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## Meet William “Bill” Bass

An entrepreneur with a heart for  
lending a helping hand

*By Monte Arnold*

William B. Bass, Co-Founder and President of Friendship Homes, Inc., has spent more than 35 years dedicated to locating and providing affordable housing in Nashville for low income and special needs consumers.



Bill Bass

*Photo by Monte Arnold*

His role and passion for helping others by providing living accommodations have morphed through the years from when he was growing up and working with his dad in the family-owned business. Bass laughs when he recalls his dad's farm equipment business, and how he learned to tear down tractors and all kinds of farm equipment and then put them back together. "I soon found out that I much preferred tearing apart and putting back together houses to farm equipment," he says. Since that transition, Bass has rehabbed more than 300 buildings in his career.

Bass and his wife, Sara, are involved in numerous aspects of real estate ownership, management and development, under the umbrella name of Bass Properties.

A significantly meaningful and satisfying project to his entrepreneurial spirit is his involvement with Friendship Homes. Bass and Wallace Cartwright co-founded the company 12 years ago, after initially meeting and working together in Nashville's prestigious Sertoma Club.

One of the club's projects that the duo worked together on was "Friends Helping Friends," a service project designed to create homes for people experiencing co-dependency, etc. It was the Club's expectation to provide a better living environment by providing independent housing.

Ultimately, the group home concept of that project did not align with the direction Bass and Cartwright wanted to go, so Friendship Homes, a non-profit organization, was born.

The two men find their talents and careers mesh well in growing Friendship Homes. Cartwright is a real estate broker, providing a variety of real estate services in the Nashville area. As Bass says, "Wallace finds the potential properties and I get them

rehabbed.” Friendship Homes currently consists of six properties and their goal is to grow the non-profit one house at a time without incurring a lot of debt.

Bass is proud of the tenants now living in the organization’s properties. “We place a lot of importance on finding a good mix of tenants,” Bass emphasizes. He believes it’s easier to attract quality renters now than a few years back. He explained, “Before the mortgage crash, if you were breathing, you could pretty much get a loan to buy a house. Now,” he says, “it’s much harder to qualify for a mortgage, therefore, there are many more good people needing to rent homes.”

The fact that Bass and his assistants are big do-it-yourselfers is one key to the agency’s success. “If we had to hire everything done, we’d be ‘upside-down’ on most of our properties,” he said.

Bass’ wife is a former property manager and they have a son working in the Bass Properties business. The Bass family lives in Brentwood. They have several hobbies, but the primary one is snow skiing. Others include boating, golf and travel.

Bill Bass’ success in business is a result of applying sound logic and common sense when making business decisions.

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