



MESSAGES OF CARE

Community • Advocacy • Resolve • Empower

Fall/Winter 2026

WORLD AIDS DAY 2026

Home Is Where Health Begins

Join us on World AIDS Day as we honor the lives lost to the HIV epidemic, celebrate the progress we've made, and reaffirm what every person living with HIV deserves: a safe place to call home and the opportunity to live a healthy, stable, and independent life.

100% of House of Mercy clients maintain engagement in medical care while receiving housing support.

Housing is healthcare.

Stable housing helps people stay connected to care, manage medications, maintain employment, and focus on what comes next.



4th Annual World AIDS Day Luncheon
Tuesday, December 1, 2026
11:30 AM–1:00 PM
Belmont, NC



Register, donate or become a sponsor
at www.thehouseofmercy.org/events
or call **704-825-4711 ext. 6**

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Latoya Gardner pictured with Kristi Walters, Director of Higher Education with The Duke Endowment at the Launch Carolinas graduation

LATOYA GARDNER, J.D.
President & CEO

“The progress
of a society is
tied to its
ability to hope.”

— Helen Amos,
Sisters of Mercy

Home Is Where Health Begins

Dear Friends,

Every day, we are reminded that lasting change happens when people, organizations, and communities come together around a shared purpose. During my time with Launch Carolinas, I reflected on what transformative leadership demands today: cultivating meaningful partnerships, expanding opportunity, and creating pathways for people to thrive.

Our mission has never been just about providing shelter and supportive services; it is about creating an environment where every individual is seen, valued, and thrives. The insights gained from Launch Carolinas challenged me to think about how we expand partnerships, strengthen advocacy, and increase opportunities for the people we serve.

Obey's story reminds us that housing is more than shelter. It is a foundation for healing, dignity, and hope. Because of supporters like you, individuals facing housing instability have the opportunity to focus on their health and build brighter futures.

Our Ladies Night partnership reflects this same belief: When women have access to education, connection, and honest dialogue, we reduce stigma and strengthen community. Together, we create spaces where women feel seen, valued, and empowered to make informed choices about their health and their lives.

As we mark World AIDS Day this year under the theme “Home is Where Health Begins,” these stories remind us that good health starts with stability, dignity, and belonging. When people have a safe place to call home, they are better able to care for themselves and build the lives they deserve.

Thank you for helping create the stability, dignity, and opportunity that make healing possible. Together, we are building a future where everyone has a safe place to call home.

With gratitude,

Latoya Gardner

Latoya Gardner, J.D.
President & CEO



From Surviving to Thriving

How stable housing helped one resident reclaim his health and build a future.

After receiving an HIV diagnosis in 2019, Obey worked hard to maintain his health and independence. But when reduced work hours and financial hardship left him without stable housing, everything became more difficult. Facing uncertainty about where he would sleep each night, the stress began to take a toll.

When Obey came to House of Mercy, he was living in his car, struggling to access regular meals, and searching for a path back to stability. “I thought I could do it alone,” he said. “This is the first time I’ve had to figure everything out.”

He arrived in a moment of crisis.
What he found was stability.

After being connected with a housing case manager, Obey gained access to support, resources, and safe housing he needed to begin rebuilding his life. Stable housing gave him a place to rest, store his medication, and focus on his physical and emotional well-being.

“Being here has helped me get out of survival mode, feel comfortable, and know that I am loved.”



“Having that support took so much stress off of me,” Obey shared. “I didn’t have to worry about where I was going to sleep or how I was going to get through the next day. It gave me the space to focus on getting healthy and moving forward.”

Because of supporters like you, last year House of Mercy helped:

 34 individuals access safe and stable housing

 70 food boxes provided to Positive Connections clients

 49 people received supportive services

 100% of our clients remained engaged in care

Every number represents a person like Obey who found stability, support, and hope.

Today, Obey is working toward financial stability, permanent housing, and returning to school to study human services. He hopes to use his experience to help others facing similar challenges. “You’d be surprised what can happen when you share your story,” he said. Obey’s story is a reminder that with support, stability, and the opportunity to move forward, a new chapter can begin.



Safe housing gives people living with HIV the foundation to manage their health, regain stability, and build a brighter future. With your support, more individuals like Obey can move from surviving to thriving.

Donate at www.thehouseofmercy.org/donations





“Housing allows our clients to breathe.”

Serving on the House of Mercy board has shown me firsthand the life-changing impact of safe housing and compassionate care for people living with HIV. In August 2026, I was honored to become Chairperson after more than three years of board service.

Housing is more than shelter. It is the foundation for health, stability, and dignity. Safe housing helps people stay connected to medical care, adhere to medications, pursue employment, strengthen family relationships, and focus on building a brighter future.

Early in my career as a social worker, the people I served taught me powerful lessons about dignity, compassion, and hope. I continue this work for the young man whose mother would not touch him, for the person facing the end of life while carrying the weight of stigma, and for every client who deserves to be seen, valued, and treated with dignity.

I am continually inspired by the compassion of our staff, the dedication of our volunteers, and the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy. Together, we open doors of hope and stand with our clients on their journey. Thank you for investing in housing, health, and hope that change lives every day.

Susan Dolphin

Sue Dolphin

Board Chair

LADIES NIGHT: A TALK TO EMPOWER

**Breaking Stigma Through Connection, Education,
and Advocacy**

House of Mercy partnered with the Sisters of Mercy, Carolinas CARE Partnership and NSideOut Excellence to host Ladies Night: A Talk to Empower in recognition of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

The event featured AIDS activist, author, and minister Rae Lewis-Thornton, creating space for education, conversation, and connection.

Because of supporters like you, House of Mercy continues bringing people together to reduce stigma, increase awareness, and create healthier futures.

Black Women Account For

13%

of the US female population, but

52%

of new HIV diagnoses among women

**A disparity that highlights the need for
education, awareness, and community action.**



**Together, We Reduce Stigma and Build
Healthier Communities.**





RESIDENCE WISHLIST



NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS

- Canned meats
- Canned soup
- Peanut butter
- Grape jelly
- Strawberry jelly
- Canned vegetables
- Fresh fruit



TOILETRIES

- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste
- Shaving cream
- Razors
- Toilet paper
- Liquid hand soap



CLEANING SUPPLIES

- Bleach
- Dishwashing soap
- Multipurpose cleaner
- Disposable gloves
- Towels
- Clorox Wipes
- Toilet-Bowl cleaner



Items can be dropped off or delivered to the House of Mercy Residence.

Questions? Call 704-825-4711 ext. 6. You can also give via our Amazon Wishlist by scanning the QR code.



HOUSE OF MERCY UPDATES



CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

Celebrating our residents' birthdays is always a joy. This month, we had the privilege of celebrating two residents and sharing in these special moments with them.

Birthdays are more than just a date on the calendar. They are an opportunity to celebrate life, reflect on the journey, and spend time with the people around us.



Thank you to Charlotte Tradesmen for supporting our resident celebrations.

VOLUNTEER AT HOUSE OF MERCY

WE CURRENTLY HAVE VOLUNTEER NEEDS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Assist with Meal Preparation
- Life Skills Coach
- Guidance counseling/support
- Phone Outreach
- Event Support
- Clerical Support (filing, copies, etc.)

FILL OUT OUR VOLUNTEER FORM ON THE LINK BELOW TO LEARN MORE & GET STARTED!
WWW.THEHOUSEOFMERCY.ORG/VOLUNTEER



MARK YOUR CALENDAR



GIVING TUESDAY + WORLD AIDS DAY LUNCHEON

DECEMBER 1, 2026



LADIES NIGHT: A TALK TO EMPOWER

MARCH 10, 2027



32ND ANNUAL WALK FOR AIDS - BELMONT

APRIL 10, 2027

Mailing Address:

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*Together,
we build hope.*