

NAME:
Konswella Gilchrist

OCCUPATION:
Resident Services
Coordinator

RESIDENCE:
Phoenix House
Apartments
Atlanta, GA
69 Homes

AFFORDABILITY:
- HUD Shelter Plus Care PBRA
- 60% AMI Income-Restricted,
Low-Income Housing Tax
Credits

*Last updated in 2019

VOICES OUT LOUD

Konswella



It really warmed my heart that we were able to provide him something as simple as a bed. Something that he's never had his whole life.

Konswella Gilchrist is the program director of social services for Community Friendship, an organization that provides social services at Phoenix House, a supportive housing

community in Atlanta, Georgia. In her role for 16 years, Konswella helps to provide community integration, medical monitoring and helps connect residents to additional community resources such as Social Security benefits, food stamps, medication, a doctor or an attorney.

As a supportive services community, Phoenix House provides a home for residents who are recovering from mental health diagnosis or addiction. Konswella explains that many residents are struggling with multiple mental health diagnoses, a combination of substance addiction and a mental health issue. Konswella and her team connects these residents them to Social Security benefits, job trainings, and works with them to complete the applications and meet all the deadlines.

After being with Community Friendship for 22 years, Konswella says she's learned that the most important message to convey to residents is that they are a part of the family. Every success is celebrated at Phoenix House, especially because many residents don't have a family of their own.

Konswella has seen the impact that supportive services can have within a low-income community and understands they are vital to the success of the residents. She believes that while social service is technically an option, it's more so a necessity for any affordable housing community.

"Many residents have a hard time navigating the complex system they are thrust into," Konswella explains. "Scheduling a doctor's appointment, might be easy for many people, but for some residents who come to Phoenix House, they find it difficult to comprehend."

Konswella shares that supportive services help to fill that gap where confusion occurs, assisting residents and helping them access the resources and tools that are there to help them.

[If you] wake up and all [you have] was wiped away. What would your options be? Where would you go? Where would you sleep tonight, who would you depend on to assist you?