



Matthew House, Inc. of Chicago  
3722-28 south Indiana Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60653  
(773) 536-6628

**MATTHEW HOUSE INC. OF CHICAGO**

*I was a stranger and you took me in...  
Matthew 25:31-41*

We're on the web  
[www.matthewhousechicago.org](http://www.matthewhousechicago.org)



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WAYMON STARKS

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

REV. DR. SANJA R. STINSON



*Serving homeless individuals from  
all over the City of Chicago*

### HOLIDAY WISH LIST

Hats, Gloves and Scarves for

Men and Women

Socks and Boots

Clothes for Men and Women

Children's' Toys (All Ages)

Food (For Holiday Meals)

Blankets (For persons in Housing Units)

Dishes (For persons in Housing Units)

Other Household Items

General Office Supplies

Fall/Winter 2009



MATTHEW HOUSE INC. OF CHICAGO

SHEPHERD'S CORNER

## FOLLOWING THE HEART

### Guy Wilhoite

In life, everyone has had that moment where they felt a tingling feeling inside just prior to making a decision. Some people may call it nervousness. Others may say that it is fear. Many view it as the conscious mind telling one what is best. Those feelings are inevitable for the unsure. The unsure are usually in that state due to the basis of their decisions. Decisions can be based on many things, but the most fulfilling and secured approach is the following of one's heart. Well, my story is one filled with them all.



Born in Chicago on the east side, to an affluent family, I was spoiled beyond measure. Always did well in school and excelled at everything that I tried. Academics came so easily that I was given a scholarship to Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. That decision was racked with contemplation and though there were other scholarships at my disposal, I ventured off to a Historical Black College based on my thoughts of prestige and opportunity...though my heart was not in it. As a result, Morehouse became a backdrop to a pursuit in the music industry.

Leaving college behind without a degree, music became my passion. My heart cried out with each melody, drum rhythm, and verse of lyrics. Passion fueled creativity, which fueled the interest of record producers. Pennies were promised, but in the grand scheme of things, my passion was bound to touch the masses. Yet my own mind and the mouths of others swayed me to forgo the opportunities and wait for that big deal. While waiting, an event occurred where an illegal act had taken place. I was privy to its happening and was racked with guilt over knowing and keeping that information to myself. My heart knew what to do, but its voice was muffled by the screams of saving face in the "hood" and not being a "trick". So, mind and peer pressure gave way, resulting in a guilty conviction for accountability of a crime that landed me in prison, for nearly sixteen years of my life.

While incarcerated, epiphany moments came like comets from outer space...infrequent, but miraculously impacting. I worked in Correctional Industry Program where I organized and implemented a Hazard Analysis Control Point program. I obtained an Associate's in General Studies Degree. I earned a certificate in Small Business Management. I completed a course in novel writing and penned two unpublished novels and countless volumes of poetry. As well, I peeled away over seventy-five pounds off of my frame to become a healthier individual.

All of these positive events were precipitated by decisions...decisions that did not take countless hours of thought. These choices were not the result of peer pressure or done on a whim. The right path that was taken was charted out by the most exact GPS system known to man...the heart.

And to this day, I cling to following my heart in making my decisions. I was taught well by my parents...great morals, God fearing, respectful. And my heart has the love of the Lord in it. Therefore I know that it will never steer me wrong.

That is why since my release from incarceration, in August of 2008, I completed the Family Reunification Program for ex-offenders at Liberation Christian Center, headed by Bishop James E. Dukes and Lead Counselor Michael Wilson. My heart also pushed me to volunteer for the organization after graduation, until my worth was recognized to the point of being hired there.

Then, in June of 2009, my worth was recognized by Rev. Dr. Sanja R. Stinson, Executive Director at Matthew House, who felt I was a perfect fit in her organization. From that day forward I have been using my talents and experience to help individuals with a plethora of problems that plague the homeless.

In the end, I can only thank God for what has been bestowed upon me. He gave me a mind to think and analyze my options. But he gave me a heart to feel with depths that the mind could never reach. I tried using my mind, or allowing others to sway my decision-making process...and I ended up out of college and in prison. Now I listen to my heart...and I have gone from prison to the penthouse...from the Big House to Matthew House...and I am on my way to the mountain top, all from *following my heart*.

Happy Holidays!!!  
From the Matthew House Family



## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - WAYMON STARKS



On behalf of the entire Matthew House Family; namely our guests, staff and members of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend to each

of you a special holiday greeting, and a heartfelt thanks for all of your support of Matthew House. Your kindness and generosity has helped Matthew House be able to continue to serve the homeless.

As you are aware, a large number of individuals and families in our country are suffering through some very difficult financial times, and like all non-profit social service

agencies, we struggle to do more work with fewer resources. However, in spite of the difficult times we have remained true to our core agency's value to "never turn anyone away who needs our help."

I am very hopeful about the future of Mathew House and the direction in which we are headed. While we face daily challenges, we never lose hope because we are committed to helping the less fortunate who come to us. You have been there for Matthew House in the past as a faithful supporter. As we strive to be accountable and to fulfill our mission to "serve the needy," we ask for your continued support.

Happy Holidays  
Waymon T. Starks  
Board President

## EXECUTIVE CORNER - REV. DR. SANJA R. STINSON



Dear Friends and Supporters:

Matthew House has been so blessed to be able to continue and keep its doors open because of the many faithful volunteers and clients who come in

and give back. Matthew House continues to stand strong, even in such tough economic times. However, I understand that it has been the ongoing compassion of our staff, board, and volunteers that has helped to keep our doors open in spite of signs of the time.

Compassion was the vision of the original founding fathers in establishing Matthew House. Compassion encompasses several key feelings; empathy, concern, kindness, care and consideration. In spite of the up and down economic forecast, the Matthew House board, staff and volunteers have remained compassionate about the vision set forth by our founding fathers. We are ever so grateful that this compassion has given us the ability to help others take control of their lives. This seasons newsletter exhibits the various success stories of individuals that Matthew House has helped, yet our journey is not over. With the rise in unemployment, lack of affordable housing and a continued

need for supportive services, the Matthew House journey continues and we need your help. Matthew House is still committed to ending homelessness and we need your contribution more than ever this year as we continue the fight to end homelessness in our society.

## HERE I AM - A Poem

Sitting for all these years and not a tear veered its way down my cheek

Bleak was my view but due to the vision of my pop...so strong that he'd never drop, plopping to his

Knees begging please just to ease his strife...his life

I lost in the time I refer to as missing, wishing it made my blood boil

Made my veins coil, but in his name, in his memory

With all of him in me...

I remained strong

So long to the emotions that fill men's

sleeves like tattooed tales weaved into the flesh...

Yes, I have my story, not searching for glory, though

So it remains tucked in like my shirt...

Oh, you didn't know...

No White-T's.

Pleased with my newfound self, my newfound wealth,

I embarked on a journey to newfound health.

While being dealt blows to my soul with my whole being, being pummeled like the tattered training bag

Of an ultimate fighter.

But that is I and I am he

Who be the baddest?

Sho'll Nuff!

Rough times that could cripple a titan I endured,

Ensured that one day I'd be free

Unscathed, I've made it...weathered the storm, reborn to the world

Here I am...

Look at me

Guy Christopher Wilhoite

SHEPHERD'S CORNER

## Felicia Barber – Overcoming the Odds

In 2007 I returned to Chicago from living in Salt Lake City, Utah for 15 years. My father Charles Sayles passed away in August, then in December my beautiful mother Nadine Wechter passed after her 7 year battle with Bone Marrow Cancer. Besides my two daughters, Alanna (18) and Kiya (14) I felt alone. No one to turn to, no more mommy and daddy.

I went to work, church each Sunday, and had a great relationship with my family and friends. Since everything was going right, I then felt I could start my drinking again. I was fooling myself again, but this time I abandoned my whole life because everyone expected me to succeed this time and I didn't. I felt like a fool again, and refused to let my girls see me in the

state I was in. In August of 2008 a drinking partner of mine walked me to Matthew House, where I was able to eat, shower, and use the phone to make contacts in order to get myself back on the right track. At first I was very impatient, because being an addict I needed results NOW! But the staff at Matthew House set me straight, and reminded me that you have to crawl before you walk. Every worker at Matthew House treated me like I was somebody, so I kept coming back. When I felt that I was okay with myself, I stopped coming, but that turned out to be a real big mistake! A year later I was caught stealing and had to do



Felicia Barber—overcame the odds

community service. As I returned to Matthew House with my head hanging down, the staff welcomed me with open arms. That was the best feeling I had in a long time. I am still, and will always have a battle with my addiction. But doing service at Matthew House has given me self-worth, and a reason to keep on living instead of self-destructing. I thank god all the time that there is a place where a person came to seek shelter, look at a friendly face, and feel safe. That is why I come here 3 times a week and volunteer, I want to make a difference in someone's life like the staff made a difference in mine.

## DID YOU KNOW.....

- In the course of a year 2.5 million to 3.5 million people throughout the United States experience homelessness, and about 842,000 people experience homelessness in any given week (Chicago Coalition for the Homeless & US Conference of Mayors, 2001).
- During the 2007-2008 school year, 794,617 homeless children and youth were enrolled in US public schools (National Assoc. for Education of Homeless Children & Youth).
- According to a December 2006 estimate, there were 73,656 people in Chicago who experienced homelessness in the course of a year and 21,078 on a given night (Chicago

Coalition for the Homeless & University of Illinois)

- Between January 2008 and January 2009, Matthew House served 32,188 meals to homeless adults and children.
- 1 in 50 children in America are homeless.
- Homelessness overall is expected to rise 10% to 20% this year. A federal survey of schools showed a 40% increase in the number of juveniles living on their own last year, more than double the number in 2003.

### Attention Federal Employees

Did you know that you can give to Matthew House through your workplace? The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is a federal workplace giving program that allows you to make contributions to charities of your choice through payroll deductions.

Between September 1st and December 15th, you can sign up to give to Matthew House through a payment plan of your choice. Even the smallest donation can make a difference in breaking the cycle of homelessness for individuals in Chicago, and payroll deduction is the easiest way to do it! Speak to your company's CFC Campaign Coordinator, or sign up online at [www.chicagocfc.net](http://www.chicagocfc.net).

## HIRING OUR OWN

In June, 2009, the City of Chicago's Department of Family and Support Services awarded Matthew House a Community Services Block Grant/American Recovery and Reinvestment Act award to implement a homeless outreach engagement initiative.

Matthew House was able to hire four new employees and re-hire two former employees as a result of this funding. Thanks City of Chicago, Department of Family and Support Services!!!!

