



**Beacon Hill Community Fund  
Report and Testimonial  
2021**

On behalf of everyone at Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP), please accept our heartfelt gratitude for the Beacon Hill Community Fund's generous grant of \$2,500 supporting our Respite Food Program. The generosity of the Beacon Hill Community Fund has allowed BHCHP to respond to a basic yet critical need for over 1,200 medically vulnerable people experiencing homelessness: the need for a consistent source of healthy food. As our medical patients endure a broad range of medical conditions—from COVID-19 diagnoses, to recovery from surgeries, to difficult treatments like chemotherapy and radiation—the support of the Beacon Hill Community Fund has ensured that they have the nutritious meals needed to stabilize their health and regain their strength. Over the past year, with support from people like you, BHCHP's Respite Food Program has prepared and served over 130,000 wholesome meals to some of our most vulnerable and medically complex patients.

Within our 104-bed Barbara McInnis House and 20-bed Stacy Kirkpatrick House, BHCHP provides round-the-clock medical respite program to people who have no safe place to go when they are too sick to be in shelters or on the street, but do not require a costly inpatient hospital stay. Patients are admitted for medical respite care from a variety of sources, including inpatient wards and emergency rooms at area hospitals when patients have no safe discharge plan and BHCHP's shelter-based clinics when they identify a patient at risk. Our medical respite program is a particularly crucial resource for our Street Team, who care for "rough sleepers"—those who live and sleep on the street. The patients served by our Street Team are an especially high risk population as they face the extremes of weather conditions, exposure of trauma and violence, and often have multiple co-occurring mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and chronic and acute medical needs. Barbara McInnis House and Stacy Kirkpatrick House offer a trusted and often lifesaving refuge for patients served by this team, offering continuity of care and a place to heal away from the threats they face each day.

With support from the Beacon Hill Community Fund, the Respite Food Program has played an integral role in the unique dimension of care offered at Barbara McInnis House and Stacy Kirkpatrick House. As patients receive medical, nursing, and behavioral health care through our skilled respite teams, the Respite Food Program provides three balanced meals each day, along with nutritional supplements when needed, to promote our patients' healing. These meals are often tailored in coordination with our respite teams, particularly for patients with special dietary needs, such as providing protein shakes for patients who struggle to maintain a healthy weight or pureed food options for patients undergoing treatments for head and neck cancers. These meals are critical to the care provided within our medical respite program, and it is through the generosity of supporters like the Beacon Hill Community Fund that BHCHP is able to use healthy ingredients in their preparation, avoiding unhealthy low-cost options that are high in fat, sodium, and carbohydrates and would negatively impact our patients' health.

The impact of your support can best be conveyed through the lives of the people we serve. We at BHCHP first met Darryl 15 years ago when he was in need of care for a torn ligament in his knee. "The care here was truly wonderful," he says now. "I had never received care here before, so I wasn't sure what to expect, but when I got here, I was made to feel comfortable and welcome."

Last year, Darryl was diagnosed with prostate cancer and was admitted to BHCHP's Stacy Kirkpatrick House, where he could receive the care, support, and consistent source of nutrition he needed to maintain his strength during difficult cancer treatments. During his cancer treatments, he noted that he would often hear a bell ring. "I wondered what was up with the bell," he said, "so one day, I asked." The bell, it turns out, signifies someone's last cancer treatment. With encouragement from his clinicians, Darryl was determined to ring the bell. More recently, Darryl's cancer was complicated when he was diagnosed with COVID-19 and needed to be hospitalized.

After his discharge from the hospital, Darryl came to our Barbara McInnis House COVID-19 ward and was under the care of Dr. Dave Munson. Once fully recovered from COVID-19, he returned to his room at our Stacy Kirkpatrick House to resume his cancer treatments. "COVID is very scary," he says, "A lot of people were very, very sick. But the doctors and nurses care very much."

Through all of these health challenges, Darryl was so grateful and remained optimistic. "Darryl has shown a great deal of perseverance this year, having had to contend with a number of acute medical conditions as well as the loss of an important family member," says Carolyn Abbanat, NP, the Site Director at our Stacy Kirkpatrick House, "Despite all of this he remains kind, quick to smile, and a support for those around him. He's a pleasure to have as a patient and frequently brings positivity to the environment."

Recently, after Darryl completed his final cancer treatment... "I rang that bell," he said with a smile.

From the staff and patients at BHCHP, thank you for the difference you have made in the lives of our patients and the dedicated teams who care for them.