

A Grateful Street Performer Finds Stable Housing in New Orleans

Positive Stories / Lessons Learned from HPRP: *Individual Success Story*

HPRP Grantee:	City of New Orleans, Louisiana State Department of Social Services
CoC Name and Number:	LA-503 New Orleans/Jefferson Parish CoC

Latest CoC Point-in-Time Count:

Total persons in ES:	575	Total persons in TH:	723
Total persons in Safe Haven:	15	Total unsheltered persons:	5,374
Total persons, sheltered and unsheltered:	6,687		

“It was my third week as an HPRP case manager at UNITY when Mr. Bryant’s file landed on my desk. Mr. Bryant (or ‘Silver Man’, as he is referred to on the street) has been painting himself silver for a number of years, adding to the rich and vibrant street performer presence in the French Quarter. Street performing was his main source of income; however, it wasn’t enough to maintain housing. He was living in an abandoned building.

“Throughout his life, Mr. Bryant has fought some tough battles with drug addiction. It wasn’t until his attendance and graduation from Bridge House (a drug rehabilitation center in New Orleans) that rendered him drug-free for the last several years. Unfortunately, being clean from drugs was not enough to keep him out of homelessness. Due to lack of stable employment, Mr. Bryant was living in abandoned buildings for a year before he was found by UNITY’s Outreach Team.

“Little did I know that yet another battle Mr. Bryant would have to fight would be finding a landlord willing to rent to him. (If you think trying to convince landlords to rent to our clients is difficult, try doing it with a man covered in silver paint.) All this kind, gentle man wanted was a place to call home, a place where he could feel safe and end the nightmare of homelessness that he had been living for over a year, yet it took four housing searches and three landlord rejections to finally find a match for Mr. Bryant. I was elated when we were finally able to promise Mr. Bryant a new 1 bedroom in the Treme neighborhood. I have never seen anyone so happy. Mr. Bryant literally jumped up and down, sang, danced, and said “thank you” many more times than was necessary. Watching Mr. Bryant sign that lease, leaving little traces of silver paint on the pages, was such a beautiful moment that made all of those earlier struggles worth the battle.

“Now every time I visit Mr. Bryant I can immediately smell delicious food cooking on the stove while he shows me the potato that he is growing in his living room and teaches me something new about farming. I am constantly surprised by Mr. Bryant’s extensive life experiences that he shares with me one piece at a time. Mr. Bryant has had good luck and bad luck in his life, and HPRP has provided him with a fresh start, a safe haven where he can begin to put his life back together again. He is so appreciative of our assistance and is willing to do whatever he needs to, to remain stably housed. I am fairly certain that I will never find a more inspiring, grateful, and talkative mime.”

**Names have been changed for confidentiality.*

For more information, contact UNITY of Greater New Orleans at 504-821-4496.