021. “I just started a conversation with him, asking if he knew anyone who was looking for a roommate,” said Paul. “We talked for a little while and he offered to let me stay in his driveway. After I had been there a while he let me move to the porch, and finally to the living room couch.” Unfortunately, the house was sold by the landlord and while the landlord gave them a place to stay for a while in another house he owned in Stuart, that, too was soon sold as well and Paul and Richard were on the street. They navigated living in the street for about a year before they met a woman in the park they were sleeping in who told them to go to LAHIA. Then they met a couple who told them to go to LAHIA.

Word of mouth finally got them to LAHIA in mid-December. Their case manager gave them a list of lower-cost housing options for Martin and St. Lucie counties, and off they went. They called the first place on the list, Astorwood Apartments in Stuart. No answer. So, they went there and met Juan, who runs the development, and the very next day, they were back at LAHIA for rent assistance. They found their new two-bedroom apartment in a single day, moved in just before Christmas, and Paul is already planning a flower garden around their patio.

Pablo Sees His Way To Success

Pablo came to LAHIA with his partner, Monica, in September looking for ID, food and a little compassion. They were both determined to leave homelessness ASAP and they are on their way! Pablo desperately needed glasses, so we sent him to Cohen’s Optical at the Treasure Coast Mall, where Dr. Durante has taken fantastic care of our clients for several years. So, armed with a new Florida ID and seeing clearly for the first time in a while, Pablo landed a full-time job at Cricket Wireless in Stuart. Monica is also working full time, at Waffle House.



Pablo needed transportation to get to his new job, so we presented Pablo with a refurbished, donated bicycle. When he started at Cricket Wireless, Pablo suggested to his manager that they bring the federal free phone program to LAHIA. His manager had worked with the homeless previously and really liked the idea of bringing his compassion for these folks to LAHIA in the form of free government phones. Pablo is a LAHIA

success story. We are very proud of his determination to get a good job and we look forward to someday soon helping Pablo and Monica get into permanent housing!

Ascent Church Brings Christmas Cheer To Our Clients

Each year Ascent Church sells Christmas trees from a festive huge tent in the front yard. Their annual event, Buy A Tree Change A Life, raises money to benefit children locally and globally. This year Ascent Church raised \$42,364. Customers can purchase a tree for themselves or sponsor a tree that will be given to someone who cannot afford one.

LAHIA got a visit from Pastor Jason and the rest of the Ascent team just before Christmas where they generously gave us 12 beautiful real trees. One of the grateful recipients was a family of four who arrived at LAHIA in early November: Heath, Ashley and their two girls, ages 5 and 14. They were recently blessed by Family Promise of Martin County with 2 months in an apartment after living in a tent at Phipps Park for several months. The Christmas tree was the perfect gift to make their holiday season special.



The family has been busy! Their two girls are loving their new schools in Martin County. Both Heath and Ashley are working full time (or more if they can) and are determined to get their lives back on track. No drug use or jail in either of their stories, just some bad luck. They are well on their way to a stable, permanent home for their family.

Remembering Marcus

Marcus was only at LAHIA for 9 months but he made a big impression on us in a short time. There are lots of words we can use to describe Marcus. A son. A father, to Jackson. An author. A thinker. A traveler.

Around here, we called Marcus a part of our team. It is pretty rare that we have a client who integrates into our volunteer group so quickly. Marcus took care of the chickens. He washed dishes—a LOT (we sometimes scramble for dishwashers, so this was huge). He served meals and drinks. He did food prep. He managed many, many shower shifts. He cleaned and did yard work.

Marcus had told us that he would be moving on. Shortly before he passed, Marcus spent Christmas with one of our staff and his wife. Marcus was an ace ping pong player—he even beat the hostess – who is known for her ping-pong skills. On Christmas Eve, the couple took Marcus to midnight mass. They observed that Marcus was very moved by the service and believe he found his way back to Jesus that night. Just in time.

We were so blessed to talk to Marcus’ mom who notified us of his death. They had a strained relationship for a couple years, but she was comforted to know that Marcus spent the final months of his life serving our homeless community. Here he was around people who genuinely cared about him and had become his friends. Marcus was always ready to help whenever we asked, and we were here for him as well.

We will miss Marcus. We have all thought thousands of what ifs—like what if he had opened up to us more, or what if we had asked him the questions that he needed us to ask. His work was so beneficial to us that it opened the door for other clients to volunteer with us in the future. We hope they are as dependable as Marcus. Thank you, Marcus, for choosing LAHIA as the final stop on your travels.



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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