EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S LETTER

As a new year arrives, we continue to be a catalyst and leader for change as we empower individuals and families to forge a path to self-sufficiency. We are embarking on a new way to create impact in Southwest Baltimore by the creation of our Culinary Arts Training Program. This program will have a profound impact on 60 youthful graduates yearly, offering a tremendous return on investment and hope. This initiative advances our vision — that individuals and families living in the neighborhoods of Southwest Baltimore will have full access to high quality health care, education, employment, and housing, and the support necessary to live stable and self-sufficient lives. We thank all of those who have helped us get to this point, and we look forward to welcoming our first class in January 2021.

Willim J. McLennan, Executive Director

TAHIR’S JOURNEY

It’s 8am Monday morning, and the doors open at Paul’s Place for guests seeking assistance from case managers at guest engagement or to pick up an emergency food box.

Depending on the day you’ll run into Tahir, a frequent guest. With a ready smile, he will ask how your day is going, talk about sports that were on the previous night, or share ideas he has for programs at Paul’s Place.

Tahir has been working with case managers Ellen and Travis since April 2019 to secure disability benefits and a permanent home, as he has been experiencing homelessness for some time.

Tahir’s journey to Paul’s Place begins in South Carolina, where his grandparents raised him on a farm. At a young age, Tahir’s grandparents passed away and he was placed in the foster care system. By the end of elementary school, he had attended 14 different schools.

He eventually moved to Washington D.C where he discovered a love of the arts and, through a mentor, got his first job at the age of 12 working at the Carter Barron Amphitheatre. At 13 he was taking classes at Georgetown University. As he got older, he had the opportunity to work at the Smithsonian and help create different works of art throughout Washington D.C.

Tahir’s varied passions and interests are evident even after a few short minutes of talking with him. As the description of his life unfolds, his move from working in the arts to working on his license in Phlebotomy makes sense. Tahir explains that none of us knows when we might get sick, when our whole world might come to a standstill. Tahir was diagnosed with a blood disease. Needing special treatment, he uprooted his life and moved to Baltimore in order to receive medical care at Johns Hopkins.

Tahir found Paul’s Place through a friend. And through Paul’s Place, he found a hot lunch, gently used clothing, and a place to get help. “Paul’s Place was dignified and cared for you. I could really tell they liked helping people.” Tahir has become part of the Paul’s Place community, offering a smile to those around him and lending his voice to Rising Voices, the choir group that meets at Paul’s Place every Monday.

Before the holidays, Tahir received news that he could move into an apartment. Through the support he received from Ellen and Travis, and his own determination and perseverance, he is looking forward to continuing his journey back to full health under a roof he can call his own.
For 37 years, we have had the honor and privilege to count Graul’s Market as friends of Paul’s Place. Their gifts of time and resources have benefited countless Southwest Baltimore residents. Their unwavering and continued support of the families who enter our doors every day is nothing short of remarkable. Once again this year, per their tradition, Mr. and Mrs. Graul served lunch on the day after Thanksgiving and generously donated turkeys and chickens for 150 families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. We are grateful for their dedication to our community.