



# HUNDRED NIGHTS INC.

Reaching for the Warmth of Home

EMERGENCY SHELTER AND YEAR ROUND OPEN DOORS RESOURCE CENTER

Hello!

As we look forward to spring and warm weather, we pause to thank you for your ongoing support of Hundred Nights and to share an update on our short- and long-term efforts to improve the way we deliver our mission of providing shelter and crisis-related services to individuals and families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in the Monadnock Region.

## Capital Project Update

A lawsuit against the City of Keene Zoning Board of Adjustment was filed in Cheshire County Superior Court on November 25, 2020 contesting the zoning variance granted for 122/124 Water Street in Keene, the proposed future site of a permanent emergency shelter and resource center facility. A hearing was held on March 5, 2021, where William C. Saturley of Preti, Flaherty, Beliveau & Pachios, LLP represented Hundred Nights as pro-bono legal counsel.

We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of support from community members who wrote letters and attended zoning board meetings, and the Superior Court hearing in March, to advocate for the variance and those in need of services provided by Hundred Nights.

While we await the judge's decision, and another 30-day appeal period, our capital project team is hard at work developing site plans and building designs to redevelop the property. Our Advocacy Committee is simultaneously working to create a community engagement plan to connect with our future neighbors at Water Street about the project and to discuss ideas, questions, or concerns they have about our services and our impact in the community. We want to ensure our new neighbors feel heard and that all feel welcome and safe in our neighborhood. Please contact us at [hundrednightsinc@gmail.com](mailto:hundrednightsinc@gmail.com) or 352-5197 if you would like to meet our team and learn more about us. We will continue to keep you updated on local approvals and the planning process.

## COVID-19 and Hundred Nights 2021-2022 Operating Plan

When a national emergency was declared a year ago, Hundred Nights responded quickly to ensure its shelters and resource center continued to be safe and welcoming spaces for guests and those volunteers who felt they could continue. Here is our current adjusted operating plan:

- There are 24 beds plus two staff beds at the Lamson Street facility. Beds are distanced six feet apart, arranged for head-to-toe sleeping, and separated by heavy-duty fire-retardant curtains. An HVAC system with air purifiers is installed and restrooms are updated to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and keep people as safe as possible.
- We are leasing twelve rooms at the Holiday Inn Express through early May 2021, and again from November 1, 2021 through early May 2022. Thank you to the amazing staff at the Holiday Inn for your support!
- We provide up to twelve sleeping bunks in a used sleeper coach bus that is parked in a lot adjacent to the Lamson Street facility. The bus has two portable air purifiers running during the night in addition to three roof-top filters. Thank you to Cheshire County for the use of your parking lot this winter!
- We operate a temporary resource center decompression site until May 31, 2021 in the former St. James Church thrift shop space on Federal Street in Keene. The space is about four times the size of the current resource center and is a tremendous asset to help keep people physically distanced and warm during the day. (The space cannot be used at night as it lacks sprinklers). Thank you, St. James!

All sites are staffed with an overnight supervisor to ensure the safety of Hundred Nights guests and guests must follow shelter rules at all locations. The "silver lining" in the tragedy of the pandemic is that most of these modifications and temporary sites are made possible by the NH GOFERR Shelter Modification Program in tandem with other sources of CARES Act funding such as NERF, NHHFA, CDBG-CV and ESG-CV.

Hundred Nights is also fortunate to have a fantastic team of volunteers, committee members and Board members who are dedicated to finding solutions to meet the needs of those experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. We are hopeful that with the growing support of our community, we will succeed in our efforts to provide better shelter and services to those we serve.

We wish you and your family good health and as much joy as you can muster as this year progresses.

Sincerely,

Jan Peterson, Board Chair

Mindy Cambiar, Executive Director

P.S. Visit our newly designed website at [www.hundrednightsinc.org](http://www.hundrednightsinc.org) to learn more about the services we offer at Hundred Nights.



## MISSION STATEMENT

*The Mission of Hundred Nights, Inc. is to provide shelter and crisis related services to the displaced or homeless. Our goal is to collaborate with and enable the community to see, hear and support those among us who are equally deserving of dignity but who currently lack the means to live independently. Our Vision is that every individual in the Cheshire County area will have access to appropriate, stable housing so they can live safe, productive and satisfying lives and be respected members of their community.*

# DERYCK'S SUCCESS STORY



Each of us goes through cycles in our lives – sometimes high points, and sometimes not so much. One young man, Deryck, has gone through a lifetime of ups and downs in the past couple of years, but thanks to Hundred Nights and Deryck's own commitment to turning his life around, he is finally doing well. But we want to share his particular story, because it illustrates how hard it is to climb back up once life has knocked you down.

In 2019, Deryck had just been released from jail in another state and moved up to New Hampshire to live with his girlfriend. "I moved up here with \$20 in my pocket, a backpack full of clothes and that was it... I just wanted to start working and get on my feet." And he did—Deryck landed two good part-time jobs, "all while living in the woods."

For several months, Deryck used services at Hundred Nights and other community resources. He got an apartment and married his girlfriend, but the lease fell through, as did his jobs. "When I couldn't find any work here [in Keene], I went back down to Connecticut. There, I was sleeping in my car, living off my unemployment checks, drinking and doing stuff I shouldn't have been doing—just starting to give up again," he admits. Eventually, he came back up to NH, hoping to reconcile with his wife. When his car broke down, he was left living in the woods again. "I was staying behind Hannaford's in a tent with my two cats, getting very little unemployment money, but just making sure the cats had enough food."

**It's either work hard and keep trying or just give up... and I really didn't want to give up.**

Deryck knew he wanted to get clean, so finally he quit cold-turkey. "I just wanted to be sober," he said. He continued to get support from Hundred Nights, and soon got a job working nights at Dunkin Donuts, but saving money was nearly impossible because of the low wages. He desperately wanted proper housing and looked daily for new job openings and apartments for rent. He spoke of the summer and fall of 2020 being one of the lowest moments of his life. "I kept telling myself, 'Once I get over these obstacles and do it clean, I'm going to feel so much better'. It's either work hard and keep trying or just give up... and I really didn't want to give up."

Deryck didn't give up, and he stayed sober. At the end of 2020, Deryck's brother gifted him a car because he saw how hard and long Deryck had been working to get a job. In late December, Deryck finally got a full-time job with benefits and a wage he could live on. He happily shared that this is "a career-type job" and that he was excited to be there. But Deryck still needed to find a place to live besides his car – a place to take showers and do laundry, and a place to live with his wife. Finally, after months of searching for an affordable place to live, Deryck found an apartment in Keene, registered his car, got his driver's license renewed—which Hundred Nights was able to help pay for—and moved into a real home. Life is finally looking up.

When reflecting on how far he's come, Deryck acknowledges the role that his sobriety and organizations like Hundred Nights and the Keene Salvation Army played in his success, saying, "If I hadn't done this clean, I probably wouldn't have gotten here... With you guys here, it helped me be able to find places to work, to have shelter, to charge my phone, to eat, use the bathroom, do laundry; otherwise, I wouldn't have had anywhere to do any of that stuff and it would've put me in a harder position to get out of. You really helped me get out of the bad headspace. Without you two, I probably would've just said 'I'm done.'"



Happy Hundred Nights staff pictured outside of the "new" 1999 coach bus, which is parked in the Cheshire County Lamson Street parking lot next to the shelter.

Hundred Nights got permission from the county officials in late December 2020 to keep the bus parked there through the end of April. It is being used to shelter 10-12 people over the winter. A San Antonio, Texas Dept of Health and Human services employee saw the article about the bus in their local paper, and called Hundred Nights to congratulate us on the creative repurposing of the bus. San Antonio has been investigating using "retired" school buses for shelter space; our bus, "Lightning" was the very first actual instance that they found of it actually happening. We named the bus Lightning after a quote from Ken Kesey, "I'm tired of waiting for an echo, I want to be a lightning rod."



There are 12 total bunks inside the renovated VanHool bus, along with a small living room area, kitchenette and bathroom. Rumor has it that the bus formerly belonged to a band. If we ever find out which band we will be sure to let you know! Hundred Nights is currently sheltering between 10-12 men inside the bus each night. Surprisingly, the beds are long and spacious and everyone who has spent a night on the bus has truly enjoyed it. One of our guests even shared how sleeping on the bus made him reminisce about his time spent living and sleeping on submarines in the Navy! We are extremely grateful that the bus was allowed to provide shelter this winter, as we have been at capacity in the 24 bed Lamson St Shelter.



A county-wide appeal for hats, gloves, scarves was led by the Offices of Keene Mayor George Hansel in January 2021, in coordination with several local businesses, non-profits, and schools. After dropping off the donated goods in mid-January, the warm accessories were distributed to those in need at the shelter and in the community. Pictured left-to-right: (back row) *Pierre Morton* from Franklin Pierce University, *Mayor George Hansel* of the City of Keene, *Daniel Smith* from the Keene Family YMCA; (front row) *Nicole Wood* from Hundred Nights, *Tiffany Hogan* from TPI Staffing, and *Mindy Cambiar*, Executive Director of Hundred Nights, Inc.



Hundred Nights Executive Director *Mindy Cambiar* stands with *Bill, Donovan* and *Katie Fenton* of Fenton Family Dealerships and several Subaru of Keene employees, holding a few of the 80 warm and waterproof blankets that were donated through Subaru's "Loves to Help" event in late 2020.



*Josephine Russell* of Aloha Healthy Living (right) stands with *Nicole Wood* of Hundred Nights (left), after Aloha held a Thanksgiving fundraiser in November of 2020 to collect donations and goods for the Shelter and Resource Center.



*Hannah* (left) has been working as a Case Manager for Hundred Nights since November 2020. Though she only recently began working with us, Hannah has been a volunteer since 2012. She is currently a senior at Keene State College studying Psychology and Addictions. Hannah works with our guests to make sure that they have ID's, Social Security cards and birth certificates, and that anyone eligible has applied for benefits, security deposits and housing assistance. She connects clients with services from other agencies, all in order to help our guests each work towards their personal goal of housing stability.



Hundred Nights staff members, *Nicole* and *Ashley*, stand with two National Guardsmen, as they dropped off personal protective equipment (PPE) for Hundred Nights, to help stock the shelter in its battle against the coronavirus.

*Nicole* (right) has been working as the Administrative Assistant for Hundred Nights since August 2020. She is a recent graduate of Keene State College, where she received her Bachelor's degree in May of 2020. Her interest in nonprofit work first brought her to Hundred Nights, and her passion for serving the Keene community has kept her here! As the Administrative Assistant, Nicole oversees all donations (both financial and in-kind goods), assists with the organization's publications and mailings, performs community outreach to partner agencies, helps to coordinate our volunteers, and drafts reports for USDA, DHHS, HMIS and the United Way.



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Several young people from the Church of Latter Day Saints. have come in to volunteer over the last several months. Here is what one of them, *Sister Norris* - pictured on the right - had to say about her experience, which ended just this week:

"Volunteering at Hundred Nights was such a great opportunity for me. I have gained such an appreciation for those around me and for all the hard work that goes into helping the members of our community. Everyone at Hundred Nights is very dedicated to helping others and really helped me have an incredible experience while I was there. I'm very grateful for the Hundred Nights family and for all they do to make the world a better place. I'm forever changed by the experiences I had while volunteering."

## COVID-19 UPDATE

*We are pleased to share that during this past month of March, 75% of our adult guest population at Hundred Nights was able to receive one or both of their COVID-19 vaccination shots! After several weeks of working with Dartmouth Hitchcock Keene on logistics, the hospital/ clinic allowed Hundred Nights to book vaccination appointments for that first week of March! Starting March 2nd, 30 individuals experiencing homelessness, 13 Hundred Nights staff members, and 18 volunteers received the first of two shots. Our appointments for the second dose are scheduled for the last week in March, so by the end of the month, the large majority of us at the shelter will be fully vaccinated! A huge thank you goes out to our frontline healthcare workers, staff at Dartmouth Hitchcock Keene, and the National Guardsmen who are operating the facility at Krif Rd. What a privilege, blessing, and turning point in this pandemic!*

## WISH LIST

*Thank you to everyone who so generously donates items that are needed here at Hundred Nights!! We all appreciate everything that you bring here. This is what is most needed at this time:*

- Sturdy paper plates, bowls, cups, plastic utensils (someday we hope to not use these!)
- Paper towels, napkins, toilet paper
- Sugar and powdered creamer, hot c3 hocolate
- Powdered drink mixes (lemonade, ice tea, Tang, etc)
- Cereal, strawberry and grape jelly
- Individually wrapped cheese slices, mayo, mustard
- Mens jeans - all sizes - especially 30-36 waist and 30 - 36 length
- Deodorant, razors, shaving cream for men and women
- Full size conditioner and shampoo
- Small packets of Q-tips, chapstick, medicated foot powder
- New or gently used, not stained, no holes, mens boxers and womens panties and bras - all sizes
- HE Laundry detergent
- New and gently used T-shirts, hoodies, lighter weight jackets for women and men - all sizes
- Backpacks, flashlights and tents
- Spray air freshener
- Heavy duty trash bags - 13, 30 and 55 gallon
- Gift Cards for grocery stores and office supplies