

HOW WE BEGAN: THE HISTORY BEFORE 1992



In the 1980s, PathForward (then A-SPAN) was borne out of Lora Rinker and Pam Juhl's passion for ending homelessness and hunger. Two nights per week, Lora, Pam, and friends prepared and served meals to Arlington's most vulnerable. They knew even then that the first step is outreach.

While PathForward has grown immensely from the idea of two meals a week, providing food and connection with people experiencing homelessness remains at the core of everything we do. Our Homeless Bagged Meal Program is a prime example of this. Our outreach team takes bagged meals to people living unsheltered and offers it to them with no conditions. Every time we do this, we build a little more trust. As that trust continues to build, clients start opening up and sharing their stories, concerns, and goals. Once that happens, the road to stability begins.

1992 - 2002: THE FOUNDATIONS OF PATHFORWARD ARE CREATED



The front desk at PathForward in it's first decade of operations.

Known then as A-SPAN, in 1992 PathForward incorporated as a nonprofit, adopts its by-laws, and contracts with Arlington County for operation of Arlington's Emergency Winter Shelter. Even though it was only meant to be an emergency winter shelter, founder Lora Rinker had visionary plans for the organization.

Looking at the roots of PathForward, in 1994 she and her team established PathForward's first-ever program, the Homeless Bagged Meal Program. Our most popular volunteer activity to this day, PathForward's team distribute meals every day of the year, rain, snow, or shine.

In 1995, PathForward began to provide street outreach after United Way funds two part-time Outreach Staff and an Outreach Coordinator. Now, these teams go all over Arlington and provide food, clothes, and medical support to people living unsheltered in places unfit for habitation.

Through immense hard work, in 1992 Opportunity Place opened in Shirlington. The HUD-funded day program provides life-sustaining services, and employment center, and case management. These were the first steps to developing programs that provided a comprehensive approach to supporting people experiencing homelessness, giving them the tools to start their path to stability.

2003 - 2013: PATHFORWARD ENTERS AN ERA OF GROWTH



Kathleen Sibert pictured alongside Lora Rinker

From 2003-2013, PathForward experienced a series of achievements that spurred organizational growth. These changes were significant and ultimately shaped PathForward into what it is today, and they allowed the organization to greatly expand its reach within the Arlington community.

2007 came with an expansion of services with the addition of the Permanent Supportive Housing Program and case management services. 2008 saw a sense of unity as PathForward, in support of Arlington County, and in partnership with other providers, began Arlington's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The following year, PathForward started its Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program to help individuals who have or are facing the prospect of being evicted. In 2010, they started offering free medical care through nurse practitioners at the Emergency Winter Shelter. Finally, in 2011, with the partnership of Arlington's Department of Human Services, they launched 100 Homes Arlington to help those that were medically vulnerable.

Throughout this time PathForward welcomed a new executive, Kathleen Sibert [LN1], following Lora Rinker's retirement after 17 years of service. PathForward's progress was recognized in 2005 when they were highlighted as "one of the best" local charities by the Catalogue for Philanthropy. In 2012 the Arlington County Board approved the purchase of the Homeless Services Center, which ushered in an even greater period of growth.

2014 - 2023: A LOOK BACK TO THE LAST 10 YEARS



Pictured, PathForward opens Arlington's Homeless Services Center

The third decade came with great strides for PathForward. We were able to expand our services and were continuously gaining more recognition within the community. As such, our efforts to make an impact were becoming more and more evident.

In 2015, Arlington became the second county in the U.S. to end veteran homelessness. The following year in 2016, we opened Arlington's Homeless Services Center. The opening of this shelter allowed us to further serve people in ways we priorly could not. Medical respite, a year-long shelter, and supportive daily services are just some of what is being offered.

During this time PathForward received multiple awards including; compass consultation, "One of the Best" nonprofits in greater Washington by The Catalogue for Philanthropy, and thanks to a grant from Arlington Community, we were able to start the Job Start Internship Program. In 2018, we were a recipient of the Neighborhood Builders Award.

We also faced a series of growth. Our then CEO, Kathleen Silbert, and COO, Leonard Chari, began the Neighborhood Builders Leadership program. In 2018 we expanded the Permanent Supportive Housing program to transition-aged youth. In 2021, we kicked off the \$1.1 million Streets to Stability campaign in an effort to purchase an apartment building. Our medical offerings also saw an expansion. In 2019, after receiving a two-year grant from CareFirst, the medical respite was extended to include a foot care clinic. A couple of years later, in 2021, the mobile medical program was created, making medical outreach accessible.

PathForward also faced internal changes. In 2020, Betsy Frantz, the then Interim director, became our current CEO. The Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Belonging Task Force was established that same year.