Bethesda House

Building a more compassionate community one person at a time

THE BEACON

Summer 2026

A Semi-Annual Publication of Bethesda House Schenectady, Inc.

She Almost Didn't Come

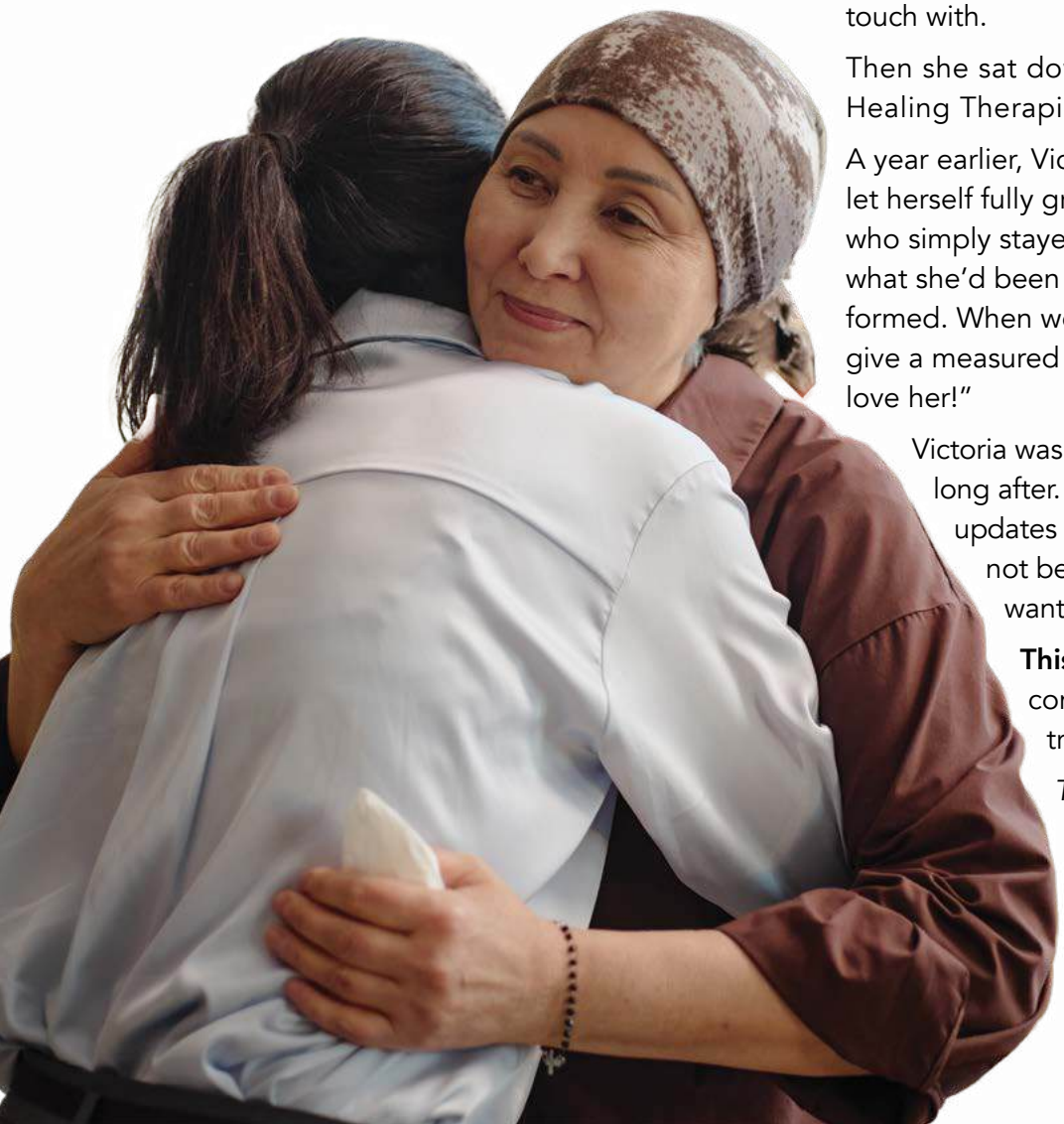
But, because of you, she was able to stay.

By Vincent Mitchell

When our RN met Victoria at Ellis Hospital, she didn't want to go anywhere.

She'd had just been discharged—again. Her diabetes was unmanaged, her depression was heavy, and she had no emergency contacts. The hospital had stabilized her, but it hadn't given her what she needed: a place to land.

A few hours later, we got the call that Victoria had changed her mind and decided to try our program.



She arrived hesitant, keeping her distance from the social work staff. She wasn't sure if this was for her.

Our medical respite team was patient and able to make steady progress. Conversation by conversation, our nurses taught her to monitor her blood sugar and make healthier routines. Our social workers helped her access care management, verbal therapy, and transport services. The Case Management team helped her reconnect with family members she'd lost touch with.

Then she sat down with our Loss, Grief, and Healing Therapist.

A year earlier, Victoria had lost her son. She had never let herself fully grieve it. In that room, with a therapist who simply stayed present, she finally began to feel what she'd been holding back, and an instant bond formed. When we asked her about it later, she didn't give a measured answer. She just smiled and said: "I love her!"

Victoria was discharged to supportive housing not long after. She still calls the medical staff with updates about her health and her recovery—not because she has to, but because she wants to. She sounds lighter now.

This is what your support builds. The conditions for a person to grieve, to trust, to begin again.

This happens because of you. On the next page, a message from Executive Director Kimarie Sheppard about what's making stories like this possible—and what's putting them at risk.

You just read Victoria's story.

I want you to stay with one detail for a moment: she almost didn't come.

When Victoria first arrived, she was distant, uncertain, and convinced this wasn't going to work for her. What changed her mind wasn't a program or a policy. It was people. Nurses who kept showing up. A therapist who stayed present. A team that refused to let a first "no" become the final answer.

That's what Bethesda House exists to do. And it's only possible because people like you have chosen to stand with us.

Every donor reading this letter shares in Victoria's story. When she calls today just to let us know she's doing well, that's not only because of our staff—it is because your generosity made their work possible. I don't say that as a figure of speech. I say it because it's true.

And it's why I'm asking for your help today.

Some of our Medical Respite clients receive up to 90 days of care through Medicaid waivers or Department of Social Services funding. We're grateful for that support, but it only goes so far. When those benefits end—or when someone has no coverage at all—there is no backup system waiting to catch them.

A person can leave the hospital with nowhere safe to recover, no stable place to sleep, and no one to call. In those moments, we are often their only option.

The truth is, stories like Victoria's don't happen by accident.

They happen because this community has made a commitment that when someone reaches us at one of the lowest moments of their life, we'll be ready. Ready with a safe place to recover. Ready with skilled medical care. Ready with counseling, compassion, and the time it takes for healing to begin.

That commitment depends on people like you.

Your gift today helps ensure that someone leaving the hospital without a home has somewhere to go. It helps provide the care, stability, and dignity that make recovery possible. Most importantly, it allows us to keep opening our doors to every person who comes to us in need.

When the next hospital calls looking for a place where someone can heal, I want our answer to remain the same:

"Yes. Bring them here."

Thank you for believing, as we do, that every person deserves that chance.

With Gratitude

Kimarie A. Sheppard

From the Front Lines

By Amit Jagdeo, Bethesda House staff member

"We're trying to hold people together with resources that were never designed for this level of need."

It was a Code Blue night in January. The temperature had dropped into the single digits, every shelter bed in the city was full, and the calls just kept coming.

One of our staff members spent the night moving from one crisis to the next—calming anxious guests, searching for extra blankets, answering calls from hospitals trying to find a safe place for patients with nowhere to recover.

Sometime after midnight, they sat beside a man who had already been turned away from multiple places. He was exhausted, discouraged, and close to giving up.

There wasn't an easy solution left to offer. So they offered something just as important: their time. They stayed with him, listened, and reassured him that when morning came, there would be a warm place to go, a hot meal waiting, and people who wouldn't stop looking for a path forward.

By the end of the shift, the exhaustion showed. But they came back the next day because they knew someone would be counting on them.

Morning brought a new wave of challenges: a hospital discharge with nowhere to go, a resident in crisis whose housing placement was at risk, transportation to coordinate, and difficult conversations to navigate - all with another freezing night on the horizon. .

Then, amid the urgency, came a quiet victory.

A resident who had spent months pushing people away—someone many others had given up on—finally agreed to meet with a housing provider. They sat down, completed the paperwork, and took the first real step toward stable housing.

For the staff who had spent weeks earning that person's trust, it was a reminder that progress is rarely dramatic. More often, it comes one conversation, one late night, one act of patience at a time.

Those moments are what keep this team going. And they're only possible because people like you make this work possible.

Medical Respite:
The Bridge Between Hospital Discharge and Recovery

Amit Jagdeo, as interviewed by Vincent Mitchell

It's the safety net at the moment of discharge, that catches people who would otherwise fall right back into crisis.

For most of us, leaving the hospital means going home to rest, recover, and heal.

For someone experiencing homelessness, hospital discharge can mean returning to the street with nowhere safe to sleep, no place to keep wounds clean, no way to manage medications, and no support to continue recovery.

That's where the ***Cara House Medical Respite*** steps in.

Medical Respite doesn't just treat an illness or condition. It breaks the cycle

Medical Respite is often the only bridge between hospital discharge and lasting recovery. It gives people the time, medical support, and stability they need to heal—breaking a cycle that hospitals alone cannot.

One man in his late 50s came to Cara House after multiple emergency room visits for an untreated diabetic foot wound. Each time, the pattern was the same: he received treatment, was discharged to the street, couldn't keep the wound clean, and returned to the emergency room within days. With every hospitalization, his risk of amputation increased.

The hospital treated his wound. But it couldn't provide what he needed most: a safe place to recover.

In our program, he found a clean bed, regular meals, skilled wound care, medication management, and staff who coordinated follow-up appointments and helped him reconnect with primary care. Most importantly, he had something he hadn't had in a long time—time to heal.

He eventually left Medical Respite with a documented care plan, an established primary care provider, and a clear pathway toward stable housing.

That's the difference Medical Respite makes.

It doesn't simply treat an illness. It breaks the cycle of repeated hospitalizations, homelessness, and preventable medical crises.

The value is clear.

An avoidable hospital day can cost between $2,800 and more than $6,000. A full week of Medical Respite care costs $2,100 to $4,550. For less than the cost of a single hospital stay, someone can receive a full week of medical care, case management, nutritious meals, and a safe place to recover—improving health while reducing the likelihood of another emergency room visit.

Recovery also begins with the simplest things.

When someone arrives at Medical Respite, they often need items many of us never think twice about:

Warm blankets and pillows.

Clean socks, underwear, towels, and basic clothing.

Antiseptic body wash and personal hygiene supplies.

Diabetic-safe and fragrance-free moisturizers to protect fragile skin.

Nutritious meals and a safe place to sleep.

These aren't comforts. They're the foundation of healing.

Some Medical Respite stays are covered through Medicaid waivers or Department of Social Services funding, but those resources have limits. Some people exhaust their coverage. Others don't qualify at all.

A person's ability to recover shouldn't depend on whether their benefits have run out.

That's where your generosity makes all the difference.

Your gift helps provide the care that funding doesn't always cover. It ensures that someone leaving the hospital has a safe place to recover instead of returning to the streets. It provides nursing care, case management, basic necessities, and the dignity that allows healing to begin.

Every day, hospitals call looking for a safe place where someone can continue recovering.

Because of compassionate supporters like you, we can answer those calls with a place to heal, hope for the future, and the opportunity to rebuild a life.

Thank you for making that possible.

BETHESDA HOUSE WISH APPEAL

It's time for Bethesda House's Wish Appeal! Each year we compile a list of gifts for friends and supporters in the community who wish to donate. Bethesda House gratefully acknowledges the generous gifts we receive that help us support the needs of so many. The items on our Wish List reflect our day-to-day needs. Donations are accepted Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 - 4:00 or by calling Bethesda House (518-374-7873) to make arrangements.

Day to Day

Food
- Non-perishable items

Kitchen
- Spices, coffee and tea
- Can openers
- Pots and pans
- Cooking utensils

Hygiene Products
- Regular and hotel size shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, soap, razors, toothbrushes and feminine hygiene products

Linens
- Sheets, towels, washcloths
- Blankets

Seasonal
- Home Depot/Lowes gift card

Our Veterans' Program needs the following:
- Twin sheets
- Twin comforters
- Pillows
- Bed bug covers (mattress, box spring and pillow covers)
- Blankets
- Hygiene kits
- Socks (varying in size)
- Underwear (varying in size)
- Undershirts (varying in size)
- Towels
- Wash cloths
- Hand towels
- Slippers (varying in size)

Adopt Our Food Pantry

A $50 donation gives us $200 in food products from the Regional Food Bank.
A $100 donation gives us $500 in food products from the Regional Food Bank.

Adopt An Apartment

Visit bethesdahs.org for details.

Gifts that Keep on Giving

Deferred gifts to Bethesda House can have a lasting effect on our future strength & sustainability. Please give serious consideration to:
- A bequest to Bethesda House
- A donation of a life insurance policy
- A gift of appreciated asset (stock, property)

Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc.
Friends of Bethesda House/Profile Update/Gift

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____

Fax _____

E-Mail _____

Enclosed is my contribution of $ _____
(Please make checks payable to Bethesda House)

Credit Card: MC Visa AMEX Discover

No: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Sec. Code: _____

Signature: _____

Are you a GE Employee/Retiree? ____Yes ____No
(Bethesda House is a GE Match Recipient)

Would you like to learn more about volunteer opportunities at Bethesda House? ____Yes ____No

You can also make donations at www.bethesdahs.org

Invest in Hope. Create Impact. Be Our Partner.

The work we accomplish throughout the year is possible because of partners who believe in our mission and invest in the people we serve. Every investment creates opportunities, changes lives, and strengthens our community.

This fall, we invite you to join us for an evening that combines inspiration, connection, and fun!

Save the Date!

Annual Fundraising Event
Thursday, October 15, 2026

Mark your calendar for an evening of inspiration, connection, and celebration. Together, we'll share stories of impact, recognize the difference our partners make, and look ahead to the opportunities before us.

More event details and registration information will be shared soon.

Ways to Make an Impact

- Invest in our mission with a financial gift.
- Join us at our Annual Fundraising Event on October 15.
- Invite friends, family, or colleagues to attend.
- Share our mission with others who care about making a difference.
- Consider becoming a monthly investing partner to create year-round impact.

Together, We Create Impact

Your investment is more than a gift—it is a commitment to strengthening our community and creating opportunities for those we serve. Every act of generosity helps build a brighter future, and every partner plays an important role in making that vision a reality.

Thank you for investing in our mission and for being a valued partner. We look forward to celebrating with you on **October 15, 2026**.

Bethesda House Donors July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Friends up to $100

Assemblyman Tonko, Paul
Babin, Diane
Bair, Elaine
Bateman, Llyod
Bates, Lindsey
Batten, Nancy
Beaulieu, Mary Jane
Bebb, Shannon
Berk, Stephen
Bieganski, Peter
Bonczkowski, Michelle
Bouton, Susan
Bruno, Richard
Bubb, Ian &Susan
Buchbinder, Paul
Burns, Patrick
Capers, Audrey
Ciarmiello, Sue
Corrado, Mary
Cummings, Mary
Curtis, George
Darsinos, John
Del Vecchio, Andrea & Michael
DelVecchio, Elizabeth
Demasi, Michael
Dunn, Nick
Felice, Linda
Ferri, Thomas
Furman, David
Giokas, George
Greek Ladies Philoptochos Society
Griffin, Norman
Hankin, Sabrina
Hebert, Cliff
Hoel, Cathleen
Hotvet, Martin
Hughes, Amanda
Isabella, Mary
Jagdeo, Amit
Jorgensen, Robin
Kamm, Melissa
Kubek, Tracy
Long, William
Loth, Holly
Magid, Alvin
Maneri, Charles
Mann, Joanne & Richard
Marshall, Alan & Mary
Mason, Paul
Mauro, Dean
Maynard, Skylar
McCord, Carol & Jim
Mears, Damien
Miller, Robert
Nassau, Jamie
O'Sullivan, Lisa
Pawlick, Rachael
Pilczuk, April
Poppino, Kathryn & William
Rapoff, RaeLynn
Rattner, Robert
Roeser, Allison
Santucci, Michele
Schenectady Friends Meeting
Schultz, Ellen
Scicchitano, Gerald
Sheppard, David
Sheppard, Peter
Smith, Janice
Stecher, Thomas
Stees, Ray
Stern, Jean
Thatcher, Crystal
Tobiessen, Jon
Tobiessen, Peter
Valachovic, Dorothy
Viscusi, Adine
Ward, Anthony
Watrous, Margaret
Willis, Harry
Youker, Justin

Patron up to $999

Acchione, Thomas
American Online Giving Foundation
Baker, Jane
Barney, Pat & Keith
Bennett Contracting, Inc.
Benson, Jerry
Blatz, Gregory
Brown, Alvin
Carll, Danette
CDPHP
Chabot, Rachael
Christoffel, Thomas
Clynk
Connolly, Bruce
Cramer, Steven
Curley, Leanna
Curro, Stephen
Davitt, Timothy Daniel
Defilippo, Nancy
Demeo, Megan
Demo, Diane
Denisoff, Gail
Diebold, Alain
Dubois, Marilyn
Duesterdick, Paul
Duran, Enriquette
Dwyer, Susan
Egnor, Christian
Emmanuel Friedens Church
Eslick, Jennifer
Euriques, Silvia
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Feuerbach, James
First United Methodist Church
Foreman, Christina
Frank and Sons Body Works, Inc
Frank, Paul
Friends of Justin Chaires
Gerstler, William
Golub Family Foundation, Inc.
Grant, James
Hagerty, Jack
Hannaford
Howard, Darren
Jaquith, Rosemarie
Jewell, Andrew
Johnson, Phillip
Kannada Koota of Capital District Inc.
Katz, Miriam
Kautz, J
Kellas, Lois
Klapp, Kenneth
Knapp, Richard
Kreifels, Douglas
Lawlor, Brian
Lincourt, Patricia
Long, Robert
Lotano, Sharon
Lynch, Carol & Mike
Macaffer, Ann
Macneal, Ellen
Maillar, Ken
Marr, Johnathon
Marrano, James & Kristen
McCullough, Daniel
Merrill, Jeffery & Judith
Meyer, Dennis
Michaels, Robert
Morrison,Patricia
Morrow, Brenda
Nealon, Grace
Orsini, Stacy
Ostrelich, Michelle
Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish
Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church
Pagano, Stephen
Patterson, Kathleen
Repeat Business Systems
Rhatigan, Laetitia
Roach, Karen
Roecker, Dave & Lauren
Roeser, Randall
Rooney, Kathleen
Saint John Parish
Santilli, Paul
Sapone, John & Karen
Sasso, Julie
Schenectady Olde Timers Baseball Club
Schwartz, Regina
Sciocchetti, Linda & Michael
Sheppard, John
Sheppard, Kimarie
Smith, Ricky
Socha, Bernard
Taylor, Hassan
TFL Entertainment
The Blackbaud Giving Fund
Tonkin, Mark
United Way of the Greater Capital Region, Inc.
Upadhyay, Roberta
Vale Cemetery
Vivier, Barbara
Walther, Anita
Waselauskas, Paula
Weir, Candace & David
Wolf, George
Wright, Christopher

Citizen up to $3,999

Arrow Bank
Balasubramanian, Nadarajah
Berkshire Bank
Blackwood, Ralph & Nicholas, Nancy
Capitaland Motors, Inc.
Cirincione, Raphael
Citone Group Hospitality
Coker, Margaret
Dunkerley, Gary & Kathleen
Etienne, Mineke
Glindmyer, Lauren
Global Partners LP
Hershey Family Fund
Home Solutions Plus LLC
Innovative Computer Concepts, Inc.
Lynwood Reformed Church
MacAffer, John
Mausert, Richard & Kathy
McCormick, Kevin
Morgan Stanley
NYBDC Charitable Foundation
Reschovsky, John
Rivers Casino
Ryan, Sheila Estate
Seacord, John
Stroble, Terry & Anne Marie
Sweeney, Jim
Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady
Williams, Susan
Wood, Andrew & Anne

Advocate up tp $10,000

Baron, Andrew
Crossley, Margaret
Khan, Genghis & Nahla
Porter, Don & Lois
Raushi, Sylvia

Benefactor up to $50,000

Broadview Federal Credit Union
Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church
The Community Foundation
The Edward D. Cammarota Foundation Inc

Ambassador up to $100,000

Werner, Richard

Bethesda House is grateful to the individuals, congregations, businesses, and private foundations who donated from $1 to over $100,000. Your generosity allows us to continue helping others by providing for basic needs in an environment that encourages and supports positive change.

We thank you and look forward to another successful year. Every donor is important to us. Our goal is to list each person or organization as the donor wishes. If your name does not appear as you would like it to, please contact the our Administration office at either smaynard@ bethesdahs.org or (518) 374-7873, ext. 1223 so we may correct our records.

A very special Thank you to donors contributing through United Way, we are grateful that you chose to direct your donor dollars to Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc. Thank you to donors who participate in the GE Match. Thank you to donors who participate in Amazon Smiles, Clynk and other Hannaford fundraising initiatives. Your gifts of spirit and generosity are deeply appreciated.

In-Kind Donors

Alltown Fresh
Burnt Hills United Methodist Church
Cathy Terwilliger
CDPHP
Congregation of Agudat Achim
Eastern Parkway Methodist Church
First Reformed Church of Schenectady
Friendship Baptist Church
Hannaford
Immanuel Lutheran
John Sheppard
Ladies of Charity Schenectady Vicarate
Lane Press of Albany
Lynwood Reformed Church
Manhattan Bagel
Margaret Coker
Our Redeemer Lutheran
Panera
Price Chopper
Rivers Casino & Resort
Schenectady Ole Times Baseball Club
Schenectady Quilters
Sharran Coppola
St. George Episcopal Church
St. George's of Clifton Park
St. Joseph's Catholic Church
St. Kateri Tekakwitha
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Congregation Gates of Heaven
The Ladies Philotochos Society of St. George
Greek Orthodox Church

Honorarium/Memorial Name

Anne Christman
Mary Christoffel
Robert Christoffel
Marianne Sheppard
June Schermerhorn
Clarie Racicot
Barbara Koster
George Moffett
Mark Bonitatibus
Linda Jateau
Elaine Ognibene
Michael & Beverly Roscoe

Bethesda House
Is an interfaith ministry to the homeless, disabled and economically disadvantaged citizens of Schenectady County, building a just, hospitable and inclusive community one person at a time by affirming the dignity and addressing the needs of each guest entering this House of Mercy.

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Bethesda House

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Bowl for Bethesda Strikes Again!

Long before the first bowling ball rolled down the lane, something special was already happening.

People were hugging, catching up, and greeting one another like old friends. For many, Bowl for Bethesda has become an annual tradition—a night they mark on their calendars months in advance. Others were joining us for the first time, drawn in by the unmistakable sound of laughter...and the sight of someone wearing a bathrobe.

This year's theme, **The Big Lebowski**, inspired some creativity. White Russians were on the menu and tie-dyed team shirts filled the lanes. One participant arrived in blue flannel pajama pants, a fishing vest, bucket hat, and sunglasses, staying in character all evening.

But the crowd favorite was "The Dude" himself. Sporting a full Rivers-branded bathrobe, who earned **Best Costume** and took home two tickets to *The Outsiders* at Proctors. When the prize was announced, laughter erupted as more than one bowler confessed they would have stepped up their costume game if they'd known what was at stake.

The bowling itself was just as memorable.

Teams from Rivers, Tech Solutions, community congregations, and many other supporters filled the lanes. Children celebrated every pin they knocked down, adults cheered one another on, and gutter balls were met with as much laughter as strikes. Winning was never the point. Being together was.

One of the evening's most unexpected moments came from a group of college students who had simply come to bowl. Curious about the energy in the room, they wandered over to ask what was going on. Before the night was over, they had purchased event T-shirts and were already talking about how they might involve their school in supporting Bethesda House.

That's what makes Bowl for Bethesda so special.

It's more than a fundraiser. It's a community coming together around a shared purpose. Longtime supporters reconnect. New friends discover our mission. Every conversation, every laugh, and every frame helps strengthen the network of people who believe everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

This year's event welcomed more teams, more participants, and raised more support than last year. Most importantly, it reminded us that when our community comes together—even over bowling shoes, bathrobes, and a few gutter balls—extraordinary things happen.

To everyone who bowled, sponsored, volunteered, donated, or simply cheered from the sidelines: thank you. We can't wait to see you on the lanes next year.