



Winter Newsletter 2024

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CEO Letter: 2024 — How We Soared

As the year comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on the journey we've shared, the strides we've made, and the challenges we still face together in ending elder homelessness. At Hearth, we've adopted the theme of S.O.A.R. – Service, Outcomes, Assessments, and Results – as a guiding beacon, which encapsulates our efforts and our commitment to the vulnerable older adults who need us.

Each day, the dedicated Hearth team puts their hearts into delivering on our mission. They navigate the complexities of aging and homelessness with unwavering compassion and resilience. Whether it's securing safe housing, offering supportive services, or building hope, they continuously rise to meet the needs of our residents and clients, even as the demands grow.

But none of this would be possible without you, our steadfast supporters. Your belief in our work fuels us, allowing us to face these challenges head-on. Inspire Action has been our rallying call, and through your kindness and generosity, you have enabled us to take meaningful steps toward our vision of a world where no older adult is left without a home or hope. We are incredibly grateful for this partnership, for it is truly the community that strengthens us and makes our work possible.

As we look toward the future, we know there is still so much to do. The need for housing and support services is as pressing as ever, and with your continued commitment, we will soar even higher, breaking down the barriers that prevent so many older adults from finding the stability and care they deserve.

Please consider joining us in this mission once again. Your year-end gift will have a profound impact, directly supporting our mission-critical services and ensuring that we can continue to bring relief, dignity, and safety to those who need it most. Together, we can inspire action and create a future where everyone can age with the security and support, they deserve.

With heartfelt gratitude,



Rhonda A. Pieroni
President and CEO



Inspire Action — Hearth's Annual Gala

October 17, 2024

Each year Hearth holds its annual gala fundraising event and this year our theme was *Inspire Action*. During the gala, we recognize an individual who is committed to ending homelessness and is presented with the “*Anna Bissonnette Award*”, named after one of Hearth’s founders.

This year Gordon Wayne, a 23-year -old from Caroline County in rural Central Virginia, was our honoree. As Gordon shared his story, the audience of 150+ sat quietly in awe. At 18 years of age, Gordon found himself alone and homeless, living in his car for shelter. He managed to attend community college days, earning an associate degree with an impressive 4.0 average while working nights and living in his car.

The depression and loneliness, along with the day-to-day struggle to survive, began to take a toll on Gordon. But he did not give up; he persevered, applying to four-year colleges as a transfer student, hoping for a full scholarship. He knew college would provide him with an opportunity for a future and a much needed place to live. Fortunately, Gordon received a full scholarship to Boston College Carroll School of Management.

Grateful for the opportunity and wanting to give back, he committed to walk over 500 miles from rural Virginia to Boston College. He created a GoFundMe page to raise money for the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

After graduating from Boston College, Gordon applied to law school. He was accepted into University of Georgia’s School of Law on a full scholarship. Once

again, he realized the magnitude of this opportunity and wanted to give back, not wanting to forget those who remain homeless. Gordon committed to walking from Virginia to Georgia, another 500+ mile journey and fundraiser. In total, Gordon raised over \$200,000 for the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

Today, Gordon is in his second year of law school and committed to ending homelessness. When Gordon finished sharing his story at the gala, the audience rose to their feet.

Gordon took action to not only help himself, but to help others. He inspired many on his journey and in his young life. Gordon did not just accept the gifts and opportunities for himself, he thought of others and how he could use his gift to help those in need.

Gordon and his incredible journey, Inspired Action for many that evening, and his young legacy will have a lasting impact on the work we do at Hearth. We are thankful for his commitment to ending homelessness and are forever grateful that he is now part of the Hearth community.



The Impact of Hearth's Work

Hearth Housing Can Improve Life Expectancy for Formerly Homeless Older Adults

Hearth has 228 units of innovative housing options from Permanent Supportive Housing to Assisted Living so older adults can age in place in the community for as long as possible. Did you know the national life expectancy for homeless individuals is 50 years?

At Hearth, formerly homeless residents who passed away did so, on average, at 72.42 years old. This suggests that Hearth's housing and services have significantly extended the lifespan of these individuals by an average of more than 22 years. Furthermore, half of Hearth residents are currently 70 years old and older. We also know that experiencing homelessness advances the aging process. Homeless adults in their 50s have geriatric conditions such as vision

impairment, incontinence, and falls at rates akin to those of housed adults who are 20 years older.

Given the complexity of the aging process for formerly homeless older adults, Hearth's supportive services are customized to the evolving health and social needs of every resident. These valuable services address the social determinants of health, non medical factors impacting health, such as economic and housing stability, access to quality health care, access to healthy food options, and community engagement.

National Alliance to End Homelessness: [Not One More: Honoring Those Who Died Homeless - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

Brown RT, Kiely DK, Bharel M, Mitchell SL. (2012). Geriatric syndromes in older homeless adults. *J Gen Intern Med.* 2012;27(1):16-22

Brown RT, Hemati K, Riley ED, et al. (2017). Geriatric Conditions in a Population-Based Sample of Older Homeless Adults. *Gerontologist.* 57(4):757-766

Development/Fundraising at Hearth

What's developing at Hearth? New branding such as a logo, refreshed website, upgraded web-based donor management tool, and new members of the development team!

Why all the changes?

It was time that our infrastructure around fundraising – tools, people and strategy – catch up with the monumental efforts we've put forth for decades.

It is no secret that development is mission critical to the success of a non-profit organization. Development works tirelessly to acquire funding necessary for Hearth to advance its mission, impact, sustainability, and longevity. It enables Hearth to make a difference in the lives of those it serves.

Meet the Development Team

Wade Dunham, Associate Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, manages Hearth's grant portfolio and serves as the primary donor contact for institutional funders. His mandate is to strengthen our existing partnerships and engage new funders to support and diversify our programming. Prior to Hearth, he was the Foundation Relations Officer for

Metro Housing|Boston for the previous five years after escaping the restaurant industry. He is a Tufts University alum, a tortured Phoenix Suns fan, and a cat dad for an 18-year-old ginger nuisance named Monty.

Dylan Curtis is Hearth's Development Associate and resident jack-of-all-trades, presiding over database management, digital and traditional mail fundraising campaigns, content generation, and a host of administrative functions too lengthy to list. Dylan has been working in development for more than eight years, helping to improve fundraising outcomes on a variety of projects for organizations dedicated to building adapted homes for severely injured veterans, lifting low-income families out of poverty, and improving research, facilities, and medical outcomes at Tufts Medical Center. His favorite project was working with the team at Tufts Medical Center to secure funding from the Dunkin' Donuts Foundation for Dottie, a hospital support dog.

We welcome our new members of the development team to the Hearth community and look forward to blazing new paths to innovating our approach to fundraising and community engagement.



Out and About with Hearth's Outreach Department

Hearth's Outreach Department plays a pivotal role in extending a helping hand to those in need, offering a lifeline of support through housing search, stabilization services, and homelessness prevention initiatives.

The Outreach Case Managers schedule weekly visits to Boston area shelters in order to connect with homeless older adults. The team also provides stabilization services to those recently housed. This includes regular check-ins including home visits, to ensure they are transitioning to their new home and accessing services.

When the team is not in the office, you can find them out in the community. A favorite event is Outreach's annual Rise Up luncheon, which was held at Franklin Park on July 18th. This event is to acknowledge the incredible journey outreach and prevention clients have embarked upon. The road to housing and stability is long and challenging. On this day Hearth celebrates the clients who have persevered through some of the most challenging times. It was a day of tears of joy, laughter, and dancing.

On September 14, 2024 the Outreach Department participated in the 3rd Annual Community Resource Fair by New Beginnings Re-Entry Services. The event was located in Grove Hall – Dorchester, MA. The team had an opportunity to engage and collaborate with local leaders, business owners, vendors, and community members.

On October 9, 2024, Dr. LaTanya Wright, Vice President for Outreach and Partnerships along with Gregory Grays-Thomas, LCSW, Bureau Director - Homeless Services Bureau for Boston Public Health Commission were invited to the BU School of Public Health. Dr. Wright and Mr. Grays-Thomas addressed graduate students enrolled in the course: Homelessness, Stories, Solutions, Advocacy taught by Professor Harold Cox, MSSW, a Professor of the Practice at the BU School of Public Health.

As the work of Hearth's Outreach Department continues, it's clear that these efforts are as essential as they are inspiring. Through every shelter visit, every community event, and every story shared with future advocates, the team embodies Hearth's commitment to helping older adults achieve stability and dignity in their later years.

Together, with the support of our community, we can ensure that no older adult faces the prospect of homelessness alone. Your continued generosity fuels our programs, expands our reach, and strengthens the safety net for those who need it most. As we look ahead, we invite you to join us in uplifting and empowering Boston's older adults – so that, one day, every individual can age with a sense of security and peace.

Thank you for being a vital part of Hearth's mission.



Resident Spotlight: Get to Know Horace

Horace has an infectious smile, an easy-going demeanor, and a positive outlook that is inescapable: “Living here is a wonderful thing,” he says, highlighting the community of Hearth residents: “I’m friendly with all my neighbors.”

Horace grew up in the South End, attending elementary school at Joseph Hurley, and spent 40 years working for the City of Boston’s Department of Public Works, the last eight as a dispatcher. Unfortunately, after retirement, he was only able to afford an apartment in a crime-infested part of Dorchester – “up there where the thugs are,” he says with his trademark grin, which then turns serious:

“Just surviving, it was really rough. You open your front door and somebody gets shot right in front of you.”

Enough was enough, and he needed to find a way out. He had a bed at Pine Street, but needed a place of his own where he could feel safe. Hearth’s Outreach department worked with Horace to help him find stable housing. Fortunately, they were able to find an apartment for him at Hearth’s Anna Bissonnette House, where he has been a fixture for the past six years.

Horace loves participating in Hearth’s Socialization

and Recreation activities, but he has a particular favorite: “Living here, there’s a lot of good things, but the Karaoke thing, I think that’s wonderful. The girl they have coming, man, she can sing.” Overall, he is very happy with our selection of group activities, but he would like to see computer literacy classes offered for residents, saying, “We need to be in the millennium; we’re still living in the 1900s.”

Horace’s journey from facing daily danger to finding a safe, supportive home at Hearth’s Anna Bissonnette House embodies the heart of Hearth’s mission. Through the Outreach and Prevention team’s dedicated efforts, he found not only a place to live but a vibrant community that brings him joy and peace. His laughter and warmth have become a part of the fabric of Hearth, and his request for new opportunities, like computer literacy classes, reflects the resilience and forward-thinking spirit we strive to foster among all our residents.

For Horace, and so many others, a safe, stable home changes everything. As we look to the future, we remain committed to expanding these opportunities and uplifting all those who, like Horace, are ready for a new chapter. Together, we can ensure more seniors experience the security, community, and joy that a home at Hearth brings.



Hearth Joins the 2025 Winter Walk as an Organizational Partner!

Hearth is excited to announce it is an organizational partner for the 2025 Winter Walk! This event brings together community members for a two-mile walk in the heart of Boston during the coldest time of year—a stark reminder of the realities faced by those experiencing homelessness.

Hearth is committed to registering 100 walkers, with the goal of raising \$10,000 to support our mission to end homelessness among older adults in Greater Boston. We invite everyone—whether a longtime supporter or new to our community—to join Team Hearth. You can support the team with a donation, help fundraise for Team Hearth, or walk alongside us to make a difference!

Why the Winter Walk Matters to Hearth

Homelessness in Boston remains a critical issue, especially for older adults who face unique challenges, including health vulnerabilities, limited access to affordable housing, and isolation. These are the individuals Hearth supports every day, providing both permanent housing and critical services such as outreach and prevention.

Participating in the Winter Walk is an opportunity for Hearth staff, residents, family members, and partners to come together, raise awareness and funds to support our mission. Together, we can show solidarity with those who are currently without a home and amplify the need for resources to combat homelessness in our community.

Join Team Hearth – Let’s Walk and Fundraise Together!

Here’s how you can help Hearth reach our goal:

1. Register for the Walk: To register, visit: <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/winterwalk2025-boston/classification/291263/>. Be sure to join *Team Hearth* in the registration process. By registering under our team, you’ll be helping us reach our goal of 100 walkers.

2. Fundraise: Each participant is encouraged to raise funds for Team Hearth to help us reach our \$10,000

goal. You can set up a personal fundraising page within Team Hearth,, share it with friends and family, and watch as they support you in this impactful effort.

3. Invite Others to Join: The Winter Walk is an opportunity for our community to grow! Encourage friends, family, and colleagues to join the team. By walking together, we amplify our message of advocacy to end homelessness.

Event Details and What to Expect

The Winter Walk takes place on a Sunday morning February 9, 2025, starting at the Boston Common. The program kicks off with brief, inspiring stories from individuals who have experienced homelessness and those working to support them. After the two-mile walk, the group will reconvene for a community breakfast—a chance to warm up and connect with others passionate about ending homelessness.

Hearth will be there to share more about our work, and you’ll have the opportunity to meet some of the people whose lives are directly impacted by your support.

Why Your Participation Matters

Every step in the Winter Walk helps to bring us closer to ending homelessness in Boston. By walking with Hearth, you’re shedding light on the needs of older adults experiencing homelessness and supporting long-term solutions through funds raised. Your participation helps us send a message that no one should have to endure the winter cold without a place to call home.

So bundle up, lace up your shoes, and join us in showing Boston that we care. Together, we can make 2025 a year of positive impact for Hearth and our city’s most vulnerable residents.

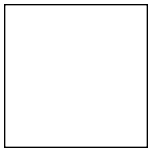
Ready to Register? Go to <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/winterwalk2025-boston/classification/291263/> to sign up today, select Hearth, inc.as your donation classification, and join Team Hearth!



Scan with your smart phone to register. →



www.hearth-home.org | 617-369-1550 | 1640 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02118



Our Mission

Hearth is a non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of homelessness among the elderly. This mission is accomplished through a unique blend of prevention, placement, and housing programs all designed to help elders find and succeed in homes of their own.

Follow us on Social Media!

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Funder Spotlight — A Heartfelt Thank You!

Hearth is supported by a diverse and growing group of corporate and foundation partners, and their investment makes it possible for us to support, expand, and broaden our programming portfolio. Some of these stakeholders provide us with flexible funds that can be used for direct client support, an invaluable housing stabilization tool that has taken on particular importance for those we serve since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hearth’s case managers situationally deploy these funds to keep at-risk residents housed or assist unsheltered older adults in clearing barriers to stable housing, such as up-front rental fees and expenses.

One of our longest-running and most dedicated partners, Liberty Mutual Insurance, has been a consistent supporter of Hearth’s mission for the past two decades. Established in 2003, Liberty Mutual Foundation supports the communities in which the company’s employees live and work.

The foundation partners with nonprofits that work to empower families and individuals who are struggling to thrive amid challenging situations in Greater Boston, Greater Puget Sound, and select counties of Washington State. Their commitment to Hearth’s mission of ending elder homelessness is exemplified by a significant gift of \$300,000 for homelessness prevention funding in 2020, a critical infusion of resources that helped our residents and clients remain housed at the height of the pandemic’s devastation.

Hearth’s staff, residents, and clients are pleased to have Liberty Mutual Insurance as a key partner in supporting our mission. We truly appreciate the Foundation’s dedication to advancing access to stable housing for our most vulnerable neighbors.



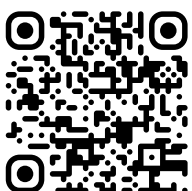
Ways to Give — Support Hearth’s Mission

Sustainer – commit to supporting Hearth with a monthly donation. Monthly donations help with budgeting and planning. Hearth sustainers share they feel more connected to the mission and its impact.

Support a Special Giving Request for 2024

Holiday Giving – a donation of \$50 provides each Hearth resident, outreach, and prevention client with a holiday gift and holiday meals at Thanksgiving and for the December holidays.

Giving Tuesday – this annual day of giving helps to support the needs of Hearth residents and clients. Monetary donations are used to support a variety of needs such as winter coats, boots, hats/gloves, and meals. Your donation also helps to support supplies for activities throughout the year.



Your Support is Vital to Hearth’s Mission!

Hearth is the only organization with the sole mission of ending elder homelessness. Currently, older adults, age 50 plus, are the fastest growing population affected by housing insecurity. Finding safe, affordable, and stable housing in Boston is extremely challenging for older adults with limited or fixed income. Together we can make a lasting impact.

← Please scan the QR code to give today! Thank you.

