



PROJECT H.O.M.E.

1515 Fairmount Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19130
www.projecthome.org

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PROJECT H.O.M.E.
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF SERVICE AND ADVOCACY

Dwelling Place

NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME

THE JOURNEY HOME REFLECTING ON TWENTY YEARS

CELEBRATING TWO DECADES:

See Page 1

- Lessons from the Past
- Challenges for the Future

Check out www.projecthome.org
for celebration updates!



free
LIBRARY
PHILADELPHIA
ONE BOOK
ONE PHILADELPHIA

PROJECT H.O.M.E. CELEBRATES *THE SOLOIST*

ONE BOOK, ONE PHILADELPHIA SPECIAL EVENT

Wednesday, March 18, 7:30 p.m.

Pennsylvania Convention Center, Room 114, 1101 Arch Street

In honor of the close of the "One Book, One Philadelphia" program:

- Discussion of homelessness in Philadelphia with *The Soloist* author Steve Lopez and Sister Mary Scullion of Project H.O.M.E.
- Performance by the Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra

Free event, donations suggested of children's books for the Free Library of Philadelphia and items for Project H.O.M.E. For information, call 215-567-7710

OTHER RELATED EVENTS:

TALK ABOUT IT! PHILADELPHIA'S HOMELESS CRISIS

Wednesday, March 4, 7:30 p.m., Central Library, 1901 Vine Street

Sister Mary Scullion will be part of a panel addressing solutions to Philadelphia's homeless crisis. Free and open to the public.

LEAVING NO ONE SOLO - Sponsored by the Mount Airy Learning Tree
Wednesday, February 25, 7:00 p.m., Neighborhood Interfaith Movement,
7047 Germantown Avenue.

Will O'Brien, Project H.O.M.E.'s Special Projects Coordinator, will be part of a panel, including formerly homeless persons, discussing *The Soloist* and street homelessness in Philadelphia. A \$10 donation is suggested.

See www.library.phila.gov for other related events.

H.O.M.E. page café

FREE LIBRARY - 1901 VINE STREET

This innovative partnership with the Free Library of Philadelphia and Project H.O.M.E. provides jobs in a lovely and comfortable eat-in setting.

- Freshly brewed Starbucks coffee
- Baked goods from Metropolitan Bakery
- Sandwiches and salads from the Back Home Café

Monday - Saturday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
215-320-6191

KEEP UP WITH

ALL THE NEWS FROM H.O.M.E.



Sign up to receive Project H.O.M.E.'s **quarterly E-newsletter** for news, updates, advocacy alerts, and events by visiting www.projecthome.org.

On **JANUARY 20**, nearly one hundred persons gathered in the community room of our 1515 Fairmount Avenue residence to watch the inauguration of President Barack Obama. A potluck lunch was laid out, with a big-screen television broadcasting the events from Washington, D.C., while residents, staff, and friends (including a few currently homeless folks) shared in the historic occasion.

The energy in the room was palpable. As the new President took the oath of office, cheers erupted, as did a bit of improvised dancing. Many of us shared the sentiment, "Never in my lifetime could I have imagined this...." We were caught up in a spirit of hope that Americans were stirring with new vision and energy to rebuild our country and restore our communities.

Our gathering place was auspicious: 1515 Fairmount, home to 48 men and women who had overcome homelessness, was the scene of a four-year legal battle for fair housing in the 1990s. The building itself is a symbol of struggle, hope, and transformation.

TWENTY YEARS AGO, hope was a scarcer commodity. A new President had taken the oath of office, promising a "kinder, gentler America." Like cities throughout the country, Philadelphia had seen a surge of persons living on its streets. In early 1989, the shelters were largely overcrowded and ineffective. A city budget crisis had forced a slashing of services. Public opinion was turning from compassion to increasing anger at the "street people" who were disrupting life in Center City.

While the Women of Hope residences, under the leadership of Sister Mary Scullion, had proved successful in getting many women with mental health issues off the streets, much animus and public frustration were directed at hundreds of chronically homeless men – some with long-term addictions, some with mental disorders, some traumatized veterans. They had "fallen through the cracks." Nothing, it seemed, could be done to reach or rehabilitate them.

But a small group of committed people, Joan Dawson McConnon and Sister Mary Scullion, along with Joe Ferry, Steve Gold, Peg Healy, Mary Ellen Whalen, and others, would not give up. They knew many of the men on the streets. They had built bonds of trust and understanding, and envisioned with them a safe and welcoming space. They applied for a small grant from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, and with the City's generous provision of space and the help of volunteers and some individual donors, opened a short-term residence in the vacant locker room of a municipal recreation center.

For four months, dozens of the men did what some thought impossible: they came off the streets. They formed a community in that make-shift home. Many made positive decisions to pursue mental health and recovery services.

Most important, during those months, a vision was born. The volunteers and residents agreed that solutions were possible for even the most dire situations of chronic homelessness. They birthed a community rooted in an unrelenting commitment to housing, jobs, medical care, and education.

IN WAYS WE could hardly imagine, the hope that motivated us has borne astonishing fruit over these past twenty years. From that initial winter emergency

shelter, we have developed almost 500 units of housing, implemented a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan, developed a world-class learning center, and provided quality education, health care, and employment services to thousands of homeless and low-income Philadelphians. We have been at the forefront of advocating for constructive policies to address homelessness and poverty, at the city, state, and federal levels. We have gotten tens of thousands of homeless and low-income people politically involved.

Along the way, we've learned valuable lessons about the unquenchable dignity and beauty of the human spirit, the power of relationships and healthy community, and the need for hope and vision. While we celebrate these remarkable achievements, we know that tremendous challenges remain. Our economy continues to slide, taking new victims with it. City budget cuts make our efforts to provide necessary services more difficult. Recently, we learned of ten people who died while homeless – a sign that we cannot be content with what we've accomplished. There is much to do.

All of us at Project H.O.M.E. will take the opportunity of this 20th Anniversary to reflect on our mission and history. We will assess what we've learned, celebrate what we've accomplished, discern where we are led. We will be hosting various events throughout the year that will deepen our commitment and widen our circle of support. We can't imagine where we will be twenty years from now – what accomplishments we will be celebrating, what new challenges we will be facing. The journey home is a long one, and we are grateful to all of you who are invaluable companions along the way.



Project H.O.M.E. celebrated the landmark opening of permanent housing at 1515 Fairmount Avenue.

Photo by Harvey Finkle

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

News from H.O.M.E.

IN FROM THE COLD

While we continue to develop long-term solutions to homelessness, Project H.O.M.E. is also responding to the immediate needs of the growing number of persons who are on the streets. This past month, we opened up an emergency respite for homeless women with serious mental illness. The program will bring these women in from the winter cold, but also connect them to permanent housing and services, including health care, recovery, and mental health services. *To support the winter respite by volunteering, please contact Erin O'Brien at 215-232-7272 or erinobrien@projecthome.org.*

CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP

One Project H.O.M.E. program participant danced the night away at the historic inauguration festivities of President Barack Obama. Last spring, Shareema Bryan earned her G.E.D. and graduated from the Comcast Customer Service Training Program, a joint venture of Comcast, the Urban League of Philadelphia, and our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs. Shareema was subsequently hired by Comcast. Her leadership skills were soon

recognized, so she was nominated by the Urban League and eventually selected to attend the January 20 inauguration, including one of the inaugural balls. We are proud to have supported Shareema in her leadership development.

ARTISTIC VISIONS

Several Project H.O.M.E. artists were recently included in an exhibit entitled "The World Apart" at Widener University Art Gallery. Current residents, James Webster and Joe Johnson, and former residents, Ron Lellis and Vanise Clay, were among the featured artists. The exhibit was organized by Coalition Ingenu and featured self-taught, visionary, and "outsider" artists.

BUSINESS IS BOOMING

Congratulations to our Harold A. Honickman Young Entrepreneurs for their most productive and lucrative year to date. The program trains teens

REAL CHANGE

Project H.O.M.E. resident Yvonne Bailey (right) is featured in promotional materials and ads for the "Real Change" campaign. After seventeen years on the streets, Yvonne – now employed at our H.O.M.E. Page Café – is a vibrant, involved tax-payer and voter, and a leader in our community. She is a true example of a formerly homeless person who demonstrates "real change" in action. The campaign, coordinated by the City of Philadelphia and the Center City District, seeks to educate Philadelphians to invest in effective long-term solutions. Project H.O.M.E. is one of the beneficiaries. For information, go to www.MakeRealChange.org.



Photo courtesy of Center City District

in basic business skills – marketing, inventory, budgeting, and customer service. Seventeen students are enrolled in the Entrepreneurial Program, several of whom have started their own businesses – selling T-shirts, travel mugs, eco-friendly bags, snacks, buttons, and other items. This past year, our young entrepreneurs earned over \$2,800 in profit sharing and launched four new businesses. We thank their mentors, staff, and others who supported their outstanding efforts.

GENERAL CONCERN



Project H.O.M.E. was privileged to host former Secretary of State General Colin Powell at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs on October 6. General Powell, who has long been involved in issues of urban education, met with adult learners and formerly homeless veterans living at Project H.O.M.E.'s St. Elizabeth's Recovery Residence.

Photo by Harvey Finkle

TO OUR READERS:

Like so many citizens and organizations, Project H.O.M.E. is feeling the pinch of these difficult economic times. We are trying to respond creatively and positively by undertaking cost-cutting measures that will have minimal impact on our services and programs. One such measure is that this edition of *Dwelling Place* is only four pages, instead of the usual eight. You will notice that our masthead and contact information is missing from the cover page.

Please see our website for contact information or call our main Administration number at 215-232-7272.

Thanks so much to all of you who continue to support us through these difficult times.

www.projecthome.org
215-232-7272

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

WE CANNOT OVERSTATE our gratitude to all of the donors who contributed to us during the late Fall and holiday season. *Every dollar has made and continues to make a meaningful difference – especially in this time of crisis.* Listed below are some recent donors whose gifts had an exceptional impact on the Project H.O.M.E. community:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Gary and Kathy Anderson | Robert and Esther Fox | Lone Star Steakhouse & Saloon | Anne and Bruce Robinson |
| Mr. Michael Angelakis | Mr. and Mrs. Lester Z. Freeman | (Del Frisco's Double Eagle | Mr. and Ms. Howard Ross |
| The Agnes Irwin School | Dr. Eugene Garfield | Steakhouse) | Saints Peter and Paul Church |
| Avery Foundation | Gene Epstein Enterprises | Dr. Deborah Anna Luepnitz | James and Marie Seward |
| The Barra Foundation | The Haverford School | Mr. and Mrs. Gerald J. Maginnis | Robbie and Richard Shell |
| Mr. William P. Becker | Historic Landmarks for Living | James J. & Frances M. Maguire | David and Rita Spillane |
| Berwind Corporation | Tony and Lynn Hitschler | Robert and Colleen McCafferty | Sisters of Mercy - Mid-Atlantic |
| Donna and Jon Boscia | Homeless Assistance Fund, Inc. | Edward and Mary McCauley | Community, Inc. |
| Bryn Clovis Foundation | Lynne and Harold Honickman | Mr. James G. McSherry | Frank and Jeanne Trainer |
| Ms. Leslie Caldwell | Independence Foundation | Menasha Corporation Foundation | United Way of Southeastern |
| Joe and Joann Canavan | Charles and Barbara Kahn | Merle Vogt Foundation | Pennsylvania |
| Comcast Corporation | Keystone Mercy Health Plan | John and Leigh Middleton | Vanguard Charitable Endowment |
| John and Janet Connor | Klehr, Harrison, Harvey, | Joe and Sue Miller | Program |
| Stephen and Beatrice D'Angelo | Branzburg & Ellers, LLP | MKM Foundation | Verizon Foundation |
| Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation | Thomas and Helen Krug | J. Patrick and Alicia O'Grady | Dr. and Mrs. Sankey Williams |
| Endo Pharmaceuticals, Inc. | James and Katherine Ledwith | Pat and Victoria Pasquariello | Susan and William Wilson |
| Entact Environmental Services | The Lida Foundation | Paul E. Kelly Foundation | The William M. King |
| Frank and Frances Erbrick | Lincoln Financial Group | PNC Bank | Charitable Foundation |
| First Nonprofit Insurance Co. | Foundation | PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP | Robert F. and Mary Gene Woods |
| Firsttrust Bank | Drew and Eileen Locher | Claire Reichlin | Zeldin Family Foundation |
| Fox & Roach Charities | | | |

PLUS, OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

NONE OF OUR WORK could have been done – particularly during the holiday season – without our invaluable volunteers! On our website, you'll find information about all of the amazing people who donated time, in-kind goods, food, and services that made this holiday season more joyful for the men, women, and children in our community.

As **Volunteer Appreciation Week** approaches (April 19-25, 2009), we acknowledge the wonderful contributions of our volunteers! From advising our human resources department in legal matters to serving a meal at a safe haven, volunteers are crucial to the operation of Project H.O.M.E. *For more information on the volunteer program, please visit www.projecthome.org or call Erin O'Brien, Volunteer Coordinator, at 215-232-7272.*

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

WE ARE THANKFUL to Bucks County businessman and philanthropist **Gene Epstein**, who last fall issued a challenge grant to stimulate new donations to Project H.O.M.E. in light of what he saw as especially hard economic times and an approaching cold winter. His \$25,000 donation leveraged an additional \$25,000 that will go a long way in helping us extend our services as more people fall into homelessness and poverty. We are grateful for Gene's desire to get more people in the community involved in real solutions.

"The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

– President Barack Obama, January 20, 2009

THE SOLOIST

THE 2009 "ONE BOOK, ONE PHILADELPHIA" SELECTION PUTS THE SPOTLIGHT ON HOMELESSNESS

WE ARE THRILLED at this year's selection for the "One Book, One Philadelphia" program: Steve Lopez's *The Soloist*. During his days as a columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Steve wrote several articles about Project H.O.M.E. and homelessness in our city. Steve showed remarkable sensitivity and compassion in his writing, which comes through as well in this amazing memoir of his relationship with Nathaniel Ayers, a stunningly talented musician in Los Angeles' Skid Row. Steve's story raises important issues, not only about homelessness and mental illness, but about friendship and human transformation. A film of the book, starring Robert Downey, Jr., and Jamie Foxx, will be released this spring. We are working with groups around the country to use the premiere of the film to raise awareness about issues of chronic homelessness. We are advocating to help end chronic homelessness through federal funding for 90,000 units of permanent supportive housing.

