

Summer 2021 Quarterly Report

In This Report

- 2 Announcements
- 3 Reunion Service
- 5 Miracle Friends
- 8 Miracle Money
- 11 In the News
- 12 Intern Feature
- 15 Looking Forward

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Extraordinary Results from Miracle Money

Two-thirds of the way through our six month Basic Income pilot, we are already seeing amazing results: 36% of our recipients have secured housing, 64% state that they feel less stressed, and 43% have stated that they feel more hopeful for the future. Hear some of their stories below!

Full Circle Fund Grant

Miracle Messages was selected to be a Grant Partner in Full Circle Fund's 2021 Grant Cycle!

Hiring for a General Manager in San Francisco!

SF Downtown Community Benefits District granted Miracle Messages \$30,000 to hire a general manager in SF to run our programs in the city. We are currently in the process of recruiting a GM for this pilot! [Check out the job description here.](#)

Welcome Colette

We welcome Colette Lay (pictured to the right) as our new Executive Assistant! Colette has dedicated much of her time volunteering, truly adopting Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self".



*Colette Lay, Executive
Assistant*



Gabby's Trip to Austin

This past June, Miracle Messages worked to expand our program and services to Austin, Texas. With the help of our core team and the Chapters intern team, we were able to set up a 6-day trip for our general manager, Gabby Cordell, to introduce our services to Austin's unhoused population and to establish relationships with organizations and volunteers for our future Austin chapter.

Alongside our two interns based in Austin, Sreya and Vidhyasai Annem, Gabby visited various sites and organizations that provide aid to the unhoused. They met with Dr. Michael K. Hole, Executive Director of The Impact Factory—a cross-sector hub for social innovation, entrepreneurship and service learning at The University Texas at Austin. Miracle Messages was recognized and selected to receive guidance for expanding our work to Austin.

Between scheduled meetings, Gabby, Vidhyasai, and Sreya toured the area and shared our services with the unhoused directly. They helped distribute food and clothes while speaking to volunteers and people experiencing homelessness as well as handing out fliers and exchanging contact information. They received a total of 11 referrals—signing up two new friends wanting to join our Miracle Friends and submitting nine new cases for our Reunion service to solve. Additionally, with the connections made during the trip, we plan to maintain contact and recruit more volunteers to help us create a chapter in Austin.

We are looking forward to the establishment of our new Austin chapter and hope to use our experience to plan future chapters around the world! If you'd like to start a chapter in your neighborhood, learn more on our website [here](#).

Partnership Spotlight: Broward Health Medical Center

Miracle Messages partnered with Broward Health Medical Center in Florida to provide our reunion services to their patients. Most patients experiencing homelessness are admitted to their Critical Care Unit and the hospital needed help locating their family members to assist in making decisions regarding their care.

"I am more amazed than I am anything, like wow, total strangers are willing to help me out."

- Michael Allen Patrick,
Reunited Spring 2021

Reunion Story: Michael Allen Patrick

Michael Allen Patrick became homeless after a difficult divorce. He moved to Middletown, CA where he found employment as a mechanic but was unable to earn enough for housing. Michael states that he overcame the stigma of being homeless thanks to the amiability of the locals, some who fondly referred to him as the "Mayor of the Park."



However, Michael remained unhoused for the next 30 years and struggled with alcohol abuse due to loneliness as many of his loved ones died over the years. It wasn't until after his hospitalization due to COVID-19 that he reached out to Miracle Messages to help him reconnect with his family.

Volunteers at Miracle Messages located his step-mother and set up a conference call where the two were reconnected. Michael then travelled by bus to his step-mother's home where they were reunited in person. His mother soon informed his daughter of his return and the two were reconnected as well. It was discovered that his daughter had submitted a "Find Them" form to Miracle Messages separately. Michael is grateful to have family who want him in their lives and is now in contact with both his daughters and other relatives. Michael currently resides in a van in his mother's backyard and he enjoys helping her around the house.



Since the beginning of April, we have facilitated 45 new friendships through the Miracle Friends program. We continue to see increased interest in our phone buddy program, and hope that many more volunteers will join us on this journey. We also have a new mentor, Josh Reiman, who joined our team to help aid volunteers and friends with any difficulties and issues they may come across. Welcome to the team, Josh!

Sneakers for Miracle Friends

Over the past few months, we have worked on a new project, Sneakers For Miracle Friends. We partnered with a local store in San Francisco, A Runner's Mind, to provide and distribute 75 pairs of shoes to our participants in the Miracle Friends program. The shoes provided were in great condition and extras were shared with another nonprofit organization, the St. Anthony Foundation, to help and support even more individuals.

In Their Own Words

What Friends are saying

"We thank Miracle Friends for our sneakers they sent us. It keeps our walk steady and comfortable no matter where we rest our heads."

"Geoffrey was pleased to receive shoes and a tracksuit from A Runner's Mind, thank you so much for helping facilitate that. A bright moment in an otherwise tough week."



Miracle Friend Story: Connie

Connie felt isolated during the pandemic. She was in the process of looking for a temporary job when the pandemic first started, but had difficulty finding one and had a hard time getting placed on a housing list. She is currently homeless but is working to find permanent housing, and came across Miracle Friends through a peer.

Connie grew up in a large, Christian household, with 12 siblings, where she faced a lot of rejection. She is a transgender woman and felt that with the lack of support from her family and the world around her, it was emotionally easier to isolate herself. As she joined the Miracle Friends program however, she found that there are people out there in the world that would accept her for who she is. Connie had doubts on this friendship with her Miracle Friend, Erika, and at first, she did not believe that this could last. However, Erika gave her security and reassurance that she would not leave her nor cut her off. As their friendship progressed, Connie found that Erika had impacted her life in inexplicable ways. She is someone who Connie can rely on and turn to for support. Erika is now someone that Connie looks forward to speaking to weekly and feels that she will always want to stay in touch with her. Connie still takes things one day at a time, but she found that Erika is a bright light in these dark and difficult times.

Testimonials from our Volunteers

What volunteers are saying

"It was just our first talk but it was amazing to realize how similar we are. We love and cry on the same movies, we love the same character, we have similar work. I feel like we will both gain a lot from that friendship. Thank you Miracle Messages! I have such big hopes for this relationship."

-Oliwia

"Today felt like a big step for Tony and me because Tony confided in me, asked me for advice, and asked me to call him tomorrow. Tony doesn't typically like talking about himself, especially if it's serious. And he never has asked me for anything. I'm glad that he is processing this loss and using his support network."

-Sarah



Miracle Friend Volunteer Story: Erika

Erika is a Miracle Friends volunteer, who came across Miracle Messages during her search for her uncle, who'd been missing for over 30 years. Erika felt that Miracle Messages approached homelessness in a unique manner, and wanted to get involved. With the ongoing pandemic and battling cancer, Erika became a stay-at-home mom and homeschooled her two children.

When first picking up the phone to call Connie, her Miracle Friend, Erika was very nervous. However, as they conversed the first few times, Erika was so surprised by how much they had in common. They had a shared love of music from the 1980s and 1990s, and Erika found that Connie was “so pleasant” and that “she’s so funny, so wonderful to be with”.

During this friendship, Erika has found that she has gained so much as well. Throughout her past, Erika has had many concussions from car accidents, which resulted in lots of brain injuries and short term memory. But her conversations with Connie, which sometimes would include references from T.V. shows and music, would help Erika remember forgotten memories of the good times in her life. Their phone calls became something to look forward to every week. Overall, Erika feels that this phone buddy program is “like having a sister” and while they themselves and their lives are so different, they are still such good friends.

More Testimonials from our Volunteers

What volunteers are saying

“I pray that Yolunda knows that she is not alone—as she has so courageously and powerfully reminded me—and that even with the darkest clouds there's always silver lining.”
-Joshua

“Tracy is always so grateful for our conversations - she said talking to me grounds her and sharing with me is helping her realize she isn't in a void, has intelligence and helps her rebuild her social skills as she hopes to work again.”
-Madeline



Earlier this year, we launched Miracle Money, a guaranteed income pilot for unhoused individuals in the United States. Miracle Money, funded with your help, provides monthly cash stipends of \$500/month for six months to 15 people experiencing homelessness. The goal of Miracle Money is to aid in providing stability and the opportunity to plan for the future, as well as autonomy to use the funds where most needed and to start to redevelop financial security.

Two-thirds of the way through the six month pilot, the results speak for themselves. Caridad moved into her own apartment, bought cooking equipment, and was able to pay for her brother's unexpected hospitalization expenses. Sandi got a service dog to help her with PTSD and anxiety. Muhammed bought new dress pants and shirts to wear to the Mosque, and a blender so he can finally eat comfortably, as he cannot eat solid foods. The list of successes goes on.

Preliminary Program Outcomes

- 36%** Secured housing
- 64%** Feel reduced stress
- 43%** State they are more hopeful for the future

"This program is helping me feel a little more confident. One of my biggest stressors is not knowing if something is going to happen to me with my nerve disorder. The service dog can help prevent seizures, nudge me to sit down, protect me, and destress."

- Martin





Miracle Money Story: Peggy

Peggy faced housing and debt struggles for the past four years. Full of brave resilience, Peggy hoped to turn her life around by saving up for a place of her own and lowering her credit card debt. Once Peggy found Miracle Messages, she became a participant of the Miracle Friend program, and later on, the Miracle Money program. Though her hardships have caused Peggy much stress and anxiety, Miracle Messages has given her the positive, practical support she needed to achieve her greatest goal: stable housing.

In only a few months, the Miracle Money program has transformed Peggy's situation. By allowing her to chip away at her credit card debt, and providing her with the support of a Smart Money coach, the Miracle Money helped Peggy find housing in a new studio apartment. In the last month, Peggy has used the Miracle Money payouts to pay for food, clothing and her bills. Full of gratitude, one of Peggy's greatest joys is the simple pleasure of having a key to her own house.

While Miracle Money has helped Peggy achieve her goals, the Miracle Friend program has provided Peggy with emotional and relational support. Peggy states fondly that throughout this journey, her Miracle Friend, Stella, has been "really supportive and helpful, and absolutely nice to have around."

In Their Own Words

What our Miracle Money recipients are saying



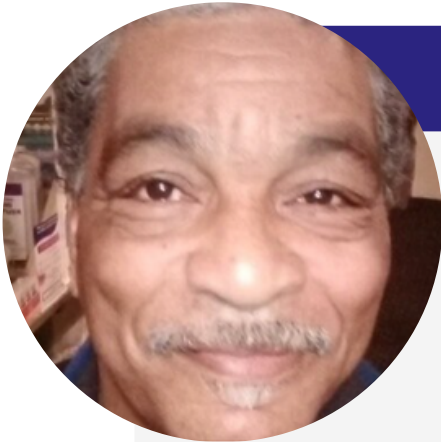
"[This program is helping me] tremendously, it's giving me the freedom to do stuff I couldn't do before, like affording groceries to make family recipes and teach my daughters. I can plant some flowers for my garden."

-Beverly

"It has given me a security blanket that I've never had before"

-Rachel





Miracle Money Story: Drake

Before developing a nerve disorder that rendered him unable to walk, Drake was a nurse caring for seniors and people in hospice, but he was also a musician, a singer, and even a chef. Unfortunately, Drake became unhoused after a severe nervous disorder stripped him of much of his mobility. Left to navigate sidewalks and run errands in a manual wheelchair, Drake had two goals at the start of the Miracle Money pilot program: 1) to find accessible, stable housing and 2) to purchase an electric wheelchair.

After putting away money each month, Drake's goals are in closer reach. As a participant in Miracle Friends, Drake also found meaning in his relationship with his Miracle Friends buddy, Sukey. Sukey has become a close friend, and Drake remains deeply grateful for their relationship.

Drake encourages others to listen to their own hearts, to always hold onto their faith, and to expect some magic every now and again, "cuz it does happen!" He sees Miracle Messages as his own miracle - one that he prayed for.

In their own words

What our Miracle Money recipients are saying



"It's a real blessing not to worry about meeting my basic needs. My main worry was around paying for my storage, and I didn't want to throw away that stuff because a lot of it was related to my career. I know I'll be rehoused one day and I don't want to start from scratch."

-Elizabeth

"This program has driven me to get out of this program as soon as I can. I'm focused on finding permanent housing a lot more before. I never set a timeline before, now I'm motivated to, especially before my daughter leaves for college."

-Ray





IN THE NEWS

Music Video MD1

Miracle Messages was featured in a music video for “Esperance” by French pop electro band, MD ONE. The lead singer, David Bernard Granger, also had a heartwarming interview with Kevin. Watch the interview [here](#)

Housing First Conference

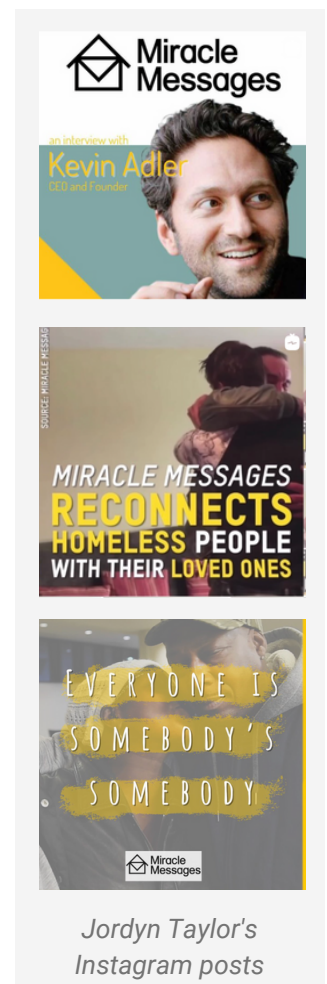
Kevin co-led the “Enhancing Housing First Through Social Capital” workshop at the 2021 Housing First Partners Conference. He spoke on the importance of social capital and how crucial it is in helping people find their way out of homelessness. More information [here](#)

Jordyn Taylor

Jordyn Taylor, an advocate and influencer, featured Miracle Messages for a month on Instagram for her nonprofit organization, 12 Months of Giving. She helped spread awareness and got followers involved by donating and joining Miracle Friends. On the right are examples of some of her posts.

Housing Matters Event

Miracle Messages partnered with Housing Matters to host the event “How to help your unhoused neighbor” where we discussed how both organizations are working towards rebuilding social support systems and providing solutions to ending homelessness. Read more about it [here](#)





Not featured here: Gabby, Sreya, Sarah, Eric, Ritika



Ashley Nakagawa

Occidental College
Community, Chapters Teams

The work we do and impact we have on unhoused friends at Miracle Messages is so powerful and uplifting. I have made amazing connections through this organization and have been inspired to engage in social change in my own community.



Julia Ip

Minerva University
Design, Community Teams

I became fascinated with the concept of relational poverty when I found Miracle Messages. I am now a four-time intern and what has kept me here is the tangible impact I've been able to track to my work and the opportunity to learn and grow my leadership skills.



Ilma Rovcanin

University of Michigan
Storytelling Team

I decided to intern at Miracle Messages because of its unique approach to homelessness. I love being a part of a team where we can hear about and see the direct impacts that it has on people. I am so glad to be here and I cannot wait to see what we accomplish!

**Dan Kirtman**

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Design, Programs & Operations

I decided to intern at Miracle Messages because I loved their values and what they strive to achieve as an organization. Miracle Messages is a way for me to further understand homelessness and help with this global problem.

**Vidhyasai Annem**

University of Texas at Austin
Chapters Team

I was drawn to Miracle Messages' novel approach to rebuilding the social support systems of our unhoused neighbors. I want to help forge meaningful relationships with people from different communities, and I'm thrilled to do so alongside the wonderful intern team.

**Merisa Rovcanin**

University of Michigan
Community, Program & Operations,
Fundraising Teams

I think society too often ignores the issue of homelessness and I believe that Miracle Messages has found a very effective solution for helping our unhoused neighbors. I truly love everything about this organization and knew I had to get involved!

**Allison Peart**

Princeton University
Storytelling, Programs & Operations

I'm interning at Miracle Messages because I want any work I do to be about more than just myself and my own ambition or goals. Miracle Messages is about healing relational divides and loving people as they are, and I want to become someone to whom those actions are second nature.

**Sophia Ahn**

University of Michigan
Design, Chapters Teams

Through interning, I've been able to listen to stories of people that Miracle Messages has helped connect. Within the intern cohort, I have met many valuable mentors that have taught me new skills. Miracle Messages has been a very comfortable environment for me to learn and make an impact.

**Emely Calderon**

Pomona College
Storytelling, Fundraising Teams

When helping unhoused individuals, we often think of their material needs but often forget about their relational needs. I never realized how impactful a support system could be until I started interning and listened to the stories of our unhoused friends. It truly gave me a new perspective on homelessness.

**Helena Batey**

UC Berkeley
Chapters Team

I was inspired by how Miracle Messages meets individuals where they are and helps them progress towards self-reliance. This aligns with my own values to lead with empathy to understand others.

**Raquel Abifadel**

University of Rio Grande do Sul
Fundraising, Community Teams

Working towards changing a life is truly inspirational. This internship changed my whole perspective on homelessness. It inspires me to bring something like this to my own country.

**Anjuli Perbuhatla**

Stephen F. Austin High School
Program & Operations Team

Since I was little, I would visit India, where homelessness encapsulates many people's lives. These people deserve a chance to grow and succeed. I want to be a part of that change.

**Reena**

University of Southern California
Community, Storytelling Teams

I first got involved with Miracle Messages through volunteering with the Case Solving Community, and loved it. I felt like I was actively making a difference in someone's life. Interning has allowed me to work with others with similar passions and has also shown me more ways to help my community.

**Nina Moore**

Occidental College
Chapters Team

I have been around homelessness my whole life, coming from the Bay Area and moving to LA, and have always been passionate about supporting my unhoused neighbors. I joined Miracle Messages to continue fighting the stigma of homelessness and helping people find social support and housing.

**Kaitlin Ip**

Markham District High School
Design, Storytelling Teams

I was searching for an organization to volunteer for and ended up being part of the Miracle Messages intern program for 3 semesters. I went into this internship not knowing much about relational poverty or homelessness, but throughout the time here, I was able to gain deeper insight into these issues.



Mobile App

We are currently testing and developing a mobile app that will help us unify all volunteer activities, help volunteers sign up for events and do outreach. Watch out for a post soon!

Commonwealth Club Talk

Kevin will be giving a talk with Dr. Gloria Duffy at the Commonwealth Club on August 30th at 12pm PT. They will be speaking about steps everyone can take to end homelessness. Check out the event details [here](#).

Our New Stories Page

Check out the [new stories page](#) on our website to read the stories of our most memorable reunions, friendships, and lives transformed.

Want to Get Involved?

Join our global community of good-hearted people, committed to connecting better with their neighbors experiencing homelessness.



Volunteer or Intern by filling out [this form](#). We're always looking for more help - especially marketing gurus, graphic designers, and amazing writers!



Join a partner site visit in SF, LA, South SF, or Austin. If interested, please email Colette: colette@miraclemessages.org



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