

DONOR CONNECTION

“My hands were saved!”

Each year, Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net (OSN) helps thousands of individuals experiencing homelessness. Every person we serve is unique, with their own story and challenges as they move toward greater stability and independence. Some stories, like this one, clearly demonstrate the power of compassionate care.



Last winter, our Street Medicine staff at OSN was contacted about Joe,* a person living on the streets who had suffered severe frostbite on all ten fingers. Amputation surgery was done in January and he needed significant help with rehabilitation.

“When I first met Joe, he wasn’t utilizing his shelter bed or following up with his surgeons,” said **Danielle Schnauber Jones**, OSN's nurse practitioner. “He couldn’t feed, bathe, or dress himself, so we stepped in to help him get back to living independently.” She and her colleagues met with Joe three-to-four days a week for two months to assist with the activities of daily living and provide medications and wound care.

In time, Joe regained strength and recovered functioning of his hands. Today, he no longer needs dressings on his hands and is able to hold utensils, bathe and dress himself independently, even brush his own teeth. *“They saved my hands,” said Joe. “Except for my grandma, no one has cared for me more.”*

Through contacts with Allegheny County, Pittsburgh Mercy obtained a service coordinator and arranged for a weekly aide to ensure that Joe continues to improve. We’re now working on finding him a more stable housing situation.

“It’s experiences like these -- and getting to know Joe -- that make me so grateful I’m able to do this work,” said Schnauber Jones.

**The client's name was changed in this article.*

Deep Creek Getaway

A summer vacation at Deep Creek, Maryland, was a memorable trip for four residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities from Fernhill Community Living Arrangement (CLA),* thanks to the leadership of Pittsburgh Mercy counselors

Kristina Crowley and Stefany Foster.

From researching the rental house to ensure accessibility, to bringing along key items that would enhance the ladies' comfort, no detail was overlooked. "We tried to think of everything they would need to feel comfortable while away from home," said Foster. Each activity was tailored to the group's pace and desires:

- A visit to Swallow Falls State Park and its breathtaking waterfall.
- A trip to the local candy store - everyone's favorite!
- Shopping for Deep Creek souvenirs.
- Relaxing on the deck and in the hot tub.
- A Saturday movie night, featuring matching pajamas and handmade tumblers, all courtesy of the counselors. And, of course, popcorn!

Coming off pandemic restrictions, the weekend was an opportunity to enjoy a peaceful setting and time outdoors. All four residents had positive reviews, as did the counselors. "We were just as excited to go on this trip as they were," said Foster. Crowley echoed that and added, "We would definitely do it again. Working in a residential setting, the house becomes a home away from home, and the residents become part of your family."

**Pittsburgh Mercy operates dozens of licensed CLAs in Allegheny County. Each CLA has one to four residents with intellectual disabilities who live together in a home or apartment and receive support and services based on safety, medical, behavioral, and recreational needs. Support levels vary from a minimum of 30 hours per week to 24/7 staff supervision. Learn more on our website.*



Clinking their tumblers together to celebrate movie night.



Enjoying the weather and scenic landscape at Swallow Falls State Park.

#ONEDAY is August 1!

Tuesday, August 1, 2023, is the day you can make a big impact on those experiencing homelessness in the Pittsburgh area.

On #ONEDAY, The Pittsburgh Foundation will provide a prorated match for every donation between \$25 and \$1,000, making your gift go even further.

Mark your calendar and visit www.pittsburghgives.org/PittsburghMercy from 8 am - 11:59 pm to make your gift to Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net.

Each donation helps us fulfill our mission to serve Pittsburgh's most vulnerable population. With your support, we can help more than 2,500 individuals experiencing homelessness find stability and move toward greater independence.

Thank you!

Any questions, contact development@pittsburghmercy.org.



*"Pittsburgh Mercy's
Operation Safety Net,
helped find a shelter
for me and my dog."*

#ONEDAY IS AUG. 1

PittsburghGives.org



Pittsburgh Mercy | 1200 Reedsdale St, Pittsburgh, PA 15233

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