

WALKING THE GOOD ROAD TOGETHER

by Dale J. Pierce, President and CEO of Different Roads Home

What Christmas time means to me

As the holidays approach what are you thankful for? I know that I have so much to be grateful and thankful for, a roof over my head, a warm place to sleep, a circle of family and friends that love and support me, a job that I love, my health and so much more.

Many of you are just as lucky and Blessed as I am. Imagine what the holidays would be like if you didn't have these things? So many people that suffer from chronic illnesses like HIV go without these things we take for granted. Imagine a life without the support of your family and friends, facing stigma for something that happened to you that you may have not had any control over. Imagine a table at the holidays that stood empty and plates and cupboards that were empty every day. Imagine battling a chronic illness that is manageable, but YOU couldn't afford healthcare or medications. Imagine on top of all this, homelessness, a sense of isolation, and even worse addiction or mental illness.

At Rosedale Medical (our clinical partner) and Different Roads Home we can't solve every problem for every person, but we do make it our mission to try. When I founded Different Roads Home back in 2012, a young man that helped to design our look and logo also came up with a tagline that we still use today; "Help in the Right Direction." We work hard every single day to offer services like a food pantry, support groups, a buddy system,

SAFE Space and Trans-friendly programming, a computer lab, (soon to come, resume and interview classes), housing assistance, and linkage to medical care and affordable healthcare options.

The basic fact is that we can make a difference in the lives of people in our community, but we can't do it alone. WE need YOU. Your time, your effort, your support, and your donations. While we as an organization remain nonpartisan in political matters and stay open and accepting to people of any faith tradition, I personally am not ashamed to say that as a LGBT professional who is also a Christian, I know that the one I serve gave up so much for me, so that I could do more for others. In fact, He came to a world literally dying to know Him and never asked anything from us in return but for our faith. Faith that together we can do the great works that He started so many centuries ago. If we all lived and acted a little more like Jesus would truly act, the world would be a better place. Not the actions of extremists on either side of the position, but people who really wanted to model their behavior after the one that came to die for our sins so long ago. How about all these people wanting to act more like

Christ reaching out and working at a soup kitchen, giving a blanket to a homeless person, or lifting up a neighbor in need.

I know, we all get wrapped up in the magic and majesty of the season and I am no different.

But I think about my two Godsons that are 2 and 4 and wonder what kind of example I am setting for them and what kind of world I am leaving behind for them. I wish everyone could see the expressions of thanks on the faces on Tuesdays when we hand out food at Different Roads Home. I admittedly DREAD going grocery shopping at times, but what if I didn't have that option; what if any of us didn't? I hate getting up and going to work when the alarm goes off, but what if I didn't have a job? I hate cleaning the house and mowing the lawn, but what if I didn't have a place to live? Admittedly, I even dread going to family holiday gatherings at times, but what if I didn't have a family that loved and accepted me? As I sit here and write this article in bed, I wonder what if I didn't have a place to sleep.

I know we all have choices to make and decisions that our neighbors may not know about. What I ask you to do this holiday season is reflect on what you have and think about those less fortunate and how you can make a difference in their life. We, at Different Roads Home, would be happy to help you facilitate being that change, that you want to see in the world. You can call our office or stop by or visit us on social media and the web at www.differentroadshome.org or call us at 704-237-8793 to see what can and needs to be done. You might be surprised how simple it could be. Volunteering to serve with us or making a one-time donation or even a monthly gift, you can change the lives of those in our own backyards right here in North Carolina. Whatever you choose to do or not do, wherever you choose to volunteer or donate, I urge you to give yourself the greatest gift this season and just do something!



"We want people to live normal lives. That's what Ryan wanted to do."

-Jeanne White-Ginder

ON-SITE PANTRY NOW OPEN!

The Jeanne White-Ginder Food Pantry

a service of  Different Roads Home

A service available to those living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses. Call today to schedule a food pick-up.

OTHER SERVICES INCLUDE

- CAPUS Safe Space Programming
- Housing assistance for HIV+ individuals
- Support Groups
- The Good Road Mentorship Program
- Trans-friendly Programming



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Jeanne White-Ginder with Ryan White