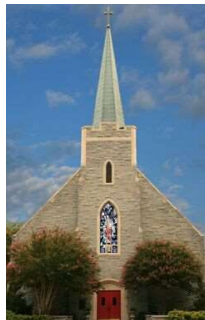


A Wonderful Start! Generous Mirci Donors Provide Book Bags Full of School Supplies for Children of Mirci Clients

Humana

Healthy Horizons™
in South Carolina



Thanks to generous donors, the children of Mirci clients have the book bags and school supplies they need to start their school year off right.

Sending gratitude to project sponsors Humana Healthy Horizons in South Carolina and the Mary Martha Circle at Incarnation Lutheran Church. We're also grateful to individual donors Marcy Coster-Schulz, Richard Schulz, Mary Greene, Carol McAlister, Randy and Elizabeth Klapman, and to Kathryn Erving of our administrative staff, who helped coordinate the project.

"The school supply drive has become a meaningful yearly project," said Mirci Clinical Director Julie Plane. "We appreciate the generosity of our supporters who helped us set these children up for success."

Mirci Named a Top-Rated Nonprofit!



Mirci recently earned a 2022 Top-Rated Award from GreatNonprofits! GreatNonprofits is the leading national online platform for community-sourced reviews and stories about charities. Three million people visit the site each year. See it for yourself to read inspiring stories about Mirci - and add your own!

[Check Out Mirci's GreatNonprofits Profile!](#)

The Leon Levine Foundation Awards Mirci a \$75,000 Grant



Thanks so much to The Leon Levine Foundation. Its very generous \$75,000 general operating grant will support Mirci's wraparound care that helps people navigate the emotional uncertainty of mental illness. The Leon Levine Foundation creates pathways to self-sufficiency, champions strategies for permanent change and facilitates opportunities for growth. Leon Levine, founder and chairman emeritus of Family Dollar Stores, Inc., established The Leon Levine Foundation in 1980 to support programs and organizations that improve the human condition through investments in education, healthcare, human services and Jewish values. (He is pictured here with his wife, Sandra.) Based in Charlotte, N.C., the Foundation invests in nonprofits across North Carolina and South Carolina with strong leadership, a track record of success, and a plan for financial sustainability. Learn more at www.leonlevinefoundation.org.

Stories Worth Sharing
**Strength + Support Brought
Olivette Through the Storm**



When Hurricane Katrina flooded 70 percent of New Orleans in 2005, Olivette Ford and her three boys lost everything they owned. They spent seven brutal days and nights living outdoors with thousands of other desperate survivors.

"Some things I remember - there were no toilets, so we had no privacy when going to the bathroom," she said. "The National Guard was there and it felt almost like they were holding us at gunpoint because they were nervous about controlling all the people. It was *unbearably* hot. Even the bottled water they gave us was really hot, but we drank it and were grateful for it because it was survival. I remember so clearly that when they put us on a bus to Houston the next week, they gave us ice cold water for the first time, and it was the most refreshing thing I've ever experienced in my life."

An exhausted Olivette and her family eventually made their way to Columbia, where her aunt lived.

"South Carolina really took care of us," she said. "They gave us lanyards to wear that allowed us to temporarily ride (buses) free and eat anywhere. They put us up in a hotel for 30 days, then found us a house."

Olivette spent the next five years raising her three boys and staying busy with the usual sporting and school events. She became a Certified Nursing Assistant and worked at an assisted living facility. But as the kids matured, the depression and post traumatic stress caused by the hurricane grew increasingly intense. Physical health problems - congestive heart failure and painful arthritis - contributed to a deepening sense of despair.



"I had to stop work and I ended up moving in with a friend," she said. "But I couldn't contribute financially, and that led to conflict. A homeless shelter seemed like my only choice, and that's where I suffered a complete mental breakdown."

Olivette spent two months recovering in the hospital. When she was released back to the shelter, a Mirci outreach worker came to visit her, offering help and support.

"Mirci worked fast to get me into an apartment," Olivette said. "The day they called the shelter to tell me to get my things packed, I couldn't believe it."

As part of Mirci's wraparound care, Olivette began seeing Dr. John Steele who is a psychiatrist and Mirci's medical director, and she also met regularly with a Mirci mental health counselor. That stabilizing and supportive routine,

along with Mirci's weekly therapeutic art classes, helped Olivette recover.

In time, the clouds begin to lift.

"I cried a lot when I first met with Dr. Steele, but that was in part because I felt so much gratitude," Olivette recalled. "As time went on, the feeling that I needed to give something back for all that people had given to me grew stronger."

Eventually, Olivette volunteered to help operate Mirci's canteen at the Rosewood Drive clinic. Later she manned the clinic's front desk, an essential job she performed part-time for nearly a decade.

"I loved, it," Olivette said. "I think it takes a certain personality to be the first face people see. By nature, I love giving people words of encouragement, and the clients took to me. They're still very happy to see me whenever we run into one another."

In January, Mirci hired a full-time receptionist, so Olivette turned her energy to decluttering and rearranging donated apparel in the Mirci clothing closet.



Now 56, Olivette said that she enjoys a full and satisfying life today thanks in no small part to Mirci. She still lives in the apartment Mirci obtained for her more than a decade ago, and she still finds the rent comfortably affordable on her fixed income. The Mirci-provided therapy helps her focus on what she can control in life and let the rest go. Among other things, she said, this has helped her quit smoking and improve her diet to become healthier.

A creative person, she spends her days making decorative towel sets she sells online. (She credits another Mirci client with teaching her how to crochet.) She also works complex jigsaw puzzles to ease her anxiety,

and she entertains her out-of-town grandchildren with puppet shows via FaceTime.

The day we spoke to Olivette, she mentioned she was looking forward to attending a concert at The Township.

"Years ago, I would have not been in a position to do anything fun like that for myself, but today I'm really living," she said.

[Learn more about Mirci's Adult Services](#)



Why Mirci?

MIRCI volunteer Mary Greene is the owner of GreeneGrassroots, a consulting firm specializing in lobbying, public policy and grassroots organizing. Mary is also a published cookbook author. She explains why she has donated her time and resources to MIRCI the past five years:

"The first time I realized exactly what Mirci does was about 15 years ago. I live in Shandon, and for years you would see a man who was homeless around our neighborhood. I remember driving past and seeing him in someone's yard taking a bath with a garden hose with all his clothes on. A Mirci outreach coordinator spent a lot of time with him, trying to help him, and he finally got the man into a Mirci apartment. It was nothing short of a miracle in my opinion.



I started cooking for Mirci special events about five years ago. Later, I began baking one day a week with the young people at the Mirci Youth Drop-In Center. Cooking is my love language, something that comes easy to me and something I care about, so that's how I like to volunteer. I've been amazed because however disruptive the lives of the young people have been - a lot of the kids were in foster care, others their family became homeless and now they are homeless - yet they all have very strong, good food memories. They often ask if we can make things they remember their mom or grandmothers baking when they were kids. It has meant a lot to me to be able to do this.

I also helped Mirci's management team oversee expenditures for a large grant they received awhile back. So I've seen how Mirci operates and I never worry about Mirci squandering resources. The staff members are very good stewards of money and run a tight ship. At the same time, they never lose sight of who they're trying to serve....the people always come first."

Thank You, Unum-Colonial Life!



Thanks so much to Unum/Colonial Life for the company's very generous \$20,000 Healthier Communities grant to support Mirci's outreach team and adult services. The grant will help pay for behavioral healthcare, supportive housing and many other services that Mirci offers to uphold mental wellness in the Midlands.

Thank you, Unum!

Save the Date for Merry Mirci Holiday 2022!

Mark your calendar and plan on joining us at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 1st, for Merry Mirci Holiday 2022. We'll hold our annual wine pairing event at [The Hall at Senate's End](#). Tickets go on sale October 15th.

We'll share more details in the coming months, but for now, if you or your business is interested in sponsoring this joyful and delightful occasion that benefits Mirci's homeless outreach, please [email Karen Addy](#) or call her at (803) 786-1844, ext 103.



Join MIRCI in providing

a way **FORWARD**

in the areas of:

Essential Needs
Behavioral Healthcare
Supportive Housing

Have you ever wanted to be a hero, to make a true difference in the world? Today, you can be a way forward for someone in the Midlands who is experiencing (or facing the possibility of) homelessness while also navigating the emotional uncertainty of mental illness.

By signing up for MIRCI's monthly giving program at any amount, you can make an instant positive change in someone's life:

- \$10 a month provides 5 days of transportation for someone trying to make appointments, go grocery shopping or meet basic needs.
- \$25 a month provides medication for an individual with schizophrenia
- \$50 a month provides sheets, pillows and a comforter for a person exiting homelessness after months or years without shelter
- \$125 a month provides a housing starter kit that contains 20 essential kitchen, bath and laundry items.

To sign up for our 'A Way Forward' monthly giving plan, simply go to the link below and select "recurring gift". Then sleep well tonight and every night going forward knowing that you're using your blessings to bless another. Thank you for whatever you can do!

Provide a way forward today!



For questions about volunteering or hosting a supply drive or fundraiser, please email:
mail@mirci.org



[Donate one of our most needed items.](#)



[Become a monthly supporter at any amount.](#)

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!



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