

September 18th

The 28th Annual Walk for AIDS Goes Hybrid!



Save the Date! ✓

Thanks to our 2020 World
Aids Day Sponsors!



Welcoming New Team Members:



Tanya Sastoque
Director of Development and
Communications


Welcoming to the Board of Directors:



Cindy Tilley
VP of Human Resources
Hospice and Palliative Care - Charlotte Region

House of Mercy Board of Directors

- Cicely Johnson, Chair
- Latoya Gardner, President & CEO
- Zeke Panzica, Vice Chair
- Cindy Tilley
- Daniel Kling, Treasurer
- LaTanya Johnson
- Nicole Fitz, Secretary
- Jennifer Aliff



HOUSE OF MERCY

PO Box 808, Belmont, NC 28012
www.thehouseofmercy.org

*Providing a hope, healing, and a home
for persons living with HIV*

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Celebrating 30 Years HOUSE OF MERCY

Providing Hope, Healing, and a Home for Persons Living with HIV

Teams and Sponsors Needed for 2021 Walk for AIDS, Saturday, September 18th



MAC Walk for AIDS Team

Mark your calendars! House of Mercy's 28th Annual Walk for Aids will be celebrated on Saturday, September 18th. Due to the continuing effects and uncertainty of COVID-19, House of Mercy has decided to do a "hybrid" event this year. Our Walk for Aids will allow for two experiences. You can join us virtually or in the comfort of your own neighborhood, any walking trail and live at Stowe Park in Belmont. Our live event at Stowe Park will have sign up slots for maintaining attendance to ensure COVID-19 safety measure protocols are in place. This year we are adding a "kickoff" with our high-level sponsor Chick-Fil-A Belmont, some live program segments from your neighborhoods and Stowe Park. Be ready for some games and contests with awards, prizes and much more...

House of Mercy needs your help in making this event an impactful and successful one to help continue to fund its mission for those living with HIV/AIDS. Help us reach our \$80,000 goal this year with the 30-team challenge in honor of our 30th Anniversary. Start or join a team. Become a sponsor and promote your organization for an amazing cause.

Registration, team signups and sponsorships open June 1st. @ thehouseofmercy.org/walk

The Wright Lady

Mary Wright may be a woman whose name isn't found in history books or on social media like most pioneers. Where you will find her name is written on the hearts of hundreds of persons living with HIV/AIDS who called House of Mercy their home over the past thirty (30) years.

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Ways to Support House of Mercy

- Start a Team for Walk of AIDS
- Become a Corporate Sponsor
- Make a donation:



- Fundraise for the House of Mercy
- Include the House of Mercy in your Estate Planning
- Volunteer
- Join our Board of Directors

A 30-Year Journey Filled with Lessons

My name is Latoya Gardner and it's a joy to join you in mission and ministry as the President and CEO of House of Mercy. On October 12, 2020, I entered the doors of House of Mercy carrying a promise that I made to myself, and to my brother, Ronnell Gardner, who passed due to an AIDS-related illness in 1995. I promised him that I would help create a world where all individuals can thrive, and I have spent my career in service to that promise. The full legacy and the profound meaning of opening our doors to those with advanced-stage AIDS during the height of the AIDS epidemic is a mission compelled by compassion, justice, human dignity, service and integrity. As we embark on the next 30 years, we are reflecting on the lessons learned from those who have walked with us for three decades. I invite you to take this journey with us over the next few months as we open the archives and celebrate Thirty Years of Mercy.

Lesson 1: Love thy neighbor as thyself.

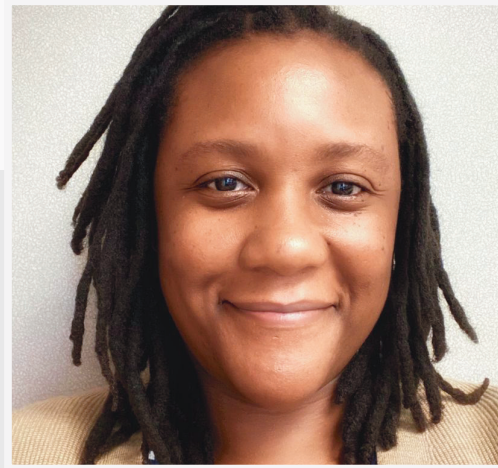
Lesson 2: Housing stability is closely linked to successful health outcomes.

Lesson 3: Improving one's quality of life and health outcomes requires us to dismantle structural and institutional racism.

Lesson 4: Housing is a cost-effective way to improve HIV health outcomes.

Lesson 5: Our work is not done and we cannot do it without you.

As we reflect on the first lesson, we are reminded of a guiding principle from Catherine McAuley that, "If we love God, we will undoubtedly love our neighbor also; they are as cause and effect." At House of Mercy, we endeavor to love our neighbors by welcoming them into our home and providing excellent care with dignity, so that individuals may live a full life.



Mary Wright, the first president & CEO of House of Mercy, held that guiding principle in her heart as she traveled the east coast visiting other homes providing care for those with AIDS. Mary Wright, along with the Sisters of Mercy, opened the doors of House of Mercy on May 19, 1991 to "provide a safe, comfortable and dignified home for men and women who often experience isolation and rejection for their current condition." As I ended a phone call with Mary Wright, she steadied me through a gentle reminder that House of Mercy is a home that should be filled with the things needed for a person to feel loved. As I close, for now, I ask for your help in making the House of Mercy and its mission possible. Please help support the House of Mercy by making a generous donation today. Thank you for your continued support and for joining us on this journey!

Blessings and miracles happening at the House of Mercy over the past year:

We welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors who bring years of experience in Hospice and Palliative Care along with Human Resources expertise.

We implemented and executed a recruitment strategy to expand our Board of directors professional expertise in the key areas of IT, Finance, and Marketing.

We launched our Bridge program to respond to the emerging needs of those living with HIV/AIDS and/or impacted by COVID.

We welcomed a new CEO and Director of Development & Communications to House of Mercy, who both share a vision for expanding our reach and increasing our impact.

We helped 22 people through our Bridge Program & 8 individuals in our residential program.



Mary Wright's Story Continued...

Mary Wright may be a woman whose name isn't found in history books or on social media like most pioneers. She will forever be found written on the hearts of hundreds of persons living with HIV/AIDS who called House of Mercy their home over the past thirty (30) years. In the mid-late 1980's when the virus was becoming an epidemic, the HIV/AIDS stigma was at its height. Hospitals and hospice homes were not admitting those with HIV/AIDS to take on a new global pandemic just like we are currently in at the moment (COVID-19). It was Sister Mary Wright of the Sisters of Mercy who was faced with a task of stepping up where our medical care professionals hadn't moved forward in time. As the founder of House of Mercy and first President

and CEO, Mary Wright provided a home for persons living with HIV/AIDS who needed hospice care. From corporate professionals to the homeless, House of Mercy served as a home to everyone. Mary tears up when she reminisces about the great friendships and family made at House of Mercy. Mary says, "We all ate together and "broke bread" at the dinner table at House of Mercy. This truly was the Eucharist. We shared laughs and were family. We did everything together." For some, the only family they ever had was at House of Mercy. Mary continued, "at the end of the day, we are all the same. Never. Judge. Anyone. Our motto at House of Mercy was to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God from Micah 6:8 and my prayer is that it will continue to be the guiding principles for all decisions." -Mary Wright, Founder of the House of Mercy.

Stay tuned for more 30th Anniversary articles to follow in our Fall/Winter 2021 Newsletter.

Bridge Program

House of Mercy launched its new Bridge Program in 2020 to respond to the unmet needs of those living with HIV affected by the pandemic. The Bridge Program seeks to provide supportive services to help improve health outcomes for all clients. Many studies have found that individuals that are stably housed are more likely to adhere to medication plans, so we focus on helping individuals remain housed. In 2020, House of Mercy received 22 household referrals for help through our Bridge program. Within sixty days, House of Mercy provided 24 clients with rental assistance, utility support, groceries, transportation, car insurance and car repairs. Your investment in their success helps to ensure that they remain independent and can continue providing for the families they support.



Effron Esseiva

Volunteers are truly the heart of the House of Mercy.

We would like to take the time to spotlight our volunteer, Effron Esseiva, a highly accomplished global technology leader who donates his time and technical skills to House of Mercy. Effron learned of House of Mercy through Apparo, a nonprofit helping other nonprofits leverage technology to increase impact in our local community. He connected with House of Mercy's mission and years of service to those living HIV/AIDS. He was particularly called to action because of the compassionate care provided at House of Mercy and the opportunity to help people thrive. "I aspire to give time, skill, talent, resources to the most vulnerable

to help lift them up. Even a feather can tip the balance. My relationship with the House of Mercy is accidental. I spoke with Apparo about volunteering opportunities and this came up by chance. I lost my best friend in the late 80s to AIDS. His name was Pat. He was magnificent but unfortunately not invincible." Effron has provided over one hundred hours helping us to upgrade our technology, migrate to some new software systems. And, Effron is actively working on our new website that will be unveiled in early summer.

Thank you to all of our amazing volunteers, your work and talents are priceless! **If you would like to join our team as a volunteer email us at activitycoordinator@thehouseofmercy.org.**