"I'm grateful to be part of our street outreach team. We meet people living on the street and make sure they're safe and comfortable.”  — Liza Poris

[Photo: Liza Poris, Friendship Place Street Outreach Specialist, Carolyn Sumner, Unity Healthcare Nurse Practitioner]
In 2023, Friendship Place continued our amazing pace of growth. We kept up with trends in homelessness and found new ways to meet the needs of the community, serving in innovative ways and with a national impact.

We began to operate our first program in Southeast DC – Valley Place, a bridge housing facility designed to help single men, women, and couples. Valley Place mirrors our Ward 3 family facility, The Brooks, in that it is designed for intensive short-term support. Indeed, it is a place where people can get back on their feet in a service-enriched setting, work with case managers to address their needs, and move towards stability as quickly as possible.

This year we also launched new youth programming, called LIFT, designed to provide 17–24-year-olds with Rapid Rehousing and Transitional Housing. Participants receive intensive case management services to support stability and growth in health, education, housing, and employment. It is truly a life changer for the young people we assist!

“Life changing” sums up so much of what we do at Friendship Place. Sometimes people we serve find themselves in difficult circumstances, but just a little boost from us can help them turn things around.

Another way this manifests itself is via Street Outreach, which brings tools to hundreds of people each year who are on the street and need assistance to survive.

Your support makes all this possible. Friendship Place, after 33 years, remains an organization where people come to hear “yes,” when they’ve been told “no” too often before.

We can’t do this without you, which is why I appreciate your help so much. Thank you for your support in recent years and I am looking forward to building our response to homelessness together in the years ahead!

With deep gratitude,

Jean-Michel Giraud
President & CEO
Friendship Place
Liza Poris, CAHP Systems Outreach Specialist at Friendship Place, performs critical and life-saving work. She searches the streets seeking out individuals experiencing homelessness to offer support and services. In her four years with Friendship Place, her day-to-day is never the same. Her experience has made her bold and dependable, earning the trust of many people who rely on her for assistance. She provides essential items such as food, sleeping bags, and hygiene products, and helps connect people to crucial resources like food stamps, social security benefits, and clothing. Liza also refers people to the Welcome Center, where they can see a doctor or psychologist, free of charge. Most importantly, she helps individuals take steps toward securing housing.

One day, Liza was on a street outreach mission, and her empathy and dedication were evident. Just two blocks from the Welcome Center, she encountered a woman sitting on the porch of a restaurant, holding out a cup for change. Liza introduced herself, and soon Unity Health Care’s Nurse Practitioner Carolyn Sumner, who provides medical care during weekly outreach missions with Liza, joined the conversation. They chatted with the woman. She needed medication, and Liza arranged for her to visit the Welcome Center for an assessment.

A few feet away, Liza met a gentleman carrying several bags. She offered to help him with one of his bags, and he accepted. He was heading to St. Columba, an Episcopal church in NW, DC that offers services to people in need, where Liza is well-known. There, she encountered about two dozen individuals. Many of them greeted Liza warmly. She spoke with several people, inquiring about their housing situations and paperwork. She is always attentive.

Liza believes there are a lot of misconception about homelessness. “Everyone’s story is different. People gradually fall into homelessness due to various factors, such as job loss, incarceration, the need to leave unsafe environments, or the sudden onset of mental illness triggered by a traumatic event.” Liza emphasizes the importance of acknowledging people experiencing homelessness. “They often feel isolated and invisible, so simply acknowledging their presence can make them feel seen and valued as members of our community.”

In every interaction, Liza shows compassion and the impact of genuine human connection. Her dedication to helping people exemplifies the Friendship Place’s mission.
Friendship Place received in-kind goods and services including household items, moving services, resume writing, and career counseling.
Permanent Supportive Housing
Served 1,041 highly vulnerable, chronically homeless people throughout the District. Our PSH case managers provide continued support to empower participants to achieve personal goals for recovery, health, financial stability, family re-unification, work, and social well-being. Our PSH programs have a housing retention rate of 98%.

Short-Term Housing
Housed 141 families, including 291 children at our Brooks Short-Term Family Housing facility in Ward 3 serving families experiencing homelessness. Our newly opened Valley Place Short-Term facility housed 110 individuals.

Veterans Services
Our award-winning Veterans First program served 531 veterans and their family members throughout DC and eight surrounding counties—successfully housing 85%.

Drop-in Center
Hosted 1,015 visitors at our Welcome Center, which provides a place of refuge from the street and where anyone can find assistance obtaining housing and vital documents. The Welcome Center also provides access to essentials such as food, mail, and survival/hygiene kits.

Free Clinic
Provided free medical or psychiatric assessments.

Job Placement
Using an innovative “employment first” fast-track model, placed 190 people, including 85 veterans, experiencing or at-risk of homelessness into jobs. AimHire Jobs First program participants earned an average of $17.48/hour.

Youth and Young Adult Services
Provided developmentally-informed services, including financial literacy, health and wellness, housing assistance, education and employment support, and counseling, to 65 homeless and at-risk individuals aged 17 to 29 through our Before Thirty program. Our Youth Street Outreach program conducted street outreach to 158 runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth (ages 17-24), distributing survival/hygiene kits, vital documents, mental health services, and housing assessments to connect them with District housing providers.

Adult Street Outreach
Served 129 individuals.
Nearly 5,000 of our neighbors—families, LGBTQ+ youth, seniors, and veterans—overcame homelessness or remained safely housed with the help of Friendship Place in 2023. Friendship Place provides essential services that help people rebuild their lives. Through education and advocacy, we also engage with the root causes of homelessness, including racism, in order to end homelessness for good.

Learn how you can support Friendship Place by reaching out to Chris Koerner at ckoerner@friendshipplace.org.
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Impact Report written and created by Yimka Odebode, Media, Marketing & Communications Director, Friendship Place
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- $250 for the Street Outreach Team to care for people on the street
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- ______ to help provide personalized services

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