



FROM WRECKAGE TO HOPE





FROM WRECKAGE TO HOPE, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

For men and women who walk through our doors, it means the chance at a new life after they've hit rock bottom. For the building we now call home, it means transforming an abandoned manufacturing facility into a place of healing and possibility. For our community, it means repairing the damage caused by housing shortages and epidemic substance misuse.

For 33 years, we've built bridges between crisis and stability. We listened, we partnered, and we became experts. We grew to provide essential services where none existed—recovery services, household items, case management, and workforce development.

At the CARITAS Center, we are proud to serve our community and continue to build a brighter future together in a world-class building that exudes dignity, hope, and pride.





TRANSFORM

A Richmond native, Bonnie is an alumna of The Healing Place program in Louisville, KY. She shares her story from wreckage to hope:

"One day, I had this addiction that was so horrifying. Money ran out, I couldn't keep a job, and I went to the streets. I started doing things that were so beneath me and then ended up in jail."

Bonnie tried short-term recovery programs, but nothing ever stuck.

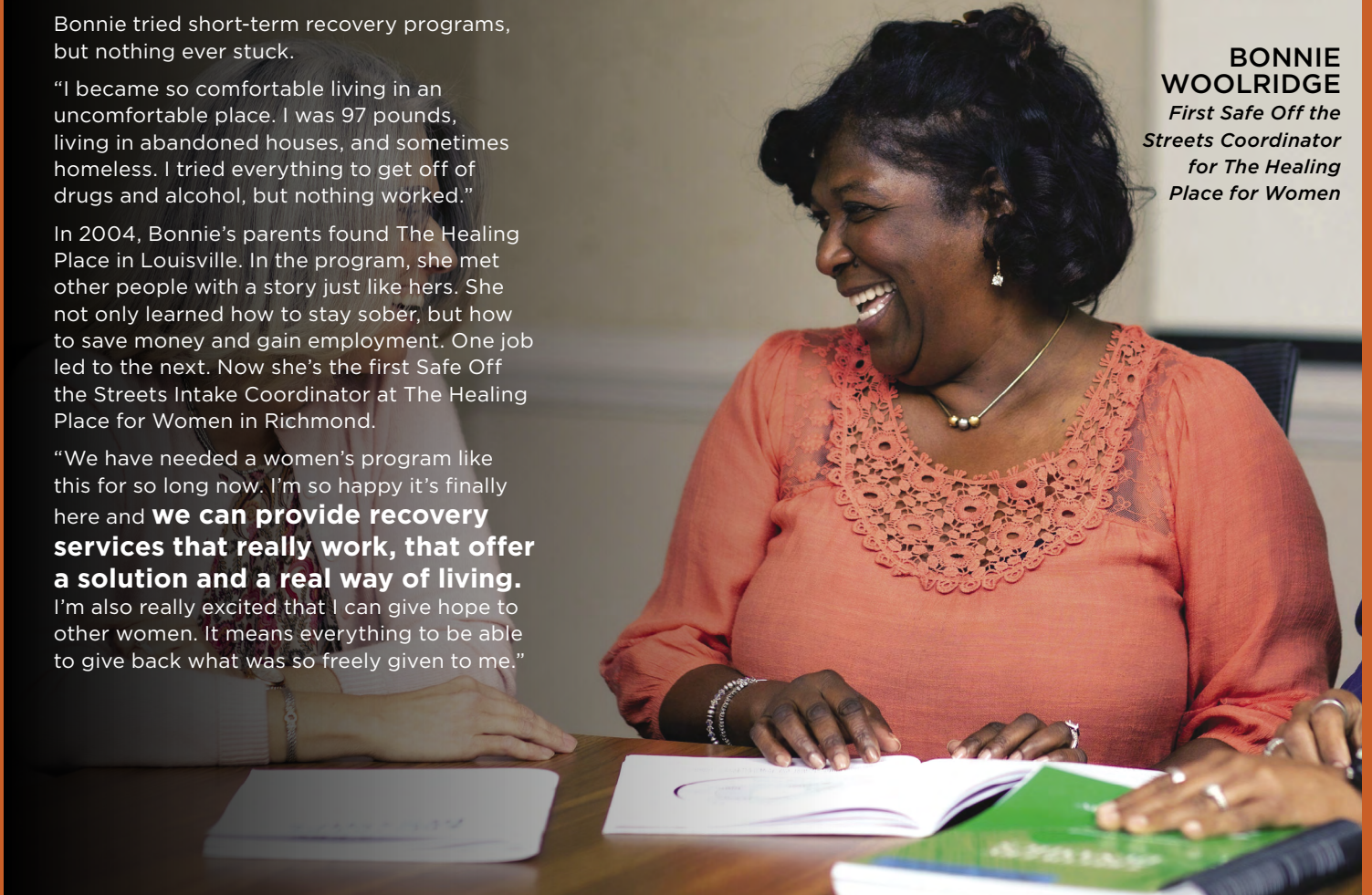
"I became so comfortable living in an uncomfortable place. I was 97 pounds, living in abandoned houses, and sometimes homeless. I tried everything to get off of drugs and alcohol, but nothing worked."

In 2004, Bonnie's parents found The Healing Place in Louisville. In the program, she met other people with a story just like hers. She not only learned how to stay sober, but how to save money and gain employment. One job led to the next. Now she's the first Safe Off the Streets Intake Coordinator at The Healing Place for Women in Richmond.

"We have needed a women's program like this for so long now. I'm so happy it's finally here and **we can provide recovery services that really work, that offer a solution and a real way of living.**

I'm also really excited that I can give hope to other women. It means everything to be able to give back what was so freely given to me."

BONNIE WOOLRIDGE
First Safe Off the Streets Coordinator for The Healing Place for Women



NEARLY 70% of our alumni are sober after one year of completing the program.



UPLIFT

From the moment a donation is received to the moment it lands in the home of one of our neighbors in need, there is an intricate web of logistics that occur at CARITAS. Every day, trucks are fueled with gas, dishes are sorted, partner agencies refer clients, and the showroom is restocked. Behind the scenes is Michael Gordon.

"My father served in the military for 30 years. Eventually, we moved to Tidewater into an area full of poverty, drugs, and crime. I began to make bad decisions and use drugs during my late teens, catching my first drug charge in 1990. It woke me up. I went back to school, did well, and got a job. Tragically a fire destroyed our home and my family lost everything. I struggled and returned to the drug scene. That led to two more drug charges and a 15-year sentence. I served two and a half years and came home to take care of my daughter and son. Finding a job without a high school diploma or GED was hard—my first paycheck was \$122. Drugs became an escape.

I was shot in 1999 and had to learn how to walk and talk again, but I still couldn't beat my addiction. In 2008, I bumped into an old friend who looked really good. He had been to The Healing Place in Richmond. He told me I could get the same help and it was free. He drove me there... and the program worked.

After I completed the recovery program, I worked at another nonprofit for two years. A CARITAS Furniture Bank position opened in 2012 and I got the job. **I've grown professionally and personally for the last nine years, and every day I get to live in recovery and help people in need."**



MICHAEL GORDON
Furniture Bank
Coordinator

MORE THAN 1,000 adults and children receive essential furniture and household items each year.



SUPPORT

CARITAS began through the generosity and vision of volunteers who wanted to make a difference. As we've grown and evolved, we still work closely with community members. One volunteer has dedicated hundreds of hours toward this vision: Richard "Dick" Upton.

"As I was winding down my business career, I began looking for a civic-focused initiative where my personal and professional background might help make a difference with an organization and its cause. Hopefully, a cause that was not only important but critical to our community and beyond.

For me, the *cause* was addressing the crisis of homelessness and addiction. The *organization* was CARITAS... **I had never experienced a non-profit executive leadership team that was as successful, entrepreneurial, and visionary as that of the CARITAS management team.** I was impressed by the independence and flexibility with which the organization was able to operate due to its predominantly private-sector funding.

With the vision of the CARITAS Center becoming reality, I became increasingly intrigued by the idea of visually documenting the entire 'recovery' process of the complex and the analogy that exists between it and the addiction recovery process itself."

Dick has chronicled the demolition, construction, and opening of the CARITAS Center. His photographs are on display at the CARITAS Center, in this Impact Report, and on our website. They poignantly demonstrate the theme "*From Wreckage to Hope.*"

**RICHARD
"DICK"
UPTON**
CARITAS
Board Member
+ Volunteer



Every single day, there are **more than 75** volunteer opportunities at CARITAS. Your unique gifts can make a difference.



CONNECT

CARITAS applies 30 years of experience and expertise to develop and evolve programs that fill vital gaps in our community. With effective programming, impactful volunteering, and efficient partnerships, we make every dollar go further. It takes faith and generosity from donors like Dan and Brenda Walker. Their gift helped make *The William M. Walker Healing Place for Women* a reality.

"I was drawn to help because I was familiar with the issues of both alcohol and drug addiction, as I have a family history of both. I am sympathetic to those who have struggled with the disease and want to help those that need help. I was invited to join the board of The Healing Place in January 2008. When The Healing Place and CARITAS merged in 2012, I joined the finance committee. I finished out my board tenure a year later. I have remained a financial supporter of CARITAS ever since along with my wife Brenda."

After her first tour of the Center, Brenda said, "It was clear that every aspect of design was created with attention to detail, coordinated with a vast variety of needs and considerations in mind, and tailored to the needs of the residents, staff and volunteers... We are grateful to be a part of this transformative project which coordinated so many service providers, community resources, staff and volunteers in serving residents on their healing journey."

Together, Dan and Brenda believe in the power of CARITAS to impact the community in many positive ways.

"CARITAS fulfills a very important need in our community in many respects," says Dan. "I appreciate that the primary focus of the organization is to help people get back on their feet and lead productive lives."

The William M. Walker Healing Place for Women is named after Dan's father.



**DAN AND
BRENDA
WALKER**
CARITAS Center
Campaign Donors

The **120-bed** Healing Place for Women fills a long standing void for comprehensive recovery services for women.



DIGNITY

MEET THE CARITAS RECOVERY RESIDENCES

Transition is a vital part of successful long-term recovery. It is the final stepping stone on the journey from wreckage to hope. Living with others in recovery is proven to increase rates of sobriety. We have seen evidence of this as we've worked with more than 9,500 men at The Healing Place. At our newest program, the CARITAS Recovery Residences, we invite men and women at any point during their personal recovery journey to live in one of our safe and affordable apartments.

Congregations and volunteers helped outfit every apartment with essentials so each resident lives in a space of dignity with a sense of pride. Our residents save money, foster independence, and make plans for brighter futures. Our team connects them to resources that enhance their support networks, open doors for employment opportunities, increase self-awareness, and inspire self-esteem.

While the CARITAS Recovery Residences are not the final destination during a person's recovery journey, we know continued connection is vital.

