



# COLUMBIA ROAD HEALTH SERVICES

*Providing quality and affordable health care to the poor and uninsured of Washington, DC since 1979*

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Dear Friends,

Throughout the years, many persons who are homeless have come to Columbia Road Health Services (CRHS). For these persons, CRHS has been a place of hospitality, hope, and healing. Sandra,\* a 45-year-old female patient at CRHS, is one of those people who has struggle to overcome the enormous challenges of living on the street.

Sandra is a recovering alcoholic, former drug addict, former prostitute, and she has been incarcerated in the past. A patient at CRHS since 2007, she comes regularly to us for treatment of the mental illness and chronic health problems that make it hard for her to work. Her physician, Dr. Rona Schwartz, prescribed medication to help manage her depression, anxiety, diabetes, and arthritis-related conditions, but she emphasized that some of her health problems were due to poor nutrition and the lack of medical care over the years while Sandra was homeless. To further address her chronic illnesses, Dr. Schwartz enrolled Sandra in our Sisters and Brothers in Wellness Program. This program invests in patients' health by providing a supportive network of peers where patients meet weekly for gentle exercise and education about small lifestyle changes that can improve health. Dr. Schwartz also referred Sandra to our mental health counselor to help her deal with substance abuse, stress, and depression.

Sandra has been very involved in her own care, asking her doctor lots of questions and even taking charge of her own nutrition-based treatment plan. Since first coming as a patient to CRHS, Sandra has made great strides in improving her physical and mental health. In addition, Sandra has secured employment through a referral made by CRHS case manager with an agency that helps those with mental illness find jobs. Moreover, after being on a long waiting list for housing, Sandra just moved into her first apartment in a supportive and safe building run by a non-profit agency. Although her income is meager after paying rent, she is now able to send money to her family in Peru.

CRHS is regularly graced by these individuals who come to us seeking help. We are able to offer our medical, mental health, and social services regardless of ability to pay thanks to the generosity of donors such as you. Sandra is very grateful for the assistance she has received.

**Thank you for making it possible for us to care for people like Sandra and many others.**

Sincerely,

*Janelle*

Dr. Janelle Goetcheus  
Founding Medical Director, CRHS  
Chief Medical Officer, Unity Health Care

*\*In order to maintain patient confidentiality, this person's name and certain identifying details have been changed.*



*CRHS works to secure healthy futures for the mother and newborn pictured above and to help patients like Sandra get back on track.*



**Columbia Road Health Services: A Unity Health Care Center**