

## Meaningful Transformations

**H**ave you ever completed a home renovation that had a profound impact on your life? Can you imagine transforming three entire properties within 12 months to positively affect the lives of dozens of individuals?

During the past year, Wellspring has completed renovations on 47 out of 51 housing units, providing life-changing homes for homeless adults with serious mental illness (SMI) in Louisville. The final property, purchased in August, is currently under renovation, with four additional units set to be move-in ready soon. Properties in beautiful neighborhoods that would not have been affordable now house previously homeless clients with SMI. Wellspring's dedicated staff offer support, assisting each individual with their mental health recovery. The photos below show the physical transformation of the buildings, but the true transformations are unfolding within the lives of each client now housed and supported.

"I've had about a half dozen moments in the last year when, while touring apartments with prospective tenants or helping them with lease paperwork, they became overwhelmed and started to cry," says Nick Murphy, Wellspring's Director of Housing. "Each of those moments was accompanied by statements like 'I never thought I'd live anywhere this nice' or 'I've been homeless for so long - please tell me this is real'. Those were the days when I went home feeling the most proud of what we do--and humbled by all the blessings in my own life."

Of the completed units, nearly 70% are now occupied, with no shortage of referrals.

One of the new buildings features 2-bedroom units, which has allowed Wellspring to assist more families. A previously homeless mother and her two young sons moved in in January, and they are thriving in their new space near Bellarmine University, where they can easily walk to schools and parks.

This past year has also highlighted ongoing needs, such as bridging gaps in funding to help cover essential household items that weren't covered by the grant funding that enabled Wellspring to launch this ambitious project. Additionally, many clients need support with Life Skills--skills they may not have developed or have become rusty during their time while homeless.

"For many of these folks, they're transitioning from shelters or the streets to an entirely different world overnight," says Murphy.

However, their new world now includes Wellspring's supportive staff. With a daily on-site presence, staff provide case management, peer support, life skills coaching and counseling, giving each newly housed client the opportunity to strengthen their personal recovery and improve their quality of life. That is Wellspring's mission, and we are grateful to have 51 new units of housing available to carry out these meaningful transformations.



# Endurance, Art & Brandon's Recovery

Endurance is one characteristic Brandon uses to describe his recovery journey, and it is the way he signs the amazing art he creates – much of which now decorates his apartment walls. One year ago, at age 28, Brandon became one of the earliest residents of Wellspring's newest supported housing properties for formerly homeless adults with mental illness. The art on his walls helps him clear his mind and, he says, helps him connect with his faith.

Brandon's childhood was tumultuous due to his mother's struggles with drug addiction. They moved often and lived in at least four states before he was placed in foster care. At age 8 an aunt and uncle here in Louisville adopted him and provided him a stable life, but in high school he began using drugs. After he graduated from a local high school in 2015, his aunt and uncle asked him to leave their house because of his drug use. He lived in an apartment, but again, his drug use led to an eviction, and he became homeless.

During this challenging period, he met a spiritual mentor who helped guide him. He studied scripture at a church where

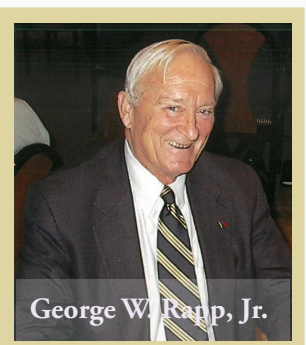
he slept. However, in 2023, he was hospitalized due to racing thoughts, agitated behavior and episodes of catatonia. He was diagnosed with Schizophrenia and placed on medication. He was released from the hospital to a Wellspring Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) where he spent about a month.

Wellspring CSU staff helped him begin his recovery and he rekindled his passion for drawing and painting. While at the CSU, staff also helped secure an apartment in Wellspring's newest housing program which kept him from being homeless again.



Brandon uses the artist signature "Endure20," a phrase inspired by his favorite Bible verse that says, "He that shall endure unto the end will be saved". Brandon's endurance along with his artistry strengthens his recovery journey, and Wellspring is also there to help him every step of the way.

## Remembering George W. Rapp Jr.



For more than 30 years George Rapp, Jr. personified the ever-constant, objective wisdom of an enlightening North Star for Wellspring's Board of Directors. George died on December 20, 2024, but like a great star, his light will continue to shine through his legacy with Wellspring.

"George is someone all of us could count on for wise counsel," said Wellspring CEO Kathy Dobbins. "He rarely missed a meeting, joining by phone - and later Zoom - even when he was enjoying his Augusts in Maine. He was a kind, considerate, and insightful man which are exactly the traits needed to help a fledgling organization grow into a mature one. He was always focused on sustaining the organization to achieve its mission."

George served Wellspring's Board of Directors consistently for 30 years. Even after the Board initiated term limits in the late 1990s, George was granted a one-year rolling term and he was re-elected every year. An Engineering graduate of Yale and former President of an international company, his business

expertise added great insight during Wellspring Finance and Housing Committee discussions. He served as Board Chair from 1996-2000, during which time he helped launch Wellspring's largest fundraiser, the Derby Preview Party, which is now in its 27th year.

In addition to the North Star analogy, several other long-serving Board members describe George's service using terms like "pillar of the organization," "constancy," and "wisdom, humility, encouragement".

"No discussion of an important issue by the Wellspring board was ever complete until we asked, 'What does George think?'" said Wellspring Board member and former Board Chair Alan MacDonald.

As his obituary noted, George was known for his generosity, intellectual curiosity, wit and charm. He was often quiet and contemplative, but always astute and judicious. He cared about those around him, and he was always mindful of Wellspring's clients and the importance of the work needed to provide the housing, hope and behavioral health services that help adults with mental illness have meaningful recovery experiences.

## Legacy Gift

In addition to George's lifetime of generosity to Wellspring, he also left one last, meaningful gift simply by naming Wellspring for the "final grant distribution" from his donor advised fund. George completed a 1-page form that instructed that any remaining fund balance be given to Wellspring. We are very grateful!

If you would like to know more about simple ways you can leave a similar Legacy Gift, please contact Wellspring Development Director, Kim Johnson at 502.753.1453.



# Happy Client Holidays with help from the Trager Family Foundation and other donors!

Please join us in thanking the Trager Family Foundation for sponsoring such an incredible holiday party for our clients! With help from other donors, too, hundreds of clients enjoyed a Wheel of Wellspring



prize table, craft making stations, a delicious meal and each client received a warm pair of socks and gift card. We are so grateful for your support in making this special event possible.

**Thank You to**

## The Independent Order of Odd Fellows

The Independent Order of the Odd Fellows purchased a karaoke machine for a Wellspring music therapy group. It was fun to unwrap this special gift during the Client Holiday Party and clients are enjoying making music together and finding it helpful on their road to recovery!



## COMING SOON...

**More Affordable Housing**

**Bridlewood Groundbreaking**



In December, Wellspring broke ground with co-developers Woda Cooper Companies to build a 76-unit affordable housing community designated for adults 55+ in southwest Jefferson County with dozens of units set aside specifically for Wellspring clients.

For the 2nd year in a row, Aetna Better Health provided funding to purchase household and hygiene items so that Aetna volunteers could fill more than 30 welcome baskets for Wellspring's clients moving into new affordable housing after experiencing homelessness.

**THANK YOU AETNA!**



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