



Helping residents live their  
**best  
LIFE**



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## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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The generosity of our individual supporters and our business Community Partners has provided critical funding for Dave's House's increased impact in the Central Florida community. This funding, alongside grants from private and public foundations and agencies, was key in fueling our strategic shift in mission focus in 2021 with the goal to provide services to more homeless men and women with serious mental illness (SMI).

Since 2008, Dave's House has developed on average one single-site multi-resident home per year, serving four residents. We have also funded Housing First apartment homes for homeless individuals with SMI and co-occurring disabilities.

In 2021, our community needs assessment, work with homeless agencies, and the impacts of the pandemic spotlighted the dire need for mental health services on the frontlines of homelessness as well as more permanent supportive housing.



Dave's House Co-Founder and Board Member Ron Wilensky and Executive Director Ellen O'Connor meeting with Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings, Community and Family Services Department Director Lonnie Bell and Special Assistant to Mayor Jerry L. Demings Iliia Torres, Esq.

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## LOWERING BARRIERS TO AFFORDABLE AND STABLE HOMES

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In 2020, the City of Orlando sought our involvement in the acquisition transfer of Pathways Drop-In Center (PDIC). This was a six-month process that included:

- The City of Orlando provided funding for Dave's House to conduct a Feasibility Study to assess PDIC's services and facilities
- The review of PDIC operations, finances and physical structures, including legal and building code regulations
- Bridge funding through grants to keep PDIC operational during this time
- The development of a comprehensive plan for PDIC's future operations and structure

### **The outcomes of the Feasibility Study:**

- Guided our decision to open the door to another agency acquiring the facility
- Provided PDIC a clear strategic business plan for future operations, including budget forecasts, site renovation and service expansion
- Enhanced our community partnerships with other non-profit agencies, the City of Orlando and Orange County
- Secured \$115,000 of grant funding for PDIC to transition through their acquisition successfully

As a result of Dave's House raising awareness and rallying resources to focus on the need for a full-service mental health Community HUB, the City of Orlando and Orange County are currently supporting both the Pathways Drop-In Center renovation as well as a second planned downtown Orlando center focused on adults with mental illness. Dave's House will continue to partner with these programs.

This year, we have worked diligently to enhance relationships with non-profits that serve the homeless but lack services for individuals with mental illness. By providing mental health services at the neighborhood level, we will increase the number of individuals with SMI we serve. This will position them to get on their road to recovery, first through transitional supportive housing to ultimately permanent supportive housing.

Our long-term planning includes an SMI Homeless Community HUB and add-on service centers at homeless centers that will give homeless adults with SMI access to centralized critical daily life and community resource services.



Dave's House Executive Director Ellen O'Connor; Tim Bernardi, Dave's House Board Member and Mader Southeast Construction Safety Director; Russ Beymer, Executive Director of HomeAid Orlando; and Rob Beal, Vice President Construction, Meritage Homes.

## 2021 PROJECTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

### Dave's House Residential Community Development

We are planning the development of a Dave's House Residential Community for adults with SMI with the guidance of Housing Consultant Alison Colvard. This purpose-designed community will include transitional and permanent supportive housing, providing residents affordable housing with the guidance of a housing consultant. It will be designed to provide residential comfort, privacy and amenities, with common area services, a Day Program and leisure amenities.

The Residential Community will be either purpose-built on vacant land or redesigned on an existing property in partnership with HomeAid Orlando. We are pursuing federal funding from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to fund up to 30 multi-resident homes.

The Residential Community will include multiple residential-style homes for either transitional or permanent supportive housing. They will feature a lock-off one-bedroom design which will allow us to change the configuration of homes based on shifting community needs. One-bedroom homes can be used for Housing First or transitional supportive housing as needed. The permanent supportive housing homes will include four to five bedrooms, allowing residents to establish long-term relationships with housemates.

Having the housing and services in one centralized location increases our ability to serve more people and creates a stable environment for residents. On-site amenities and services will help residents readily access the ongoing services they need; a lack of transportation is typically a top barrier for these individuals who live at or below the poverty level. This model will be replicated at other locations.





## Expansion of Dave's House Residential Programs

The Dave's House 360° Resident Development Programs focus on residents' personal and professional betterment and life-long wellness. They include day programs, volunteering and interactive workshops. They offer social, career, health and daily life skill training in areas including nutrition and cooking, gardening, personal computing and wellness.

These programs provide ongoing education from qualified partner providers, giving residents lifelong services and skills relevant to them. They also create professional and volunteer opportunities for residents to increase their skills, social interaction, and self-confidence. Partnerships are developed for job-sharing positions, allowing residents to work part- to full-time.



- Through Wired for Success, funded by Universal Orlando Foundation and AdventHealth, laptops (and technical support) connect Central Florida residents with family, friends and the world. This helps decrease the isolation often experienced by people with SMI. One resident reconnected with his daughters with whom he had lost contact for over 17 years. Residents are using their computers for benefits and job applications; telehealth; continuing education; hobbies; music; and improving literacy.
- A deck at Aspire Health Partners' Kate's Place Clubhouse increases resident time outdoors and socializing for both transitional and permanent supportive housing residents (our residents attend Day Programs here). Raised gardens at the Clubhouse and our Central Florida homes provide a therapeutic hobby and the opportunity to learn about seed-to-table nutrition. Due to their previous homelessness, many residents lack core nutrition and cooking skills. At one home, residents attribute their weight loss in part to one of the housemate's vegetarian cooking. The gardens provide ongoing educational opportunities to address proactive preventive health tactics to combat chronic conditions, including high blood pressure and diabetes. Design, labor and materials donated by Mader Southeast.
- Residents work and volunteer part-time. Their community contributions include grocery and food service; facilities upkeep; event set up and support; and working with at-risk youth and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## Advocacy for people with SMI and community support

- Increased community support from individual supporters and businesses resulted in our fundraising at our annual Dave's House Party exceeding our goal of \$100,000.
- The launch of our SMI Coalition, a Central Florida Housing & Services Network, to maximize services through community partnerships. Our goal is to provide a clear road to recovery for men and women with SMI from homelessness to transitional supportive housing to permanent supportive housing. We'll work with community agencies, homeless services, and behavioral healthcare providers to develop innovative service and awareness programs as well as advocate legislation specific to issues associated with serious mental illness.
- Dave's House was selected by Walgreen's to be one of three featured non-profits in the Central Florida region in 2021 Quarter 3. People donated to support Dave's House programs through the MyWalgreen's donation program.
- *Orlando Magazine* honored our Executive Director Ellen O'Connor as one of their 2021 Women of the Year in their May issue.



Some of our Board of Directors Members at our Dave's House Party.

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## FOCUSING ON FRONTLINE SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS

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Dave's House has identified key growth areas to fulfill its mission in the years ahead. We are focused on infrastructure development for priority projects. We have established these goals in line with our budget forecasting, current staffing, and current knowledge of community and funding opportunities. We will reassess these goals should additional opportunities arise.

### 2022 Goals

- **Lower Barriers:** Provide services at existing homeless facilities to reach people in their neighborhood
- **Advocate with Community Voice:** Establish and lead SMI Coalition
- **Expand Housing:** Finalize development and operations plan for physical property development of a Residential Community
- **Resident Development Programs:** continue development of proprietary programs and partnerships
- **Acquire funding** from local, state, and federal sources

### Working to serve more men and women with SMI

In Central Florida's Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties, over 2,000 people are homeless. Nearly 20% of these people have a serious mental illness.

Through advocacy efforts, housing development, and the provision of ongoing recovery services, Dave's House is creating a clear path to permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals with SMI in Central Florida. We will serve as a catalyst for community initiatives focused on serving men and women with SMI who are homeless, at-risk of being homeless, or in sub-standard housing.

Our strategy will position Dave's House on the frontlines in the battles against homelessness and serious mental illness in our community, helping these vulnerable individuals escape homelessness and begin their journey toward stability, recovery and success.

The generosity of our individual supporters and our business Community Partners has provided the foundation for success for Dave's House to fulfill these goals.

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