

Breaking the cycle of homelessness, one woman at a time.

# HYACINTH'S PLACE

ANNUAL REPORT





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# From the Desk of the *Chief Executive Officer*

## GREETINGS!

A new year has dawned and we are thankful for all the support that arrived in many forms- gifts, pro-bono services, financial donations, and well wishes that have kept our non-profit alive to serve another year.

We branded year 2021 "Pseudo Post COVID19". It was a year we commenced wearing masks, then we unmasked mid-year, and then we masked again to conclude the year. "COVID," the game changer, challenged us to go beyond our capabilities and limitations—much more than we could imagine. It was a year when the generosity of others allowed us to take our women virtual—fostering connections and bonding with peers to receive essential support services.

Year 2022 promises to be another step forward in reaching our strategic goal toward financial sustainability. We anticipate receiving new funding to construct an additional affordable housing unit. Over the past five years, management, the Board of Directors, and a Development team have worked diligently towards responding to the District government's call for affordable housing. It is our hope and plan to address this critical need through secure and comfortable housing with support services; targeting homeless seniors, veterans, and those diagnosed with a mental illness.

My sincere gratitude to all of you who have championed the needs of the homeless, the mentally ill, and the underserved. Your generous financial and in-kind contributions have afforded us the opportunity to make a difference in so many lives.

We look forward to your continued partnership as we journey in the New Year!

Sincerely,

*Urla Barrow*



**URLA BARROW**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# From the Desk of the *President*

## DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS,

The year 2021 was another challenging year for Hyacinths Place (HP), intensified with the unforeseen arrival of and consequences from COVID-19. Fortunately, throughout this period, staff, volunteers, and the Board of Directors remained committed to ensuring its survival and increasing capabilities to serve homeless women with a mental health diagnosis. Many Board members gave their time, finances, and energy, unstintingly.

My journey and continued involvement with HP are inspired by the commitment of the CEO, staff, and other long-term Board members. As one of the founding members of the Board, I am particularly motivated to support HP's work of personal development and providing stability for the women. It is a humbling experience.

Homelessness is a such a key issue in the District of Columbia that no vacancies should exist at Hyacinth's Place for any period of time. However, we still face responsive and subsidy challenges with governmental agencies, with whom we partner. In addition, like most small non-profits, ongoing financial support from donors is still needed. Year 2022 promises challenges of another nature, as we hope to begin the construction of a new, additional 70-unit affordable housing project for homeless seniors in Ward 8.

Thank you! I deeply appreciate the generosity of our grant funders, donors, the Board of Directors fundraising committee, pro-bono partners, and all those who have supported us throughout this year. I look forward to your continued partnership in this critical service and conclude with the encouraging words of Samora Machel, the first president of independent Mozambique, "A luta continua, victoria ascerta" (The struggle continues; victory is certain).

Sincerely,

*Osei-Bryson*



# Ten Years of Service

## The Passage of Time

On November 21st 2011, we quietly opened our doors. No ribbon cutting...no fanfare...We were seven years late. The community had a serious case of "not in my backyard" syndrome. The genius of our Developers finally figured it out. We returned to the architectural drawing board, turn the front of the building to the alley and the back of the building to the street, spent an extra \$85,000, to avoid the need for a "curb cut"...and wow.. We got a building permit, and one year later, we very quietly opened our doors...

Fast forward ten years...the alley to which we opened our "front gate", previously strewn with litter, high grass, drug runners with police in chase is totally transformed. Expensive high-priced buildings with spiraling stairs and "penthouse" like balconies .... Believe it or not...the ally is now being transformed to paved roads...of course, this is

Washington DC where every piece of real estate is worth nuggets. Our women can now sit on the balcony and enjoy beautiful serene sunsets...the passage of time has brought transformation.

Knowing our journey, being aware of the work we did over the past ten years, the contribution of our women to their new neighborhood ....has assured me, we were a catalyst for this change. This irony was not lost on me when months ago, I attended a community meeting in another impoverished neighborhood of the District where we propose a similar project. The chorus echoed at each of the six meetings to introduce this project..."Why do you have to bring those people to our neighborhood?" ... I know it will not take ten years this time to witness the transformation. Our work and our experience will speak for itself much sooner.



2011



2021



"The contribution of our women to their new neighborhood has assured me, we were a catalyst for this change."

# Covid at Hyacinth's Place

## Challenges & Changes



What remains as clear as any vision, is the mark of COVID 19 on this organization. There are laminated signs on every wall on every floor... "wear a mask in this area"... Tables bear tall bottles of hand sanitizer... There is a wall mounted thermometer as you enter the building.....this was different.

We usually decorate our walls with beautiful paintings/pictures...not laminated signs. Our tables are for vases of colorful flowers not bottles of hand sanitizers. As much as COVID changed our décor, it kept the women of Hyacinth's Place physically safe and out of the hospital. None of our women were affected physically by this disease.

Unforeseen and unforgettable are the mental health repercussions of COVID 19 on the mentally ill. Our women's individual struggle for emotional stability, without notice was thrown in a tailspin. Fear,

misinformation and drastic change steered them into unfamiliar terrain. All they were told would help their healing process was no longer true... "You must insulate...you cannot use public transportation... people are dying all over the world....."

During this pandemic, we realized that our residents' need for the reassurances and support of their peer groups, was at an all-time high. Our only option was to take our women virtual. An appeal to our donors and through the kindness of volunteers, we began the process of connecting with others virtually.

As vaccinations were introduced and restrictions relaxed, the lessons learnt by this organization from the pandemic were profound. We saw the fragility of the human spirit, the unwavering kindness and generosity of others and the resilience of our women when faced with adversity but offered the appropriate support.

# Hyacinth's Women

## Giving Thanks



### GIVING BACK TO THE HOMELESS AT THANKSGIVING

The aroma left the kitchen, permeated the entire lower level, and was distinct in the elevator. The chatter among the women in the dining area adjoining the kitchen was happy bantering. It was going on all day. The faces changed but everybody was doing something. Onions were being chopped over there, potatoes were being peeled across that table, and napkins were being folded by a group across the way. All hands were on deck. Everybody had a role to play. Some prepared the ingredients, others cooked, some were assigned the task to share and pack. It was thanksgiving eve and the ladies had planned this dinner for some time. They were preparing a special thanksgiving dinner to feed the homeless under the bridges and those who camped out at Union station in DC.

Just as the turkey was being checked, somebody realized the food trays for each meal which were orders a week ago had not arrived. Staff will have to make the dreaded "wait in line" trip to a nearby food warehouse on thanksgiving eve. Maria and Anna were identified to travel with the meals since we needed as much space as possible in the car for the thirty (30) plus packages. While the ladies provided directions through the very

heavy DC traffic, we chatted excitedly as to where the idea originated. Anna who arrived at Hyacinth's Place early in the summer was now working and spoke about how "incredibly lucky" she felt to have a wonderful home, a job and friends this thanksgiving. She had donated most of her paycheck for this project because "she knew exactly what it was like to be out in the cold and to be homeless at thanksgiving".

There was no parking so the women unloaded and staff drove around the block. Maria was crying when she returned to the car. She told the story of a mother and her two daughters in a tent outside of Union Station. The woman could not stop thanking her for the meal. The mother turned to her daughter and said "See, I told you God would provide." That evening, as the ladies sat in the common area, Maria and Anna relived their experience in details and without hesitation, they started sharing their various thanksgiving experiences as "former homeless women"..... a moment of clarity and a moment of thanksgiving.



# Another Step Forward

## HYACINTH'S WAY Senior Housing

### Shifting the focus on our future and affordable housing

In spite of positive ongoing efforts to meet the District of Columbia's demand for permanent supportive housing, there still remains an inadequate supply of such units. This is especially true for low-income seniors with a mental health diagnosis. For those seniors who are low- and very-low income (50% & 30% AMI), the options are even fewer. We aim to change that situation.

Hyacinth's Way (HW) is a proposed residential property of the Institute of Urban Living. This seventy (70) one bedroom/efficiency mix of affordable housing for over 55 yrs old will target those who are homeless/at risk for homelessness and who are in need of mental health and other support services. This proposed project will produce a number of critical benefits to the District of Columbia. It will help to alleviate affordable housing needs for seniors with a mental health diagnosis; it will provide sorely needed permanent supportive housing services, create a near net-zero energy, multi-family building and produce an age-in-place housing design.

Located in Ward 8 south east, Washington DC. (Anacostia neighborhood). The complex will be designed according to the principles of green affordable housing and will provide clinical, including mental health, social services and recreation programming. Hyacinth's Way "green building" will offer residents solar heating, 24 hr. security, on-site laundry facilities and both indoor/outdoor garden equipped for relaxation. Residents will have an annual lease, access to public transportation and other neighborhood necessities.

Services will be tailored to address tenants' needs, which may involve multiple service agencies including volunteers working together. Apart from a property manager an administration, staff on site will include those drawn from social work/psychological disciplines. In addition to indoor and outdoor cameras, the organization will contract with a security firm for indoor and outdoor purposes. The organization proposes to work with the available resources offered by the DC Government for support services for this population.



# Virtual Therapy

## Health & Wellness

Where do you go when you can no longer sit in a group with your peers and discuss your problems? What do you do when you can no longer use public transportation to reach vital services? What happens when your health and wellness is jeopardized because your Providers must remain under “lock down”? You go virtual. This whole new world was a different experience for the women of Hyacinth’s Place over the past year of COVID recovery.

The mentally ill are not among those who can wait for “things to return to normal”. Support services in the form of individual and group therapy is an essential part of what is necessary for our women to function and continue to live a life of quality. A volunteer answered our call to lead the women of Hyacinth’s Place through virtual

services as they addressed their struggles for therapeutic services. With the assistance of videos and discussions offered by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) our women were able to continue receiving the support they needed to facilitate their emotional health and wellness.

Mental health services are slowly returning to the Community Mental Health Service Agencies. However, this new virtual path introduced to our residents continue to resonate well. Many of our women now request and follow NAMI and other virtual services previously unknown to them. Information on Health and wellness has taken a new path and is readily available through this virtual world.



“CHANGE IS NEVER EASY, BUT IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE”

—Barack Obama

# Making a Difference

## Anne’s Story



I am a twin. My brother lives in Baltimore and I have two sisters. Both my sisters work for the federal government. My mother worked at a hospital and my father passed away when I was 18 years old. We were raised in a big white house in Southeast DC. I also had three children taken away from me by the system. I have a 29-year-old daughter who is a registered nurse living out West with her military husband. And I have a son employed at the Post Office.

I had to be very grown-up when my younger sister was born because I had to take care of her. My mom had to work and couldn’t afford a babysitter. Life was simple back then. Clothing wasn’t expensive, nor was rent, but food cost a lot. We were not rich, but we lived in a neighborhood where everybody knew each other, looked out for each other and helped each other. Everybody went to work.

At the age of 15, I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and severe mood swings. I did not finish school. I tried to build a home with men that I thought loved me, however, my relationships failed. When I took my medication, I managed to stay very stable, however, when I didn’t there was a lot of abuse. I turned to alcohol and for years I stayed in relationships that were abusive but there was always a lot of alcohol. I found and lost jobs--I kept and lost homes.

I was ashamed of who I had become and stayed away from my family because I did not want them to know what was happening to me. None of my relatives or my children knew where I was. I was a very different person. I’m sure my family would not have recognized me if they saw me and I really did not care if I lived or died.

Eventually, I could no longer keep a home, a job, or a man, and I ended up on the streets for a very long time. I didn’t want to go to a shelter, my life was a mess and I had a lot of hurt. Sometimes I felt like I knew every street in DC. I begged for money and I bought alcohol. I have walked and slept on these streets in good

weather and in bad. I met a lot of men and women like myself during this period of my life, and sometimes, we helped each other. There were many days I didn’t eat.

One day I collapsed in the streets and woke up in the hospital. I was very sick for a long time, with pneumonia diabetes, high blood pressure, and other complications. When I was feeling better, a social worker started working with me to help me get my life back together. She helped me register with a mental health agency and I was discharged to a shelter where I made myself a promise to get back on my feet and stay there. I would not allow the social worker to contact my family.

When I came to Hyacinth’s Place, they helped me contact my family. Trying to be a part of my family’s life was more difficult than I expected. Years of living on the streets, bad relationships, and alcohol left me more fragile than I first realized. I cannot explain my lost years to my family and they can’t understand what happened. However, I now visit my mother who is living in a retirement home and she visits me sometimes. I speak with my daughter often and I am hoping one day that I can make sense of what happened with my life.

Having my own unit at Hyacinth’s Place is a beautiful thing because it allows me the time to heal and fully understand my illness. I attend group sessions that allow me to discuss some of the feelings I can’t understand to help take away some of the hurt.

I know my road back to my own apartment is long but I feel as if I have the help to get myself back. I am taking my medication now and doing better. I have not touched alcohol for three years.

# Our Board of Directors

A True Passion for Change



Dr. Kweku-Muata Osei-Bryson



Teresa Ferrante



Rev. Dr. Jaylene Chase



Barbara Gross



Laura Ehle

*Among the problems of our world, Hyacinth's Place is a necessary solution.*



Derin Abass-Teniola



Michelle Batchelor



Oke Anyaegbunam



Tamarah Teixeira

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

**DROP A PEBBLE IN THE WATER:  
JUST A SPLASH, AND IT IS GONE;  
BUT THERE'S HALF-A-HUNDRED RIPPLES  
CIRCLING ON AND ON AND ON,  
SPREADING, SPREADING  
FROM THE CENTRE,  
FLOWING ON OUT TO THE SEA.  
AND THERE IS NO WAY OF TELLING  
WHERE THE END IS GOING TO BE.  
DROP A PEBBLE IN THE WATER:  
IN A MINUTE YOU FORGET,  
BUT THERE'S LITTLE WAVES A-FLOWING,  
AND THERE'S RIPPLES CIRCLING YET,  
AND THOSE LITTLE WAVES A-FLOWING  
TO A GREAT BIG WAVE HAVE GROWN;  
YOU'VE DISTURBED A MIGHTY RIVER  
JUST BY DROPPING IN A STONE.**

## THE WASHINGTON DELICADOES

JASON CADDELL  
RASHIDA CALVIN  
BEVERLY CAMBRIDGE  
ELIZABETH CERYAK  
DR. JALENE CHASE  
DENNIS & ZANDRA CHESTNUT  
JESSE COLEY  
PAPSY COLON  
ANITA CONNELLY  
N'HLAUNI CORLLEY  
ANNIE S. DANIELS  
RAMONA DEGRACE  
MICAELA DEITCH  
RESHESA DELOATCH  
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PAMELA KELLY  
MICHELLE KENDRICK  
DULCIE KUMI  
RITA KUMI  
ANNA LANTZ  
ILLANA LARA  
PHILIPPE LASSERRE  
MARK LONTOK  
MARSHALL LOVE  
ROBERT LYNN  
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HAZEL MARSHALL  
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KATHLEEN MCGARRITY  
TABATHA MCNEILL  
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CARYL MOORMAN  
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CELESTE MYERS  
LORETTA NESBITT  
KELLEY O'CONNELL  
CHIDINMA OPAIGBEOGU  
SUSAN ORGE  
KWEKU-MUATA OSEI-BRYSON  
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JACQUELYN SHORT SIMMONS  
JEM SMALL  
HALLET SMITH  
GARRY TEIXEIRA  
TAMARAH TEIXEIRA  
LATORIE WALLACE  
ELISABETH WARNER  
ELISABETH WARNER  
JEARSEL WATSON  
JEARSEL WATSON  
ANDREW WELLE  
GERRY WILLIAMS  
CHANDRA WILLIAMS  
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MORRIS & GWENDOLYN CAFRITZ FOUNDATION  
SHARE FUND  
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PEOPLE WITH DISABIULITY FUND  
DC DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
DC HOUSING AUTHORITY  
MILLER AND CHEVALLIER FOUNDATION  
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BRI COOLEY CONCEPTS  
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TROPICS ICE CREAM  
WINE TASTINGS WITH KATHY  
WILDERNESS TECHNOLOGY ALLIANCE  
PETAL SHARE  
CHARQUINTA MCCRAY  
COMPASS PRO BONO DC  
7TH DISTRICT METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT  
TECH SOUP  
GREATER WASHINGTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

# Our Wish List

The following suggestions are some ways YOU can give!

Women coming to Hyacinth's Place are welcomed with fully furnished efficiency apartments with a full bathroom and kitchenette. Your support with the items below helps us continue to provide quality living for the residents.

## Items

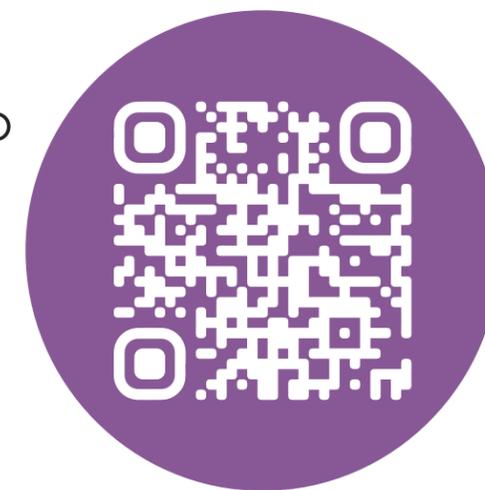
- Easy wring mop w/bucket
- Vacuum Cleaners
- Portable air conditioners
- Fans
- Microwave ovens
- Mini refrigerators w/freezer (3.3 cu. Ft)
- Washing Machine/Dryer
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Household cleaning supplies
- Toilet Deodorizer
- Electric Lawn mower
- Weed Wacker
- Twin Size comforters
- Bathroom mats and shower curtains

## Services

- Landscaping/lawn
- Plumbing
- Mentoring
- Musical
- Fundraising



If you'd like to help volunteer please scan the QR to go to our website!



*We give because giving changes us for the better.*



# Yearly Finances

## FY21-FY22

Hyacinth's Place finances are managed by J.M Business Solutions LLC. Still in a mode of COVID recovery, the Board of Directors continue to work diligently with management to address our financial capacity. Since the pandemic, one of the biggest struggles being reported by small non-profit organizations is securing core funding. Donors are redirecting funds toward COVID-19 relief efforts, suspending grants that were normally renewed on an annual basis, and eliminating the possibility of future funding. As new funding opportunities

become more restrictive and challenging in nature, our donors and supporters continued over this difficult financial landscape to support Hyacinth's Place with their donations. In 2021, we gained the support of the Washington Delicados who adopted Hyacinth's Place as their charity of choice. Hyacinth's Place appreciates the very important trust each donor places in this organization. We work hard to earn and maintain both transparency and accountability. Shown below are charts illustrating Hyacinth's Place financial status over this year.

