

---

---

# SECOND ♦ CHANCE ♦ HERALD

---

---

*We envision a world where your past does not define your future*

October 2018 Edition



## **Friends of Guest House Executive Director Kari Galloway**

**Galloway** is a truly inspirational woman for the residents of Guest House. Not only is she passionate, committed, and consistent within Guest House, she also plays a significant role in the community regarding incarcerated women. For instance, she is a tireless advocate for the improvement of incarcerated women's living conditions, including having easier access to

hygiene products in prison. Furthermore, she helps women reentering the community to regain their right to vote. Ms. Galloway is an active leader at Friends of Guest House who truly believes that everyone deserves a second chance. In this, she embodies the vision of Guest House.



On Saturday, the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, 2018, residents of Guest House, along with Friends of Guest House staff member Marissa Tordella, attended "Zip Trip" sponsored by Fox 5 News at Potomac Yards. The purpose of the event was for the residents to inform the public about the mission and vision of Friends of Guest House.



In July 2018, the residents of Guest House were able to attend "A Path To Victory – The Power of the Equality Voter" in Herndon, VA. Through this event, they learned about the power that the LGBTQ community and its allies can have in regards to influencing public policy.

# AND THE M.V.P. AWARD GOES TO...



Ms. Rebecca (pictured to the left) is the MVP Residential Monitor at Luray! Ms. Rebecca began with Friends of Guest House in January 2017 as an intern, and soon became a monitor in May of 2017. She has been helping residents ever since! She is charming, intelligent, and kind in every interaction and everything she does. She truly exemplifies the spirit of Friends of Guest House.



Ms. Kathy D and Ms. Kathy G (pictured to the right) are the two MVP Residential Monitors at Sheffield! Ms. Kathy G has been working with Friends of Guest house for two years, and Ms. Kathy D has been working with Friends of Guest house for one and a half years. They both are loving and supporting of each resident on their journey to a new beginning, which embodies the vision of Friends of Guest House.



Friends of Guest House

## WELCOME WAGON

Please help us welcome our newest staff!

*Case Manager:*

Takeisha Johnson

*Workforce Coordinator:*

Ms. Keba

*Residential Monitor:*

- Ms. Susan
- Ms. Rachel
- Ms. Tonica
- Ms. Ingrid
- Ms. Emily
- Ms. Angie



The MVP for Staff of Friends of Guest House is Case Manager Jessica Rodgers (above, pictured left)! She is being recognized because she consistently goes above and beyond the call of duty in her job.

Ms. Jessica pushes the residents to be the best version of themselves that they can be. Moreover, she selflessly gives of her time and energy to help each resident, even if she is off duty. She is the rock that many residents rely on!

We also want to recognize those who have tirelessly poured into Friends of Guest House who are (unfortunately) departing in the coming weeks. Ms. Rachel Younger (pictured left to Ms. Jessica) and Ms. Val Jernigan (pictured above), we will miss you dearly!





As a kid, I was always good in school—from my behavior to my grades. I took advanced classes until I graduated high school and was accepted to VCU for college. By the time of my high school graduation, I was already a daily weed and cigarette smoker, and an almost daily drinker. I had also been selling weed for quite some time at that point. I was introduced to ecstasy and started using and selling that also. I usually had a job also, but I was basically floating through life with no plan or any goals.

I definitely became addicted to fast money from selling drugs, and also to being the person that my friends or family could always call if they needed anything. Clearly I had an under-developed moral compass and no vision for my future because I never really had any thoughts that what I was doing was wrong or that I should and could be doing so much more. Drinking alcohol and smoking weed everyday were just normal things to me. My parents and most of my friends' parents drank every day for as long as I can remember, so substance abuse definitely runs in my family. Maybe if the doctor who prescribed my first pain pills had asked about my family's history with substance abuse, he would have decided

to go a different route. You see, I'd had the surgery and was prescribed Percocet for the pain. Being predisposed to addiction the way I am, naturally I liked the Percocet, abused the pills, and continued to buy, sell, and take them after my prescription was gone. At that time, I was about twenty years old. Growing up I never thought that I wouldn't have been in college at this age. Although I had been accepted, I took the opportunity for granted, didn't show up to classes, and eventually stopped going all together. However, I kept drinking, partying, and selling and using drugs.

Over the next few years my addiction got worse. I was introduced to heroin and needles. I continued to sell drugs, but mainly this was done to support my drug habits which definitely outweighed my "money habit". As it always does, my addiction spiraled out of control and I ended up in jail at the age of 24. I was released 5 months later right back to the same people, places, and things that I was around during my addiction, and I consequently started using again right away. Within 2 months I was back in jail, this time for 11 months. I got out in August 2016, and moved to Richmond where I was originally from but not where I had been in jail. I got a job rather quickly and, from the outside looking in, seemed to be doing well for a little while at least. It was a dead end job making little money. Moreover, I started using again and told myself that it was ok because this time I would only have it every now and again, and I could control it. The addiction escalated quickly and I was violated by probation and arrested for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in July 2017.

I had never really thought I needed help, or even considered listening to someone else's advice (because I knew everything right? No...) However, I had always prayed for God to put people in my path to guide me. I would pray these prayers, but I wouldn't have been receptive to guidance from anyone before. God knew that too though, which is why I know that I had never even heard of Guest House until my 3<sup>rd</sup> incarceration. I can't really say what changed or what made me open and willing to go to a program, but once

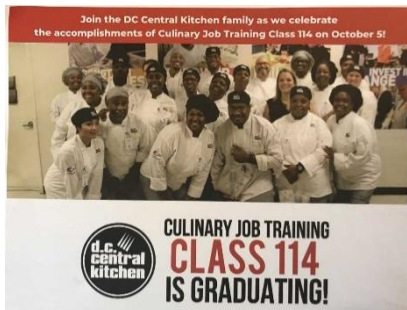
I was told about Guest House I knew it would be the very best chance I had to change my life. By coming to Alexandria through Friends of Guest House, my life has been changed drastically for the better. I wouldn't have stood a chance going back out into the same environments I'd been in before with the same people AND none of the knowledge I've gotten since coming to Guest House. I would've convinced myself that I had to sell drugs to survive because I wouldn't have had a job. Furthermore, I would've convinced myself that I could sell without using, but I know in my heart that eventually I would have used. I know that I would've been back in jail by now, or worse—dead.

Guest House provided a way for me to relearn how to navigate life without using and selling drugs, while simultaneously having a warm bed and food to eat every night, AND numerous people on staff to get advice from and to talk to. My willingness to listen and my openness to take suggestions played a huge part in my success. Guest House can give us plenty of tools if we only choose to use them. Everything that has lined up to help me learn and grow started with Guest House. DC Central Kitchen's Culinary Job Training Program as well as the Matrix Program offered by the city of Alexandria have also been very important to my transformation. Without Guest House, I would have never known those programs existed. Now I have reconnected with my family members, and my mom can't stop telling me how proud she is of me. My twin, who wouldn't even speak to me on our birthday, is now speaking to me. After graduating from DC Central Kitchen, I started working at a job that I love, making better money than I've ever made with an amazing company. Not only do I actually have some goals now, I also know that they are within my reach now. I am incredibly blessed and humbled by my blessings. As long as I trust the process, put my faith in God, do the right thing, and pray, I know that life will only continue to get better from here!

- *Grace Ferguson*



# FUN TIMES AT GUEST HOUSE!



Editor, Mick Goodwin  
Co-Editor, Rachel H



*With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.*

...

*Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?*

...

*Out of huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.  
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.*

- Maya Angelou