

For Immediate Release

When one door closes, another opens

The Other Place announces name change to Homefull to better reflect the organization's mission and direction

Dayton, OH—Jeannette Finch's apartment in the sprawling, 19th century brick building on the V.A. Medical Center's grounds is nothing fancy. The home features a bathroom and an open living area that contains the kitchen, living room and a bed. Yet, to the 43-year-old Dayton native, the quarters represent the end of a long and emotionally painful journey and the beginning of a better life.

Sitting on a comfortable couch and occasionally glancing at the photos of her children and her granddaughter that adorn the coffee table, Finch vividly describes the tale of how a tumultuous childhood marked by emotional abuse and drug addiction evolved into a lengthy period of jail time, chronic homelessness and even a stint in prison before she was—as she describes—“rescued” by The Other Place, the Dayton-based organization that provides an array of services designed to help people who are homeless become citizens who have their own place to call home. Finch is one of the featured speakers at today's event, which marks the announcement that The Other Place will change its name to Homefull on July 1 to better reflect the organization's mission and direction.

Finch, who attended Wilbur Wright High School in the early 1980s, was introduced to drugs when she was just 12. For awhile, Finch says, she “cleaned up her life.” She married and had three children, but her husband was verbally abusive to her and the children so one day in 1994 she packed their belongings and moved out but struggled raising them on her own. The subsidized housing where she lived was not conducive to recovery. Finch spent a decade that includes multiple episodes of homelessness.

“I always wanted to change, but I didn't know who to turn to and where to start,” Finch explained. “Then I found The Other Place.”

Created as a homeless shelter in 1988 in the basement of Dayton's Christ Episcopal Church, The Other Place has dramatically evolved. It is now a comprehensive continuum of services designed to help people who are homeless become citizens who have their own place to call home. When The Other Place debuted as a shelter in 1988, it housed 20 people. Today, the organization assists more than 550 people daily.

“We provide a broad range of direct services to those who are currently experiencing homelessness, are at risk of homelessness, or are formerly homeless,” said Tina Patterson,

the organization's Executive Director. "The goal is to help people out of homelessness and make sure they never experience homelessness again."

For years, The Other Place served as a daytime homeless shelter and the St. Vincent Hotel operated as the overnight homeless shelter in Dayton. Then, in November 2009, Dayton saw the opening a 24-hour "gateway shelter" for single men, giving the community two separate 24-hour shelters for the first time.

The Other Place provides case management and programming for the gateway shelter system while St. Vincent de Paul provides all the meals and shelter operations. The organizations work closely together.

The Other Place case managers work one-on-one with clients in the gateway shelters with the primary goal of moving them into appropriate permanent housing, and out of the shelter system. The Other Place provides educational classes for shelter clients, including basic life skills and job search and employability courses. Through its community partnerships with other organizations, The Other Place is able to offer additional services such as employment, legal and veterans' assistance, and credit counseling.

"For some people, homelessness is quite temporary and for others it is a long-term issue," said Trudy Elder, who is director of housing for The Other Place. "This is why we offer such a broad range of services because we wouldn't be fulfilling our objective to eliminate homelessness in our community if our residents just remained in shelters and had no further assistance."

On June 30, the doors of The Other Place will close and the next day, July 1, will mark the beginning of Homefull, the same services and mission but a new name to more accurately reflect the organization's direction. The organization's new name and rebranding was spearheaded by FORGE, a Dayton creative marketing firm.

The most significant example of FORGE's innovative vision is the Forge Your Dot Org program, which debuted this year. Forge Your Dot Org was created to offer one Miami Valley non-profit organization free branding and creative services for one year. This includes pro-bono expertise in identity design, print design, website design, and web application development.

FORGE announced the program last fall and developed an application process that generated 24 entries. The firm narrowed the field to four finalists and chose The Other Place "because of their vision to eliminate homelessness."

"For The Other Place, we created a new name and are implementing a rebranding strategy including a new website, marketing materials and a public relations campaign,"

FORGE CEO Chad Mullins said. “The name Homefull more aptly describes what the organization is all about.”

Finch agrees. So does Walter Roberts. The 40-year-old single father moved out because of overcrowding. He and his 13-year-old daughter Chelsea had nowhere to go, so they entered the Gateway shelter for a month and are preparing to move into their own home with assistance from The Other Place’s housing relocation program. Roberts, a drywall contractor who had trouble finding work and struggled to pay child support, is attending Dayton Barber College and expects to graduate this year and start his new career. He will then take on responsibility for paying fair market rent and household expenses.

“They are giving me the guidance and the support to help me in my goal to be a better man and be a productive member of society and a good father to my daughters,” said Roberts, who is telling his story at today’s event. “This has been a very humbling experience. Now, more than ever, I appreciate who I am and what I’ve been given. Our new place might be a two-bedroom apartment to some people, but for me and my daughter, it represents a new start.”

As for Finch, who receives disability benefits because of multiple health problems, The Other Place is giving her the support to help her reach her ultimate objective: independent living so that she can take care of her 19-year-old son, Desmond, who is disabled.

“Since I’ve been here, I’ve been off drugs, pay my rent on time and have been able to save money, but most importantly, I’ve turned my life around,” Finch said with a smile. “I feel good about the present and look forward to what’s ahead for me because I know I will have a home. For so long, I felt like there was no hope. Now my life is full of possibilities because I don’t feel alone.”

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