

# VOICES OF

## Energy and Housing Affordability

ENERGY  
EFFICIENCY  
FOR ALL

**AFFORDABILITY:** PBRA, Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, (Income Restricted)

**RESIDENCE:** Phoenix House Apartments, Atlanta, GA - 69 Apartments



**NAME:** Nam Nguyen

**AGE:** 50

Nam Nguyen could not have known what his life would look like when he fled Saigon in 1975 as the Vietnam War came to an end. At the age of 21, the war had so disrupted his life that Nam had not graduated from high school. Despite the hardship of having to leave friends, family, and country, Nam says that he chose to leave because he wanted to live in a “free country.”

Nam explains that life in America was sometimes difficult. Arriving in Houston, Texas, Nam was without a community for the first time and struggled to find work and housing. Within a few years, Nam moved to Atlanta where he found a much needed community as he began to conquer his biggest challenge of his life — overcoming mental illness.

In the late 1990s, Nam’s friends noticed a difference in his personality. He was having trouble coping with mild setbacks and seemed overly anxious. Close friends in Nam’s community recognized the signs of crisis, and they took him to a hospital where he received temporary

treatment for symptoms stemming from anxiety and depression. After a diagnosis, Nam moved to a group home that often restricted his movements and did not offer the full range of support he needed. His mental health put him constantly at risk of becoming homeless.

After living in the group home during his recovery from hospitalization, Nam was finally able to secure the housing he needed at Phoenix House. In addition to being affordable, Phoenix House offers a wide range of supportive services for residents with mental illness and other health issues.

---

Nam says the staff really care about his needs, and he is excited to live in an environment that allows him to make friends. Most importantly, the service support provides Nam with security and structure, which makes him feel “safe and happy.”

---



**NAME:** Tashianna Curry

**AGE:** 21

---

**“I was homeless. I have family here, but they are not in my life because of my sexuality.”**

---

At 21 years old, Tashianna is the youngest and one of the newest residents at Phoenix House. She says she feels lucky to have found a new home after being kicked out of her family’s house at the age of 19 for being gay.

---

**“I had to figure out life on my own,” she says.**

---

Tashianna spent two years on the streets of Atlanta, struggling to find permanent housing. Some nights she stayed with friends, other nights she managed to get enough money from her job as a hair stylist to pay for a hotel room, but most nights, she slept outside in a tent.

In 2018, alone, nearly 1.6 million LGBTQ youth like Tashianna will experience homelessness in large part due to their identity. Their vulnerability is often compounded by increased risk of mental illness and targeted sexual violence. Shelter and supportive services like the ones offered at Phoenix House represent some of the far too rare opportunities for LGBTQ youth to find safety and security after being forced onto the streets, with no place to call home.



*Phoenix House Apartments*

“Finally, I got housing,” was all she could think when Tashianna saw her soon-to-be home at Phoenix House. “I was so relieved.”

Freed from the stress of finding a safe place to live, Tashianna now focuses on the future. She is planning to get her General Equivalency Diploma and Child Development Associate Certificate so she can pursue her passion — working with children experiencing homelessness.

---

**“I see a lot of children panhandling on the street. I just want to help them.”**

---

Supportive housing services provided Tashianna the lifesaving tools she needed to find stability in her life. Now, Tashianna wants to pay it forward and become a social worker like the ones that helped her find Phoenix House. Affordable housing is more than just a roof to Tashianna. It also represents the opportunity to lead the life she dreams of.