It’s never too late to change your life. Johnnie S. was staying at Transition Project’s Clark Center short-term residential program when he first met Trent Gay, a Central City Concern (CCC) employment specialist. At age 60, Johnnie had spent nearly his entire lifetime homeless and unemployed because of substance use disorder and poverty. And after two full years of sobriety, he still struggled to find employment and housing. His job skills were limited to work he had while incarcerated.

Trent heard one of his regular employer contacts, Produce Row Café, needed a prep cook/dishwasher. He drove Johnnie over to meet with the café’s hiring manager, who liked Johnnie immediately. He invited Johnnie to participate in a hands-on working interview to see if he had the ability to perform the duties, but more importantly, to make sure Johnnie liked the work. Johnnie did great and wanted the job, which the hiring manager offered to him that day.

Following Johnnie’s job start in May 2017, Trent put in a referral for Economic Opportunity Program (EOP) rental assistance to end Johnnie’s long period of living on the streets and shelter life. In July 2017, Johnnie found a permanent home in CCC’s Hill Park Apartments in Southwest Portland. He received EOP A Home for Everyone rental assistance through Human Solutions for six months to help him move in and pay rent while getting secure in his job. “I couldn’t have done it without Trent’s help,” says Johnnie. “I might still be out there without a home.”

That year, 2017, about 1,200 CCC clients were homeless immediately prior to moving into CCC housing; 73 percent of those clients either remained housed through the end of the year or moved to other housing. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]
Their relationship is a stellar example of how CCC is working with clients from partner organizations, such as Transition Projects, to get more people back to work and housed.

Trent stays in touch with Johnnie to ensure work is going well. He helped Johnnie succeed at his job for the first nine months, and if Johnnie shows interest in a higher paying job or promotion, Trent will be there to lend his assistance. Their relationship is a stellar example of how CCC is working with clients from partner organizations, such as Transition Projects, to get more people back to work and housed.

Having a purpose—or simply a place to be productive every day—can give life a richer meaning, like it has for Johnnie.