

summertime...  
as one community

Heart for Winter Haven | Season In Review | Summer 2024



## Where Transformation Meets Community

**BEE GALLISON, DIRECTOR OF CARE**

Overwhelmed. Generous. Excited. Empowered. These are just some of the words that describe how “Anna” feels. She is the first tenant to move into the house recently donated to H4WH (see our Spring issue at [heart4wh.org/news](http://heart4wh.org/news) for a reminder)! Anna, a mother of two young children, once lived in a stable home and had a great job. But two years ago, she found herself in a difficult situation, forced to leave her home due to domestic violence. From that point, she faced the challenge of rebuilding her life, finding safe housing, and securing employment.

Four months ago, Anna walked through the doors of Heart for Winter Haven. She attended our New Client Orientation, where she was introduced to the programs we offer and met her Care Manager, Kharla. Since that time, Anna and Kharla have met weekly to create and work through a personalized plan to achieve Anna’s goals. One of her primary objectives was to secure stable employment and enroll in our **Faith & Finances** class.

In just a few short weeks, Anna found not one but two part-time jobs. Shortly thereafter, she received a full-time offer with excellent pay and benefits. Her commitment to her goals and consistent effort did not go unnoticed. Our care managers reviewed several clients for the house, and Anna stood out as someone who had been diligent in completing her case plan, attending all her appointments, achieving her employment goals, and successfully completing our 8-week financial literacy program. She even started an emergency savings account.

Thanks to her hard work and dedication, Anna was selected to become the tenant at the house, where we will continue to support her in her journey towards stability. Over the next few years, we will work together to help Anna and her family transition back into the housing market, securing a bright and stable future.

To say that things have moved quickly for Anna since joining Heart for Winter Haven is an understatement. Her story is a testament to what can happen when someone embraces the opportunity for transformation within a supportive community. We are excited to continue partnering with Anna and watch as God reveals her purpose and identity in Him.

It is our prayer that as we move toward our 2030 goals, we will acquire more properties to support families like Anna’s, helping them not only survive but flourish. We believe this is just the beginning of what God has in store.


Anna is a fictitious name used for the safety of our client. ❤️

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SCAN ME

# Celebrating New Beginnings: Raymond's Graduate Journey and Welcoming Tyler!

**BRIAN FLORES, COMMUNITY CARE MANAGER- THE SCHOLARSHIP HOUSE**

We are thrilled to share some exciting updates from the **Scholarship House** Program, where moments of triumph and new beginnings light up our community.

First and foremost, congratulations to Raymond Castro! Raymond, a dedicated and talented individual who has been a part of our program, is now embarking on an incredible new chapter. He has officially begun his graduate studies, pursuing a master's degree in music at USF. Raymond's journey is a testament to his unwavering commitment to his craft and his passion for furthering his education. We have no doubt that his time at USF will be filled with inspiring achievements and creative breakthroughs. Raymond, we are so proud of you and can't wait to see the beautiful music and profound impact you'll make in the world.



In addition to celebrating Raymond's accomplishments, we are excited to welcome Tyler Spence as the newest member of our household. We are eager to support him as he embarks on his own educational journey. With a bright future ahead, Tyler brings fresh energy and enthusiasm to our community. We're confident that his presence will add to the vibrant tapestry of experiences and talents that make our program so special.

As we celebrate Raymond's success and extend a warm welcome to Tyler, we are reminded of the strength and spirit of our **Scholarship House** family. These milestones reflect not only individual achievements but also the collective support and encouragement that define our program.

Thank you to everyone who supports our mission and contributes to the success of our scholars. Your commitment makes stories like these possible, and for that, we are incredibly grateful.

We still have room available at the **Scholarship House**, so please help us spread the word. An example of an ideal resident for the House would be a young man around age 18-24, who is pursuing his education via a college/ university or trade school. Please contact me at [HouseManager@heart4wh.org](mailto:HouseManager@heart4wh.org) for more information.

Here's to new beginnings, ongoing success, and the shared journey ahead. ❤️



## The Beatty Beat

**BRAD BEATTY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

We are making real headway on our journey to end child homelessness in Winter Haven. We are seeing people grow through employment, financial stability, and most of all, in learning how to make a home- to "abide." We see a long road ahead, but it's not endless. There is a destination, and the promise of that beautiful place keeps us travelling onward. Every day, I witness our staff and volunteers, our clients, and our partners start and finish their days motivated to get us there together. Because, after all, it takes a community!

We are "all in," as the card players say. Our commitment level is maxed, our passion runs pure, our hope endures... but we can't do it, we can't get there.... without you. You are SO important! We believe you might be the key ingredient to making this whole thing work. We want you to consider (pray even) about going "all in," too.

We are growing our volunteer opportunities, finding new ways to impact the lives of those families who are desperate to grow. Elevate is coming online, and our program classes and mentoring opportunities are expanding. We need people who will "join the game," and for some who've already joined to consider "doubling down" and making it their OWN. It's not a gamble (though I'd bet you may be growing weary of my allusions to it) it is a sure thing. When we come together in His name, Jesus' presence results. And ending the suffering of children is just the sort of thing that Jesus will do in His Kingdom. That's the kind of heart He has for Winter Haven.

I hope to see many of you at our **As One! Vision Banquet** in November. Come help us celebrate TEN YEARS of God's faithfulness in this ministry. ❤️



# Student Homelessness in Winter Haven

**TABITHA KEITH, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS**

As we concluded the 2023-24 school year, we unfortunately saw the number of students experiencing homelessness in Polk County Public Schools rise to a record-breaking 5,089. In Winter Haven alone, 627 students were affected, representing 12.3% of the overall student

population. Part of this increase is due to the addition of South Pointe Elementary to our area, which contributed to the rise in identified cases. Winter Haven High School, with 100 identified students, has the highest rate of homeless students locally.

Despite the rising numbers countywide, it's encouraging to note that the percentage of homeless students in Winter Haven has remained relatively stable in the 12% range over the past few years, while other cities across Polk have seen a significant rise in their percentages. This stability is notable given the overall growth in the student population and the increasing number of students facing homelessness. Of the 627 homeless students in Winter Haven, 206 cases are linked to underemployment or unemployment.

This information fortifies our drive to continue offering programs such as **Jobs for Life** and **Faith & Finances** to families in our area. While the addition of South Pointe Elementary has helped us identify more families in need, the numbers remain a challenge. Rest assured, we remain fully committed to addressing this ongoing crisis and continuing our advocacy and work for change within our community. ❤️



## Elevate Space Update

**TABITHA KEITH, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS**

We are beyond thrilled to announce the completion of the buildout of Elevate, our new Center for City and Life Transformation! This space, a year ahead of schedule, would not have been possible without the generosity of our donors, and we especially want to thank Ms. Judy Beatty for continually covering the project in prayer. Elevate is designed to be a beacon for growth, learning, and transformation. Programs and workshops are already being scheduled, and you can find the full calendar on our website.

This space allows us to bring the community together in new ways, serving as a hub where transformation truly meets community. We invite everyone to stop by and take a tour—come see firsthand what your support has helped create and get yourself plugged in! ❤️



## Program Update & Call for Volunteers

With the completion of Elevate, we now have a dedicated home for our programs like **Jobs for Life** and **Faith & Finances**, allowing us to serve more participants on a regular basis. Just recently, we celebrated the graduation of our latest **Faith & Finances** participants in this new space, a joyful milestone for everyone involved. As we look

forward to expanding our programs, the need for committed volunteers has never been greater. We are asking those who feel called to serve as an ally for **Faith & Finances** or a champion for **Jobs for Life** to step forward. Volunteering in these roles is not only a way to serve others, but also a deeply rewarding experience where you can witness real transformation and share the love of Jesus Christ. As Matthew 25:40 reminds us, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." If you're interested in making a difference, please reach out to our volunteer coordinator, Lydia Adcock, at [lydia@heart4wh.org](mailto:lydia@heart4wh.org). We look forward to serving alongside you. ❤️



# Exciting News from The Center for Well-Being!

**KIMBERLY SMILEY, DIRECTOR, THE CENTER FOR WELL-BEING**

We are super excited about our most recent community partner, **Positively U!** The **Center for Well-Being** is now offering bi-weekly counseling services on-site at Positively U. If you are unfamiliar with them, Positively U's primary purpose is to provide meaningful support for persons living with HIV and to prevent the spread of HIV through education, counseling, testing, and case management. You can learn more about them online at [positivelyu.org](http://positivelyu.org).

On another note, we have also added two Bilingual clinicians to our team, Michael Rodriguez and Brenda Canales! These clinicians will help us to better meet the needs of our community. Welcome aboard, Michael and Brenda! ❤️



## Ways To Help

- **PRAY!** For those we serve, our volunteers, staff, community businesses, city leaders, etc.
- **GIVE:** To make a **donation**, please visit [www.heart4wh.org/donate](http://www.heart4wh.org/donate).
- **SERVE:** We are seeking volunteers to serve in various areas of ministry. Please mail [info@heart4wh.org](mailto:info@heart4wh.org) for information.
- **SPONSOR:** Tables are now available for the AS ONE! Vision Banquet on **TUESDAY, Nov. 19th**. Please email [jen@heart4wh.org](mailto:jen@heart4wh.org).

## Our Special Thanks!

In the past several months, we have been honored by the creativity and support of two local businesses, Seven Anchors and Bespoke Physical Therapy!

**Seven Anchors**, an apparel boutique owned by our dear friends Eli and Kayla Hendrickson, donated a percentage of their sales to Heart for Winter Haven during a special shopping event over two weekends. Wow!

Also, Dr. Cassie Cook, owner of **Bespoke Physical Therapy**, recently celebrated her 1 year business anniversary!



As a part of the night, Bespoke PT blessed H4WH with the proceeds from a raffle held at the event!

Our sincere gratitude to both Seven Anchors and Bespoke Physical Therapy for their faith in our ministry and the creative way they partnered with us. Thank you for being such an incredible support! ❤️



## The Impact of a Volunteer

**TABITHA KEITH,  
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS**



We are excited to introduce Lydia, a shining example of transformation and dedication within our Heart for Winter Haven community! Lydia first connected with us as a client, where she showed remarkable growth and resilience. Now, she's giving back in a big way—volunteering multiple days a week to help others on their journeys.

As our Volunteer Coordinator, Lydia plays a vital role in welcoming new volunteers, organizing orientation sessions, and providing essential training. She ensures that every volunteer is equipped with the knowledge and support they need to make a meaningful impact.

At H4WH, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved. If you've been looking for a way to make a difference in our community, now is the perfect time!

Reach out to Lydia at [lydia@heart4wh.org](mailto:lydia@heart4wh.org) to learn more about how you can join us in restoring relationships and transforming lives. ❤️