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## Newsletter Fall 2022

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## A Mother's Journey

Youth who experience trauma, including abuse or neglect, are at increased risk for long-term emotional, behavioral, and physical health problems, among other challenges. Sherry Williams, a mother and survivor, knows trauma all too well – but despite growing up in foster care, experiencing homelessness, managing addiction, and overcoming physical, mental, and emotional abuse from a young age, Sherry stands tall today as a woman rebuilt on hope.



Growing up, Sherry's mother had a substance use disorder, which forced Sherry and her siblings to grow up in group homes and foster care. As the youngest child in her family, Sherry's sense of purpose faltered as her sisters and brothers started to age out of their foster homes. At seventeen, the years of neglect became too much, and Sherry began using drugs and later became pregnant with her first child. Not long after giving birth, Sherry found herself in and out of jail. "It took a while; I went to jail 5 to 6 times ... before I realized I was worth something," says Sherry.

In 1988, Sherry found herself picking up the pieces of her life and searching for help – that's when she first met Community of Hope. Laura Worby, then a nurse practitioner on our health team, began making home visits to provide whole-person care to Sherry and her children—one of the most empowering chapters of her life. "I couldn't even go to the dentist because of so many sexual assaults; I couldn't have them work on my mouth because I have been through so much," says Sherry. "Laura and Community of Hope taught me so much. After finding Community of Hope, my life began to change and is still changing."

*(Sherry's story continues on page 2)*



### You can bring holiday cheer to families!

Each year, our donors give gift cards to people experiencing homelessness. The cards provide our clients with the power of choice during the holiday season – helping them choose a holiday meal or gifts for their family. We believe choice is critical to helping our clients get back on their feet.

Our goal is to raise \$62,000 in funds and gift cards to provide \$50 to every individual person and \$75 to every family – and a much needed increase due to inflation.

You can donate online at [communityofhopedc.org/holidaycheer](https://communityofhopedc.org/holidaycheer), can mail a check payable to Community of Hope indicating "Holiday Cheer", can donate \$50 or \$75 Target gift cards.

**Household goods are urgently needed** for new residents of our housing programs. Please visit [www.communityofhopedc.org/wishlist](https://www.communityofhopedc.org/wishlist) to easily choose and send helpful items.

Also, don't forget to choose Community of Hope as your selected AmazonSmile charity, which sends a portion of your purchases to assist our work!



### Board of Directors

Kimberly Woods, Chair	Kessia Cruz
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Kelly Sweeney McShane, President and CEO

## From The Desk of Kelly Sweeney McShane



Dear Friends,

I am astounded at what we are achieving together. Whether you have donated financially, attended an event, volunteered at our family shelter, mentored a child, or donated school supplies, children's books, household goods, or baby supplies—you are part of our bold vision to address inequities in DC.

Together, we are working to eliminate inequities in health outcomes. I am pleased to share that in August, we learned that we were in the top 25% of health centers nationwide, based off our 2021 outcomes, for helping patients control hypertension and blood pressure, and for screening for various cancers. We are doing more to continue to improve outcomes with several innovations described here.

We are also working to end family homelessness together. Already this year, we are seeing an increase in the number of families served while also seeing 96% of families not entering shelter and getting families into their own housing in less than 90 days. We ensure that moms like Sherry have the tools to stay stable housed.

Through all of this, we are integrating our core services together by innovating and partnering to better support DC residents – especially pregnant people experiencing homelessness. And yet there is more work than ever still to do. Life expectancy for Black people in DC is still shorter on average than for white people. Inflation is impacting everyone, and we are worried about future evictions. In the midst of this, we see hope—because together we are innovating and making an impact.

Thank you for sticking with us,

*Kelly*

Kelly Sweeney McShane  
President and CEO

If you do not wish to receive this publication in the future, please email [development@cohdc.org](mailto:development@cohdc.org) or call 202.407.7747.



## Hope Happenings

### Pharmacy Now Open

Our expanded and relocated Family Health and Birth Center is now home to a new service – a pharmacy available to all our patients regardless of their medical home. The onsite pharmacy provides same-day pickup and free delivery. We are collaborating with programs to help patients get their medications at a more affordable price. And our pharmacist, Damon Gilliam, loves his role connecting with patients, consulting on their prescriptions, and providing the highest level of care to create a healthier community.



### Family Success Center's 2-Year Anniversary

In the past two years, our Bellevue Family Success Center has enrolled 500+ families and residents in community resource navigation since opening. We celebrated with a party honoring our dedicated Community Advisory Council, a group of Bellevue residents who inform our programs and approach. Our team connects residents within our health and housing teams and to other government or nonprofit partners—addressing food, housing, employment, and health needs. The Drop-In Center is located on the first floor of the Conway Health and Resource Center and offers low-barrier services to anyone who walks in the door. We honor the resilience of our participants by giving them tools to solve the challenges they face.



### Birthing Justice Documentary

Lights, camera, action! Community of Hope's maternal and infant health work are prominently featured in the newly released Birthing Justice documentary. The film goes behind the statistics and beyond the grief to amplify how Black women are taking control of their lives and transforming the birth experience to one of resilience and joy. Our Director of Midwifery, Ebony Marcelle, and Director of Maternal Child Health, Abayea Pelt, are featured throughout the film sharing their personal and professional perspectives on how to better Black maternal health outcomes. Thank you to the Birthing Justice team for including us. We will be hosting a screening of the documentary. Email [development@cohdc.org](mailto:development@cohdc.org) to be invited to our upcoming screening party.



### ...Continued from front: A Mother's Journey

Sherry came a long way from the childhood that left her traumatized, but her journey of restoration was not over. In 2011, due to unfortunate circumstances, Sherry and her 5 kids lost their housing, but Community of Hope was able to provide permanent supportive housing. "Permanent supportive housing supported me with everything I needed," says Sherry. "Community of Hope has helped me, and my children grow. Two of my children are now in hair academy."

In recent years, with the help of Community of Hope, Sherry has dramatically improved her health. Through Community of Hope's health education and quality care, Sherry has adopted a healthier lifestyle and is no longer required to take insulin shots for her diabetes.

Today, Sherry is completing her education to become an addiction counselor and doing better than ever. Her gratitude for the support she has received from Community of Hope has motivated her to pay it forward. "I want to become an addiction counselor because I want to help someone, someone who has been through what I've been through. I want to give back, and now I believe I can do that," says Sherry. "I want the people who helped me to know they saved my life and my children's lives. I am grateful."

**"I want to give back, and now I believe I can do that."**

## Celebrating Togetherness at Night of Hope

Community of Hope celebrated clients, volunteers, sponsors, and donors at our annual Night of Hope. This year's theme of Together Again rang true throughout the evening as party attendees embraced and rejoiced at being back in person for the first time since 2019. We wholeheartedly appreciate the outpouring of support at our 2022 Night of Hope reception and the leadership of our 2022 Host Committee led by co-chairs, Ray and Jen Martz and Lisa and David Madden. The program, led by Jenn White of NPR and WAMU's 1A show, featured the brave story of Sherry Williams which is also featured here, and an inspiring speech about our vision and impact led by Kelly Sweeney McShane, President, and CEO. Thank you to all who celebrated with us and helped raise \$420,000+ to increase access to quality healthcare and end family homelessness to make Washington, DC more equitable. We are already looking forward to next year's Night of Hope, and we hope to see you there!



Kelly poses with board member Catherine Buell and KellyAnn Kirkpatrick of sponsor Amazon Housing Equity Fund.



Enthusiastic donors give generously - Marcia Jackson-Hooper, Rose Alford, Violet Parker, and Annabelle Lockhart lead the way.



Philanthropic leaders, Lori Jackson and Julia Baer-Cooper, pause for a friendly Washington Monument moment.



Co-Chairs Ray and Jen Martz pose with Jenn White and the Pebblebrook Hotel Trust team.

### Thank you to our event's sponsors!

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## 2022 Tom Nees Award for Exceptional Service Recipient

The 2022 Tom Nees Award for Exceptional Service honors Caty Poulin for her 16 years of visionary partnership. Caty first walked through the doors of Community of Hope in 2006 as we opened our first Ward 8 location. Over the years, she has been a committed friend, thoughtful advisor, and inspirational leader as Community of Hope has grown from then two locations to now 8 properties and expanded services throughout DC.

Caty has served as a board member for Community of Hope as well as board Chair and Treasurer. Between rotations on the board, she has stayed involved as a finance committee member. Since 2019, she has served as Board Chair for Bladensburg Road Health Partners, a sister organization supporting the new Family Health and Birth Center. Caty has brought both a mastery of finances as well as a deeply caring heart to all of our decisions and initiatives.

As a mom to two young men, Caty is passionate about supporting young families with children in Washington, DC. Her vision to expand access to emotional wellness, homelessness prevention, maternal and infant health services have made a deep impact at Community of Hope. When she rolls up to the center with boxes of books, our team gets excited at stories that our children will enjoy.

Outside of Community of Hope, Caty is a food access advocate, band mom, wife, adjunct business professor, and nonprofit consultant. Her husband, Robert, has been a passionate supporter and her sons have enjoyed their volunteer opportunities – collecting books and preparing backpacks and school supplies. Thank you, Caty, for your advice, friendship, generosity, and commitment for many years. We look forward to continuing to partner together to advance our shared mission of making Washington, DC more equitable.

This award – given in memory of our founder, Tom Nees – recognizes its recipient for their long-standing, and impactful service to the women, men, and children who turn to Community of Hope for help.

