

Sarah, Bill, Trisha, Paul, & Brittany all moved into their own apartments this year & are still stable in their housing, meaning your support has helped us **end homelessness** in their lives.

Read on to learn more about their stories!



Sarah

housed since April 2011

When you visit Sarah in her new apartment, the first thing you notice is that everything matches, and that nothing's as bright as her smile.

Sarah's been a nurse for most of her life, and when she got her first nurse's uniform, she wanted to be skinny in it like the other nurses she saw. So when someone offered her a weight-loss solution, she took it, and that solution was a drug. From there she spiraled into addiction & spent 35 years chasing highs, in & out of prison and rehabilitation centers. Sarah has one son & a wonderful relationship with him. While she was using drugs, he begged her to quit, he threatened dealers so they wouldn't sell to her, and he got her into rehab programs over & over. And Sarah loves her son, but trying to quit for him never worked.

Eventually, Sarah went to prison again for selling drugs, and she stayed there & stayed clean for 6 years; when she got out, she stayed clean another two years before she relapsed, leading to homelessness for the first time in her life. Sarah's always liked nice things & kept a nice home, so becoming homeless meant hitting rock bottom for her. She entered rehab again, but this time for herself, and it worked. Sarah says, "If I'm not going to rehab to get clean for myself, it's not going to work...you gotta want it in order to get it."

Last summer, Sarah entered Homeward Bound's Room in the Inn program, where she found stability & support. She began attending substance abuse groups & she got involved in other community addiction programs. And when her name came up on Homeward Bound's

Pathways to Permanent Housing list for an apartment, she waited until one became available away from downtown, where she knew she had addiction triggers.

In April 2011, Sarah moved into her own apartment in South Asheville, away from temptation & close to her son & his family. She's in a brand new building with neighbors she already knows and an apartment no one's ever lived in but her. Thanks to the support of her HOPE to HOME team, her apartment's also fully furnished, and she has visitors on a regular basis who stop in to chat & see how she's doing in her new home.

Because of Homeward Bound's programs & her own dedication, it's a new day for Sarah. She's rebuilding old relationships and building new ones, and she's seeking the support she needs to stay clean and well. Most importantly, she's stable in her own home, and she plans to keep it that way.

Bill

housed since February 2011



Bill doesn't match the stereotype most people think of when they think of homelessness. He's got a degree in political science from UNC-Asheville. He worked as a furniture mover for 17 years. He reads the paper every day, and he can tell you what policies *Looking Homeward: the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Asheville and Buncombe County* promotes. But before moving into his own apartment this February, Bill was homeless for 5 years, right here in Asheville.

When manufacturing jobs started moving overseas, Bill lost his job, and had a hard time finding another one. He started drinking more & more heavily, and eventually lost his housing. For five years he spent his days drinking and his nights staying here or there, with friends or in shelters or camping out. And he came to Homeward Bound's A HOPE Day Center most days, where he knew he could get some coffee, have his mail checked, do his laundry & take showers, and store his stuff.

A HOPE staff had been talking to Bill about housing, but he wasn't ready. But last fall, when it started to get colder out, he started to change his mind. He began working with Homeward Bound's substance abuse counselors and attending group meetings, and he got sober. He applied for public housing, and through a new partnership between Homeward

Bound and the Housing Authority, he got priority on the waitlist to get in, as long as he agreed to a year of case management from Homeward Bound once he was housed.

On February 1st, 2011, Bill moved into his own apartment downtown! He didn't move in to an empty apartment, because he's also participating in Homeward Bound's HOPE to HOME program. Through HOPE to HOME, Bill has a team of 8 volunteers from the faith community who've committed to support him for one year, financially, materially, practically, and relationally. Bill's a likeable guy and had a lot of friends on the streets, but what he didn't have was a sober community around him to support him in this transition to stability. His HOPE to HOME team not only collected furniture & other donations to get him set up in his home, but they also keep him busy! They drive him to doctor's appointments & grocery stores when he needs that kind of support, but mostly they just spend time together, going to the movies or going fishing or sharing a meal, and they're becoming an integral part of the support system he needs to stabilize.

Now that he's got a home, he's able to move forward with some goals he's set for himself. He's working part time with Home Free Bagels, and hoping to grow that to a full-time job. He's working on his computer skills with the help of his HOPE to HOME team, and he's starting to exercise and get in shape. He serves on the board of a local nonprofit. And most importantly, he's staying sober and stabilizing more & more each day.

Bill's story is a great picture of the way Homeward Bound's programs work together! Because of our substance abuse counselors, basic services at A HOPE, partnership with volunteers from the faith community, and focus on permanent housing, Bill's been able to access the services he's needed to make the transition from homelessness to home.



Trisha

housed since February 2011

Trisha only has to know you for a minute before she starts calling you "baby," and her sass makes you smile. In February 2010, she moved out of Room in the Inn and, through

Pathways to Permanent Housing & with the support of a HOPE to HOME team, into her own apartment...for the first time in 14 years.

Trisha grew up mostly in Buncombe County, and she's got a lot of family in the area. She often spends her days with her mother in her apartment in public housing, and she's close to her sister, who lives in one of the new Depot apartments built by Mountain Housing Opportunities. She has three kids—2 of them live in South Carolina, but her baby boy is here & in school at A-B Tech, and is the most responsible & well-mannered young man imaginable.

So if homelessness is caused by a lack of support & Trisha had all that family around, why was she homeless? She's a crack addict, and that played a big part, but the rest of it is something we see often: that even though she had relational supports, those people weren't healthy enough themselves to support her through that addiction crisis & back into wellness.

When Trisha came to Room in the Inn, she was coming out of prison, where she'd landed because of drug charges. She stayed in Room in the Inn for almost a year, stabilizing in her sobriety, making friends, and making plans.

In January 2011, Trisha was approved for housing & started getting prepared for the transition. Because she'd been homeless so long, she was scared to sleep alone in her apartment, and scared about housing in general. But because she's connected to Homeward Bound, she has the support of the Room in the Inn director, she attends weekly support group meetings of A HOPE's substance abuse program, she has a HOPE to HOME team who made her house a home & continues to support her relationally, and she has a case manager through Pathways to Permanent Housing. In addition to her friends & family, Trisha has the support she needs to stabilize the parts of her life that are challenging for her, to move forward in her recovery, and to move out of homelessness, for good.



Paul & Brittany, and baby Howie

housed since December 2010

After a childhood of abuse and trauma, Paul spent his adolescence on the road with his long-haul trucker father, along with his mother and younger brother. When he turned 21, the trucking company considered him an adult and wouldn't allow him to continue traveling with his family. With no place to go home to, Paul headed to Knoxville, where he had a friend willing to put him up while he figured things out. But when he got to Knoxville, his one-person support system fell through, and he ended up without housing, resources, or people to turn to. He was homeless in Knoxville for a year and a half, before he headed to Asheville for a fresh start in 2008.

Brittany grew up in Asheville. Like Paul, she had a rough childhood, and when some family relationships got too difficult, she became homeless. Her first few months of homelessness were spent in Homeward Bound's Room In The Inn program. She was pregnant, and Homeward Bound staff helped her get into public housing with her child's father. They lived there for two years, but he was abusive and addicted to opiates, so when they eventually split up & were evicted, Brittany became homeless again, and their daughter Zoey entered the custody of a family member. She met Paul at Homeward Bound's A HOPE Day Center at the end of 2009, and they began a relationship of supporting each other through survival on the streets.

In February of 2010, Brittany got pregnant! Paul had had some bad experiences in emergency shelters in Knoxville, so in his homeless tenure in Asheville, he opted to camp, and Brittany camped with him. When her pregnancy got too far along for camping, she started staying at the Western Carolina Rescue Ministries shelter, where she continued to stay another two months after little Howie was born in October.

Paul had applied for public housing through the Housing Authority back in the summer, and was facing a wait of 12-18 months before his name got to the top of the list. But because he'd been homeless for more than a year, he qualified for Homeward Bound's new partnership with the Housing Authority, in which he'd be given priority on the waitlist as long as Homeward Bound agreed to provide case management to him once he got into housing. Brittany's name had to be added to the application in order for them to get into housing as a family, but because she'd been evicted with her previous partner, she had some old eviction debt to clear before she was eligible for public housing again. Homeward Bound had some grant funding to cover some of the debt, but more than \$200 still had to be paid for Paul & Brittany to be housed.

Enter HOPE to HOME! In October, Homeward Bound began managing this new program that had originated in discussions with leaders in the faith community about how to go beyond serving meals to actually solve the problem of homelessness. HOPE to HOME pairs teams of volunteers from faith groups with a person or family who's been homeless as they move into

permanent housing. The teams help them get set up in their new homes, then support them practically – by providing things like budgeting help and transportation – and relationally for their first year in housing while they stabilize. For all of those reasons, and because HOPE to HOME also provides some financial support, it was a perfect fit for Paul & Brittany, who were partnered with the very first HOPE to HOME team! The team’s financial contribution covered the needed \$200, and in December, Paul & Brittany were approved for public housing. Three days before Christmas, they got the keys to their new apartment, and moved into a home, not only for the holidays, but for good, and for the first time as a family.

Now that they’re in housing, the work has just begun. The HOPE to HOME team volunteers got them set up in their new home with furniture and household goods, and got to work right away providing practical support to them. Team volunteers drive Brittany to her weekly visitation with Zoey, whom she’s seeking custody of in court. They’ve talked with Paul & Brittany about meal planning and budgeting their food stamps so they last the whole month. One team member was able to connect Paul with a friend for part-time employment, which allowed Paul & Brittany to pay their first month’s rent of \$50.

Paul & Brittany are more stable than they’ve been in a long time, thanks to Homeward Bound’s work with the Housing Authority. But because they’re no longer in survival mode, they’re dealing with a new set of challenges: how to live together, how to be parents to Howie together, and how to take the next step beyond finding meals and shelter, which is all they’ve known for the past year. And that’s why HOPE to HOME matters, because Paul & Brittany need some support to figure out what it’s like to live in housing, and what stability will look like for them. They haven’t had many people invest in them along the way, and when the team members spend time with them, they light up under the attention. They’ve also got case management support from Homeward Bound, so there’s someone to help them figure out how to access public job programs that will help them get started, what to do if they can’t pay their rent this month, and how to get access to an attorney to help win the custody battle for Zoey.

Paul & Brittany grew up without stability. But because of Homeward Bound and HOPE to HOME, Zoey and Howie won’t. Homeward Bound works to *end the cycle of homelessness*, and Paul, Brittany, Zoey, and Howie are all evidence of that. As a young family newly housed, they have a chance at stabilizing, healing, and becoming self-sufficient. And as HOPE to HOME participants, they have a safety net of caring relationships to support them while they do it, and to catch them if they start to fall. Paul & Brittany are hopeful that Zoey and Howie will grow up never knowing what it’s like to be homeless, and everyone on their HOPE to HOME team as well as the staff at Homeward Bound joins them in believing that they’ll never become homeless again.