

News FROM HOME



NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME®

State of Homelessness 30 Years On



Photo by Harvey Finkle
Sister Mary Scullion doing street outreach in 1987 prior to Project HOME's founding.

This year marks a phenomenal milestone: the 30th anniversary of Project HOME. Looking back on the early days of building relationships with people on the streets and opening emergency shelters, we see how much has been accomplished: last year, we housed more than one thousand people. Our quarterly census of people living on the streets, though hovering above 900 people in recent years, is the lowest of the nation's ten largest cities, despite a staggeringly high poverty rate (26 percent, or approximately 400,000 Philadelphians). By comparison, Los Angeles, with three times Philadelphia's population, has a poverty rate of 18.6 percent and a homeless population of 22,887. Leadership and partnership from people, organizations, and government agencies across the region and country have played a critical role in creating a future of hope for so many.

When we began in 1989, street homelessness among people with serious mental illness seemed an utterly unsolvable

problem, a permanent feature of the urban landscape. Today, we are able to talk about ending chronic street homelessness. We have developed proven, cost-effective solutions, and have been fortunate to have public and private sector peers and partners who share a vision of a just and compassionate society and do the work daily to make that vision a reality.

From our early days, we focused our efforts on street homelessness, primarily among people with struggling with mental health. Generally, the most visible in Center City Philadelphia, street homelessness was historically a result of poverty, deinstitutionalization, and limited mental health care and other social supports, and drug epidemics, paired with ever-increasing housing costs. The widening gap between what people earn on minimum wage or public benefits – once enough to afford housing – and the cost of safe, decent housing has grown into the most intractable cause of homelessness. Today, in collaboration with the City

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With a Little Help from Friends

Bill Burrell had been at Project HOME's St. Elizabeth's Recovery Residence only three days when someone asked him a question that would change his life.

Bill's journey to St. Elizabeth's was a long and rocky one. He grew up in Pittsburgh, one of four siblings living in a sea of extended family and cousins. But his life went awry. A fight landed him in jail. Upon his release in 1999, he moved to Philadelphia where things were soon looking up. He got training at the School of Culinary Arts as a chef and began working in restaurants all around town.



Photo by Bill Burrell

Bill Burrell's successful recovery story began at St. Elizabeth's Recovery Residence.

hauled back to Pittsburgh for an old bench warrant—which turned out to be mistaken identity." But, he says, that turn of events was a blessing. "It brought me to my senses. I decided I was not going to continue down this path."

After a six-month rehab program, Bill came into St. Elizabeth's. And on day three came the question. "I was eating lunch when Alexis Pugh [Project HOME's Director of Workforce Solutions and Employment Services] came up to me and was bold enough to ask: "What do you want to do? What are your goals?"

No one had ever asked Bill that question. "I want to go to school," he surprised himself by responding. Alexis told him about Project HOME's Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) class starting in three days. If Bill showed up, she would know he was serious.

Serious he was. The following months found him in Project HOME's Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL) eight hours a day, studying behavioral health, emergency first aid, mental health, forensics, and other background essentials to being accredited as a CRS specialist. While there, Bill also picked up a ServSafe food handling certification to buttress his chef background.

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Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

As we start 2019, all of us at Project HOME are deeply grateful for the progress that has been made – with your support and commitment – in addressing homelessness. For 30 years we have brought thousands of people home, including many people who had lived on streets with severe, untreated mental health challenges.

We continue to assert that we know what it will take to end street homelessness in Philadelphia. But we also know that enormous challenges loom. While the numbers of persons on the streets has fallen considerably in recent years, today we see two troubling factors that are aggravating the situation, and which we must confront head-on.

The first is the continuing – and more desperate – lack of affordable housing. The local housing boom may be good for the larger economy, but the increasing costs are worsening the situation for people on the bottom rung of the economic ladder, for whom decent housing options are precarious at best.

The other, as we all painfully know, is the explosion of addiction, especially the opioid crisis. This crisis affects people from every walk of life, landing many people on the streets and tragically claiming hundreds of lives in Philadelphia each year.

Along with numerous nonprofit and government groups, we are redoubling efforts, both to develop meaningful

solutions, such as recovery housing linked with employment, and to learn more about best practices, including Medication Assisted Treatment, which we are utilizing at our Stephen Klein Wellness Center with great success. Also many of our resident leaders and staff have launched a monthly Recovery Café program, to provide affirming, supportive space for people in recovery.

As we strengthen our outreach efforts to provide help and healing to individuals who are in the grasp of addiction on the streets, we must also work on public policies and economic forces to increase the availability of affordable permanent supportive housing. We must do the advocacy work that will help make our society more just and compassionate. Please take action by contacting your elected officials at projecthome.org/action.

As we celebrate 30 years of success, we know that more progress can and must be made. We face these challenges with hope and with the power of community, as well as the strength of so many remarkable women and men who bear witness to what it means to come home.

S. Mary Scullion



Photo by Dave Hering

Sister Mary Scullion,
Co-founder and Executive
Director of Project HOME

State of Homelessness 30 Years On

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of Philadelphia and spectacular peer organizations, we are working to address homelessness among young adults and homelessness caused by addiction.

Poverty is not the only factor causing homelessness. Mental illness and addiction are equal opportunity diseases. Our recent ad campaign (see page 4), designed to give hope to people living on the streets and struggling to attain recovery, featured Project HOME residents and alumni from all walks of life. Following national trends, substance use is growing in Philadelphia, and as a result, the region is facing the greatest public health crisis in decades. The number of deaths related to drug overdose – more than 1,000 in Philadelphia last year— is triple that of the number of homicides. Individuals experiencing homelessness are at an increased risk of substance abuse disorder and drug overdose; this is a risk amplified in Philadelphia given the low cost and high potency of heroin and other opioids on our streets.

“We continue to hear stories of patients reconnecting with their roles as parents, employees, and functioning community members due to their hard work in recovery.”

In 2015, Project HOME opened the doors of the Stephen Klein Wellness Center in the second-poorest zip code in Philadelphia. This beautiful 30,000-square-foot structure is home to an extensive program of trauma-informed health services specifically tailored to the surrounding community, including dental, prenatal, pharmaceutical, physical fitness, behavioral health, recovery, legal and benefits counseling, and programs

for community education. As a Federally Qualified Health Center, we are able to offer services to low-income persons without the ability to pay. Recently, through partnerships with Pathways to Housing PA and Prevention Point, we are able to provide critical healthcare and treatment services to individuals struggling with homelessness and substance use through an innovative model known as Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). MAT uses a unique combination of behavioral therapy and medications to treat substance use disorders. Robin DeBates, who manages our MAT program, describes it this way: “Because we provide MAT services in an integrated wellness center setting, we have a way to help people engage in and take charge of their physical, mental, and social health. Our goal is to make medication assisted treatment easier to get than heroin and to stick with them when they show signs of addiction, which is the disease we are helping treat. We continue to hear stories of patients reconnecting with their roles as parents, employees, and functioning community members due to their hard work in recovery plus the support we are able to provide.”

In the coming weeks, we will open a new residence which will prototype further integration of recovery housing with healthcare and employment for people beginning their recovery journey. Sacred Heart Recovery Residence will provide a safe, supportive program with a range of services to assist individuals on the path to recovery. Coupled with education, employment, and healthcare supports to help people stably transition to permanent housing.

We remain committed to being the first major city to render homelessness a distant memory. Poverty, addiction, and mental illness are adversaries too daunting for any of us to face alone. Together we can build a brighter future for individuals and families, bringing them HOME with dignity and compassion.

When it was created eight years ago, the mission of the PECO/Exelon Veterans Employment and Training Program was to use the restorative power of work, education, and community to help formerly homeless veterans in recovery remake their lives and achieve self-sufficiency. And it has done just that.

As two of the Greater Philadelphia region's most socially-engaged companies, PECO and its parent company, Exelon, have well-earned reputations for commitment to supporting military veterans, whether they be company employees or are represented in the broader community. The Project HOME PECO/

Exelon Veterans Training and Employment Program builds on that commitment: providing job skills training, access to paid work experiences, and paid internships to formerly homeless veterans since 2010. The program targeted



Photo by Edward Savaria, Jr

Mecharia Bey (left) was a 2017 graduate of the program.

formerly homeless veterans living in Project HOME supportive housing residences, as well as Project HOME resident alumni.

To ensure that each veteran receives the tools necessary to succeed, participants of the program received on-site support, career guidance, and job search assistance for the duration of their internship.

The Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs provided program participants with classes on professional development and certification, computer proficiency, networking opportunities, workplace etiquette, and job search assistance. Veterans met one-on-one with a member of Project HOME's Employment Services team each week to discuss their progress and challenges.

Overall, the PECO/Exelon Veterans Employment and Training Program was highly successful; the program graduated 63 military veterans from every branch of service. We are so grateful for the leadership and support of Michael Innocenzo, President and CEO, PECO; Craig Adams, retired President and CEO, PECO; Romona Riscoe Benson, Manager of Corporate Relations, PECO; and Denis P. O'Brien, Advisor to the CEO, Exelon Corporation; along with their support and veteran staff across PECO that attended graduation ceremonies in solidarity.

Moving forward, Project HOME is pivoting the program's winning strategies to serve an emerging community of need: young adults.

Research shows that emancipated young adults face a number of challenges during the transition to adulthood, and unemployment and housing stability may be among the greatest of these. The January 2018 Point-In-Time Count showed that of the 1,083 homeless, unsheltered individuals counted, seven percent were young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. Each year, approximately 1,000 young adults age out of foster care in Pennsylvania – many left struggling without the life skills, education, or employment history to obtain competitive employment

and housing.

Recognizing that successful employment is a critical component of overcoming homelessness, Project HOME currently requires all young adult residents to work full-time or, if they are enrolled in the Young Adult Program, at least part-time. This program adds a supported apprenticeship to employment to help these young people to succeed. The supported apprenticeship is a six-month experience during which the young adult participant receives intensive support to retain competitive employment, or if necessary, to rapidly connect to new employment. Simultaneously working one-on-one with an employment professional while participating in a trauma informed support group, each participant will develop an individualized career goal plan and acquire new skills to make measurable progress toward those goals. The experience is designed for Young Adults to both develop new skills and discover hidden talents for a life of independence, productivity, and contribution to family and community.

With the support of partners PECO and the Exelon Foundation, dozens of formerly homeless veterans have achieved recovery and self-sufficiency. Every day, these veterans call on their skills and experience, putting them to use to build an amazing future. We are excited to bear witness to what the future will hold for graduates of the new Young Adult Employment and Training Program and are deeply grateful for the visionary leadership of PECO and the Exelon Foundation. They truly exemplify what it means to build a brighter tomorrow, today for people in our community.

With a Little Help from Friends

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Bill also began working with employment counselor Paul Dunnaville. "Bill was very ready," Paul says. "He set up a standing weekly meeting with me, and he never missed." They discussed his life, his goals, and his skills. Paul reviewed his resume and suggested job openings to pursue. "We put applications everywhere," Bill recalls. "I wanted a part-time job, because I knew I also had to keep up with my recovery, which requires going to meetings every day."

Meanwhile, staff at St. Elizabeth's worked with Bill to access housing through the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA). "God was on my side, because it came through in a few months, and often people are on waiting lists for years! I believe that because I was doing my part, my Higher Power was working things in my favor."

The same September day Bill moved into his newly rehabbed PHA apartment, he was offered part-time employment at St. Columba,

"Bill models what can happen if you take full advantage of what Project HOME offers."

Project HOME's safe-haven residence for men. There he cooks,

gives residents medication, and works at the front desk. His apartment is about twelve blocks from his sister and mother.

Even though he is living independently in his own place, Project

HOME continues to support Bill to make a full, healthy transition. For the next several months, staff will help him set up medical services in his new neighborhood, and gain financial management skills and additional life skills.

"Bill models what can happen if you take full advantage of all that Project HOME offers," said Alexis Pugh. "We have all these opportunities to build skills and access support, and when someone like Bill is ready, the change can be immediate and remarkable. Bill knew his goals and went at them with everything we could offer him."

One year after arriving at St. Elizabeth's, Bill Burrell has a changed life – but he is also looking to the future. "I want to get a car. I'm taking a Spanish class. I access all the support I can to get what I need to stay on this path."

"I really appreciate Alexis Pugh," Bill says. "I decided I was going to do whatever this lady said, because sometimes you need a kick in the butt. She was what I needed."

Then he pauses. "My mom said she was proud of me. She has never said that in my entire life."

At Project HOME, each story is different. Not everyone will write a new life script in one year. We strive to offer people the tools, counsel, and relationships to empower them to forge a new life. When they step up with courage and are able to do that, our entire community is heartened by their spirit.

Information That Matters to You

Receive the news and issues updates that matter to you by subscribing to Project HOME's monthly eNewsletter and Advocacy alerts.

Go to www.bit.ly/PH_Subscribe or contact michaelgainer@projecthome.org

Also, follow us on social media:



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www.youtube.com/projecthomephilly

And don't miss the great stuff on the

Project HOME Blog

www.projecthome.org/blog

HOME Happenings

◆ **In January, Wawa began** promoting and accepting donations from customers to benefit Maguire Residence during transactions at cash registers at 14 Wawa locations in Center City and throughout the Philadelphia region. This marks an expansion of our existing partnership with Wawa and the Wawa Foundation through which Wawa currently donates all of the coffee to the Hub of Hope in Suburban Station. The Wawa Foundation has pledged to match the first \$25,000 raised by Wawa shoppers and is a Platinum Sponsor of our upcoming 30th Anniversary Gala.

◆ **Our 30th Anniversary Gala** will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at the Philadelphia Downtown Marriott. This very special evening will honor Lynne and Harold Honickman for their long-term commitment to ending and preventing homelessness in Philadelphia. For more information, contact Scarlett McCahill at smccahill@projecthome.org or 215-232-4786, x3075.

◆ **Please join us in** our first exhibition featuring the incredible efforts of the Project HOME Art Program's Teaching Artist Training Initiative. Over the past six months, a team of two Project HOME residents has worked collaboratively with a professional Teaching Artist to create and facilitate Creative Community Art Workshops. The exhibition will be open throughout February at Francis House of Peace, located at 810 Arch Street. The show's closing event will be held on Friday, March 1 from 4:30 to 6:30 pm.

◆ **We are partnering** with the Center City District on a new information campaign highlighting five Philadelphians previously living on the streets who found a path out of homelessness and now seek to inspire others to do the same. Seventy ads appear in transit shelters and buses throughout Center City Philadelphia and feature photo portraits and success stories of five individuals who have experienced homelessness. Counter-top tear-off postcard displays have been distributed to retailers, restaurants, hotels, residential buildings, and offices in Center City on which the same five individuals tell members of the public how they can best help and offer information cards that can be handed to people living on the street.

◆ **The Stephen Klein Wellness Center** reminds our transgender, questioning, and gender nonconforming community members of our transgender-inclusive healthcare services. In addition to primary medical and dental care services, we have providers experienced in considering the holistic care needs of transgender and gender nonconforming patients, as well as gender affirming care; behavioral health providers adept at working with patients engaged in gender identity exploration; staff who receive ongoing LGBTQ cultural competency training; and a record system that identifies patients by their correct gender, preferred names, and pronouns. Call 215-320-6187 for an appointment.

◆ **On January 15, we** celebrated the construction kick-off for Maguire Residence, a new affordable, permanent supportive residence in Kensington for people who have experienced homelessness and are committed to recovery. The residence will offer 42 homes and green space, and programming will focus on attainment of employment and educational goals while establishing a lifestyle that promotes wellness, recovery, and community. For more information visit projecthome.org/maguire-residence.



YOUR STORY DOESN'T END HERE.

"I'VE LIVED IT, SO I KNOW WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM. I ALSO KNOW IT GETS BETTER."

ADDICTED TO DRUGS AND STUCK IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP, **KATIE** LIVED ON THE STREETS FOR YEARS UNTIL SHE FOUND PROJECT HOME.

MEALS & SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE
HUB OF HOPE - 1401 ARCH STREET | BROAD ST MINISTRY - 315 S. BROAD STREET

MEALS ARE AVAILABLE
ST. JOHN'S HOSPICE (MEN ONLY) - 1221 RACE STREET | CHOSEN 300 CENTER CITY - 1116 SPRING GARDEN STREET

PROJECT HOME NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME. PROJECTHOME.ORG

I Am Project HOME

MILLIE KORN

About 20 years ago, a friend of Millie Korn's, Bill Harvey, who was then on Project HOME's Board of Trustees, told her, "I have a group I think you should work with." Millie, a native of Philadelphia, has run a title insurance agency for the last 30 years. The new client, she found out, was Project HOME. "Ever since, it's been a wonderful working relationship," she says.

And it has been a vital one for our housing work. Millie has helped secure titles for all of our housing developments for the past two decades. It's one of those essential but behind-the-scenes, nuts-and-bolts jobs

without which we could never fulfill our mission of ending homelessness. Hundreds of residents have been able to come home with Millie's support.

Millie finds it professionally and personally rewarding. "It's an incredible team doing remarkable work." She has thought of herself as someone "on the outside" of our mission, contributing her part for the deals. But this past

summer, she says, she got an unexpected experience of what it means to be "on the inside."

Millie learned from neighbors about a family that was living in Washington Square near her home. Millie decided to get to know the family – a 77-year-old grandmother in a wheelchair, her son, and her daughter-in-law (the couple's 10-year-old daughter was in foster care at the time). They had been homeless for several months after being evicted from their apartment. They also had multiple complications in their

lives, including physical and mental health issues. Millie offered to try to help them – and reached out to Project HOME's Outreach teams and to Sister Mary Scullion, our Executive Director.

For the next several months, Millie became an unofficial case worker, working tirelessly against numerous obstacles to help them get off the streets. Along the way, she grasped the reality of the long waiting lists and the glaring inadequacy of affordable housing. She convinced the grandmother to take a temporary bed at Project HOME's Women of Change safe haven. "When I went to visit a few days later, she was well rested and smiling," Millie said. "She had heat and could take a shower – and she told me she was never going to be homeless again." With support from Project HOME staff and many neighbors, she was eventually able to find the grandmother permanent housing, where she is deeply happy and feels safe. Shortly after that, she convinced the daughter-in-law to come in to Women of Change, where she still resides. She is still working (in collaboration with outreach workers) with the son, who remains on the street, she is hopeful: "Until he is in housing, my job isn't done."

But more than her improvised social work skills, Millie became a friend to this family. She regularly visits the grandmother, and stays connected to the daughter-in-law and son. She also engaged many of her friends and neighbors, who offered tremendous support to the family, especially the grandmother as she moved into her new home.

"If it weren't for Millie, outreach efforts with this family would never have been so successful," says Sister Mary. "It just shows how we are all part of the solution, and if more people get involved, we will have more success."

Millie says the whole experience has "restored my faith in humankind. It was great to see my friends and colleagues really caring and rallying to help this family on the streets. At the end of the day they're human beings, they feel the same way we do." And when people understand that, beautiful things can happen.



Photo by Emmanuel Sofolawe

Millie Korn has helped secure titles for all of our Project HOME developments for the past 20 years.



Looking for a way to help folks who may be experiencing homelessness?

Try HOME Snacks!

This snack provides Philadelphians in need with sustenance, information on meal access, and directions to the Hub of Hope's life-saving services.

Purchase them individually or in boxes of 36 and have them ready when you meet someone on our streets.

Pick them up at projecthome.org/store or HOME Spun Boutique at 1523 Fairmount Avenue.



1515 Fairmount Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19130

Our Mission

The mission of the Project HOME community is to empower adults, children, and families to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty, to alleviate the underlying causes of poverty, and to enable all of us to attain our fullest potential as individuals and as members of the broader society.

Our Residences

- 1515 and 1523 Fairmount Avenue
- Connelly House, 1212 Ludlow Street
- Francis House of Peace, 810 Arch Street
- Gloria Casarez Residence, 1315 N. 8th Street
- Hope Haven I/II, 2827-28 Diamond Street
- James Widener Ray Homes, 2101 W. Venango
- JBJ Soul Homes, 1415 Fairmount Avenue
- Kairos House, 1440 N. Broad Street
- Kate's Place, 1929 Sansom Street
- Rowan I, 2729-A W. Diamond Street
- Rowan II, 1901 N. Judson Street
- Ruth Williams House, 2415 N. Broad St.
- Sacred Heart Recovery Residence, 1315 Hunting Park Avenue
- St. Columba, 4133 Chestnut Street
- St. Elizabeth's Recovery, 1850 N. Croskey St.
- Women of Change, 2042 Arch Street

Support Services & Programs

- Adult Education, Employment & Arts
- Neighborhood Services
- Advocacy and Public Policy
- Healthcare Services
- Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs
- Hub of Hope
- Outreach Coordination Center
- Personal Recovery Services
- Resident Alumni Program
- Volunteer Program

Businesses

- HOME Spun Resale Boutique, 215-232-6322
- HOME Made Products, 215-232-7272, ext. 3023

Administration

215-232-7272

Homeless Outreach Hotline

215-232-1984

Human Resources Hotline

215-232-7219, ext. 5200

www.projecthome.org

NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME®



Photo by Joy Gorodeizer

In January, we celebrated the construction kick-off for Maguire Residence, a new affordable, permanent supportive residence in Kensington for people who have experienced homelessness and are committed to recovery.

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.



Union
Bug