

News FROM HOME

NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME

A Little Heaven from Underground



Photo by Karen Orrick

The bright colors of the Hub of Hope window helped welcome many persons in from the streets during the winter months.

Riley was already a regular visitor to the Hub of Hope when he first displayed to the staff some of his artistic talent. It was a day that was normal enough – whatever that means in a high-traffic, high-intensity ground zero of homelessness and poverty.

“I want to share something I wrote with you,” Riley (not his real name) told me in his quiet, just audible voice after beckoning me over to where he was sitting. He began humming gently then broke into a soft, smooth, jazz melody. The longer he sang, the louder he crooned until his honeyed voice filled the entire space. “Wow... SING IT!” “I had no idea!” and “That’s what I’m talkin’ ‘bout!” gasped from every corner. The jazz melody soon blended into a soulful R&B, then fused in rhythm, funk, percussion, and rap. The way Riley’s voice could slide into falsetto then glide dexterously into heavy doses of vocal

synthesizers and percussion made it clear that his background included extensive musical training. The concert lasted about half an hour, with other participants joining in for duets and harmonies and building connections from shared moments of pleasure singing musical favorites.

Witnessing Riley shine that day was just one of many moments this winter when Hub of Hope staff were able to witness the beauty, grace, and strength of the many participants who came through our doors.

The innovative winter walk-in engagement center recently completed a second successful season in the Suburban Station subway concourse, where its doors were open to individuals experiencing chronic street homelessness. From the opening of this year’s initiative in mid-December, over 550 unique individuals came in – to see a case manager,

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www.projecthome.org

Closing Doors, Opening Doors



As case manager at the Hub of Hope, Kanika Stewart helped many guests access services. With the Hub closing, we will continue to advocate for critically needed services for those on the streets.

With the recent closing of our second annual winter Hub of Hope engagement center in the Center City concourse (see adjoining article), we are again gratified at what we were able to accomplish. Hundreds of persons experiencing chronic street homelessness were able to access critically-needed services, empowering many of them to take concrete

steps toward breaking the cycle of homelessness. And once again we take away the valuable lesson: When resources are available and targeted services are provided, positive things happen.

But what about when the resources aren’t there? While the Hub provided a vital access point that empowered many persons to make the transition off the streets, many more of our sisters and brothers are still struggling with homelessness, poverty, and economic vulnerability.

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett has not yet chosen to expand the state Medicaid programs as part of the federal Affordable Care Act. This decision affects up to 800,000 uninsured low-income Pennsylvanians, leaving them with minimal resources to afford health care. If Pennsylvania does not opt in, the state will lose out on up to \$1 billion in savings over several years, and this choice will negatively affect the economy and threaten the financial viability of many hospitals.

We have been working with dozens of groups

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Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

Sometimes, it's all a matter of how we look at people.

Khalaf was a dropout from high school. His family had been through years of homelessness, and his experience of failing schools left him with enormous educational deficits. A few years ago, looking at him, you might have been tempted to write him off as another inner-city high school dropout. Had he been trapped in that identity, his story could have followed the sad trajectory of many young men: chronic unemployment, possibly addiction and crime, even incarceration and violence. But in fact, some people looked differently at Khalaf, and saw his gifts and potential: the staff at Project HOME's Rowan Homes, where his family had a safe, stable place to call home; volunteers and staff at our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs. This month, Khalaf will graduate from Williamson Trade School with an associate degree and skills that will give him a step up in entering the work force.

Richard picks up his granddaughter each afternoon from the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs, where she attends the Community Partnership School. Richard is a homeowner in the neighborhood, a full-time worker, tax payer, and family man. Once he was a sullen drug addict homeless on the streets of Center City; to look at him back then you might have thought that was all he was and would ever be. But thanks to the miracle and hard work of recovery,

in part at our St. Elizabeth's Recovery Residence, Richard is a positive, contributing force in the community. This different story of who he is and who he could be has a multiplier effect, bearing fruit in the next generations.

When we lock people into labels – homeless person, drug addict, high school dropout – we deny them the truth of their greater possibilities. But we also deny ourselves and our society of those possibilities, those hidden gifts. When we look beyond the labels, beyond the difficult circumstances of the present, when we see the real person, brimming with potential, we can help create a different story. When we believe in people, and help them believe in themselves, great things happen – not just for them, but for all of us. We all share in a new and more hopeful story for them, for us, and for our community.

Thanks for the many ways you support the work of Project HOME, but most of all, for sharing in our conviction of the dignity of each person. Thanks for believing, like us, that despite the harshest of circumstances, everyone has a story of hope and possibility within them, and that we can empower those stories when we truly believe in each other. Thank you for your countless acts of compassion and generosity that have changed many lives and stories.

A. Mary Scullion

Photo by Rodney Aienza



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

A Little Heaven from Underground (continued from page 1)

talk to a peer specialist or a recovery specialist, visit the doctor, nurse, or psychiatrist, or grab a cup of coffee and a moment's peace.

This year's program was again made possible because of valuable partners, including the City of Philadelphia, the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Jefferson University

Riley was one of over 150 visitors to take advantage of the health clinic, and one of over 130 persons for whom we were able to find housing and treatment placements. After years on the streets, he agreed to come inside to the SREHUP stabilization beds at Arch Street United Methodist Church for Hub of Hope participants. From there, he moved into a safe haven and connected to an intensive case manager. We continue to encourage him to take positive steps to break the cycle of homelessness.

"The Hub is a special place," says Riley. "What attracted me to it were the windows – I saw them and wanted to check out what was inside." He speaks so softly I have to lean in close to catch his words. They have a lyrical quality and tumble off his tongue connecting to wisps of other thoughts floating in different strands somehow all connected in the atmospheric reality of Riley's world that he is inviting me into. At first Riley is suspicious, distant – yet over time, consistent, caring relationships reveal a beautiful, soft, artistic side.

"I am a singer," Riley tells me, when I ask if I can tell the story of his singing in our newsletter. "I like when music is interactive." He tells me the song he sang that first day was called "Heaven Most High" – "because it's about an outer feeling. Music can do that to you."

—Karen Orrick

Karen Orrick coordinated this year's Hub of Hope. She is a closet musician herself. To read a final report on the outcomes of this year's Hub of Hope, go to www.projecthome.org.

*"I choose to identify with the underprivileged.
I choose to identify with the poor. I choose to give my life
for the hungry. I choose to give my life for those who have
been left out of the sunlight of opportunity."*

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Hospital, Einstein Healthcare Network, Public Health Management Corporation, SEPTA Police, Student Run Emergency Housing Unit of Philadelphia (SREHUP), and Arch Street United Methodist Church. Working together since the early days of winter, we were able to deepen our understanding of the needs of people sleeping in the Suburban Station concourse, provide consistent access to physical and behavioral healthcare, and transition people experiencing long-term homelessness into permanent housing.

Closing Doors, Opening Doors

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around the state to urge Governor Corbett to change his mind and support Medicaid expansion in Pennsylvania (as many other Republican governors have done). Many friends of Project HOME have contacted the Governor and legislators, telling them we can provide health care to thousands of citizens while saving state money while preserving and creating jobs.

At the federal level, the recent “sequester” went into effect, resulting in automatic 8 percent across-the-board cuts in domestic programs in the current fiscal year 2013, including those affecting the most vulnerable Americans. Programs providing shelter, transitional, and permanent housing and critical services to homeless and formerly homeless persons (except certain veterans’ programs), will suffer cuts. (Fortunately, thanks to great advocacy efforts, there were some last minute exceptions to reduce the impact on people who are homeless; in fact, homeless assistance and public housing funds all got a slight boost.)

But the sequester is just part of continuing struggles over the federal budget. While we will continue to monitor the impact of these and other cuts on housing and services in our community, we also must be engaged in the ongoing debate and advocacy efforts. Some current congressional proposals for the 2014 federal budget would cut programs even more dramatically.

We agree that government at all levels needs to function with fiscal discipline. We too are concerned that reckless debt can mortgage our future economic health. But policies that focus solely on drastic cuts in programs only foster greater social instability, deepening the economic vulnerability of millions of Americans while creating more costs for local communities. We believe in public policies that balance fiscal responsibility with meaningful investment in education and economic opportunity, health care, and human services – all of which can help us meet the current needs while preventing future generations of poverty, while saving public money in the long term.

Our success at Project HOME for over two decades has been made possible largely by public-private partnerships. We believe that the model we have pursued, in which all sectors of society play a role in meeting our toughest challenges, is in fact the most promising model for a healthy society for all citizens.

A recent front-page article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that Philadelphia has the highest rate of “deep poverty” (defined as income below half of the poverty line) among big cities – about 200,000 Philadelphians, or 12.9 percent of the city’s population. The sheer scale of the problem dwarfs the capacity of charities and nonprofits working on their own. Poverty and homelessness are societal crises, and they necessitate societal vision and response.

At Project HOME we seek to be part of both the vision and the response. Our Hub of Hope is one small part of that response, and thanks to the tremendous collaboration with private, nonprofit, and public partners, we were able to meet many critical needs. But when winter ended and the Hub closed its doors, we were aware that the needs continue to be enormous – for supportive housing, for access to health care and other services, for meaningful educational and employment opportunities. We will continue to strategically expand our programs and services to meet those needs, and we will continue to advocate for just policies for all Philadelphians, especially our most vulnerable sisters and brothers.

Join us in our advocacy efforts!

For more information, contact Jennine Miller, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy at 215-232-7272, ext. 3042, or jenninemiller@projecthome.org.

Get Involved!

We can only end homelessness with your help!

DONATE
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*For more information,
scan here or go to our website.*

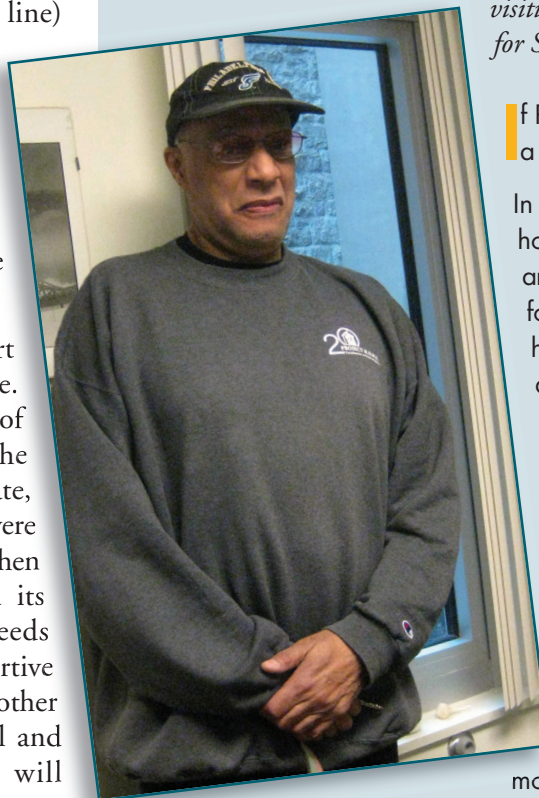


[https://community.projecthome.org/
community](https://community.projecthome.org/community)

Bring Others Home

By Frank Bradley

Frank Bradley, who lives at our Connelly House residence, has been a member of the Project HOME community for almost ten years. This is an excerpt of a talk he gave last fall to a group visiting from the Corporation for Supportive Housing.



If Project HOME ever had a Prodigal Son, it is I.

In 2003, I was lost, homeless, hungry, dirty, and weary. Project HOME found me, brought me home, gave me shelter and care. Also, I was dead in spirit, shattered and broken. I remember crying many a time in the midnight hour. Friends turned their backs on me. I was down so low, people thought I was no good, a failure.

During this time my motto was “Let me die

before I live.” But now, after nearly ten years at Project HOME, outpatient therapy, and becoming a Secular Franciscan in 2010, my motto is “Let me live before I die.”

What I have learned is no matter what I am going through today, tomorrow, or what I went through in the past, it is just temporary. Thus, no matter what the condition, you must rely on courage and hope to conquer fear. Fear is nothing more than False Evidence Appearing Real.

As a result of my collaborated efforts with Project HOME, I was awarded the Fran Egan Civic Award at Project HOME of \$3,000 cash; graduated in the first Certified Peer Specialist class in Philadelphia; awarded the National Every Day Hero Award by a syndicated TV program; became the client participant on the Board of Directors at Horizon House; assisted with the psychiatric interns orientation training at the University of Pennsylvania; completed my two-year study to become a Secular Franciscan; and mostly, helped me to improve my relationship with my daughter Francesca, who is near completion of her Masters Degree in Applied Psychology at New York University.

I have a question for you today: How much love do you have for homeless people, addicts, people infected with HIV/AIDS, and people with a psychological disability? All too often, we get saved and get our lives cleaned up a little bit; we lose compassion for those who are still lost. There’s a whole world full of weary people out there who are our potential brothers and sisters. Lost ones in desperate need of our help. This Prodigal Son is home. Let’s bring others home, too.

HOME Happenings

- ◆ **Project HOME was awarded the largest amount of low-income housing tax credits ever** from Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, which allows us to proceed on our next major housing development. In partnership with Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, we will develop 94 units of affordable housing at 810 Arch Street. The facility, which will be LEED certified, will provide quality permanent housing both for formerly homeless men and women and for the community at large, and will be designed to be compatible with the unique character of the Chinatown neighborhood. Stayed tuned for more details on this exciting project.



Rendering by Kramer + Marks Architects

Rendering of our future residence in Chinatown.

- ◆ **The employment initiative through Our Daily Treads** continues to act as a base for the sustainable recovery of residents and alumni of the Project HOME community by providing daily structure, direction, and transferable skills. Our Daily Treads at 1515 Fairmount Avenue up-cycles donations of gently-worn men's and women's clothing to provide affordable prices for the local community while also offering job coaching and empowering trends, both fashionably and relationally. But like any small business, we're constantly in need of community support. You can help us end chronic homelessness through employment – visit the store, meet our staff, volunteer, or donate gently-used clothing! Store hours are Tuesdays through Thursdays, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, Fridays, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. For more information, contact Jenna Bryant at 215-232-6322 or jennabryant@projecthome.org.

- ◆ This summer the Project HOME HYPE (Helping Youth Pursue Excellence) Program will once again include the opportunity for teens to participate in the **John and Sheila Connors Youth Employment Program**, thanks to the generous and faithful support of the Connors. This program provides students with paid summer internships, which serve as an invaluable

opportunity to learn skills necessary to achieve college and career success. The program is currently in search of intern positions for our talented youth. If you or your business would like to foster youth development, career exploration, and help students earn money for college expenses, please contact Giovanda Richardson, Teen Program Manager, at 215-235-2900 ext. 6307 or giovandarichardson@projecthome.org.

- ◆ **Project HOME is participating in the Philadelphia Food Access Collaborative**, an initiative of the Nutter Administration that emerged in the wake of last summer's controversy over groups providing food outdoors to persons who were homeless. The PFAC is bringing together community leaders, providers, volunteers, and city government representatives, along with residents who use emergency food assistance, to ensure all Philadelphians have access to nutritious food and vital services in healthy settings. The Collaborative will seek to coordinate meals, eliminate gaps in service, and increase the availability of meals, particularly in indoor settings. It also has a long-term goal of advocating for state and federal policy changes to reduce restrictions on food access programs.



Young Leaders Event 2013

CELEBRATING
the 10th Anniversary of the
Honickman Learning Center and
Comcast Technology Labs

Wednesday, September 25th
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Urban Outfitters at the Navy Yard

Sponsorship, Online Auction, and Ticket Information at
www.projecthome.org



I am Project HOME

SR. JOANNE WHITAKER

Photo by Hannah Jones-Lewis



In 2010, S. Joanne Whitaker might have considered stepping into her golden years of retirement. After all, she had already logged practically a half century as a member of the Sisters of Mercy religious order, first in teaching and later in serving some of the most vulnerable and needy populations. But her commitment to the values of mercy and compassion at the heart of her vocation meant she wasn't ready to rest from service.

S. Joanne is now in her third year as a vital part of the team that runs Project HOME's St. Elizabeth's Wellness Center. The health clinic provides a range of services for our residents as well as neighbors, including primary medical care, behavioral health care, education on nutrition and healthy lifestyles, and access to medical assistance and insurance. As clinic coordinator, S. Joanne helps patients with referrals, appointments, and many other aspects of their care. But she attends to other small details such as making coffee and assuring a welcoming atmosphere in the clinic.

"I love it here," she says. "I'm busy from the minute I set my foot in here to the minute I leave. I love the human contact.

I am doing work that I feel is a contribution, first to the patients, but also to the overall mission of Project HOME."

S. Joanne feels her previous years of service prepared her for the Wellness Center. "I've had experience with the kinds of people we see regularly: those with histories of homelessness, mental health issues, addiction." A one-time professor of microbiology at Gwynedd-Mercy College, Joanne served as Executive Director of Calcutta House from 1991 through 1999, providing services to persons with AIDS. "At a time in the 1980s when people with HIV/AIDS were feared and shunned by society, S. Joanne stepped up and welcomed people who were suffering into a safe, supportive, healing environment," says Monica McCurdy, Project HOME's Vice President of Health Programs, who works closely with S. Joanne.

She spent the next several years overseeing refugee services in several African countries. She is sensitive to the difficulty of delivering health services to persons in unstable situations.

"Everybody here really cares about our patients," S. Joanne says. "We all try to respond to the big picture – the life situations of our patients and this community." She acknowledges the frustration of persons not able to manage their health situations – but this is exactly the kind of service she chooses to be in. "It's a gift being able to work with people who are highly vulnerable and face many issues. So many of them don't have anybody to support them. When I am able to offer some support, it keeps me going."

We hope she keeps going for a long time.

Stay Connected!

Keep in touch with HOME Happenings on a regular basis because you are a valuable member of the Project HOME community.

Do you want to receive our Newsletter and advocacy alerts?

Contact

michaelgainer@projecthome.org.

Also, follow us on social media:



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And don't miss the great stuff on the Project HOME Blog – www.projecthomeblog.org

Spirit of Generosity

THE INDEPENDENCE FOUNDATION

Susan Sherman says she "owes S. Mary Scullion for poisoning her years ago." Sherman, President and CEO of the Independence Foundation, offered sandwiches to S. Mary and staff member Helen Brown when they met for the first time.

Both S. Mary and Helen did indeed contract food poisoning years ago, but the Independence Foundation has long since repaid any "debt" owed to Project HOME. The Foundation has supported various projects at Project HOME since 1996, including core funding for housing, but also special projects like internships for teens in the College Access Program and a much needed van for the St. Elizabeth's Recovery Residence. The Foundation's most notable support was for the inception of our St. Elizabeth's Wellness Center, which now provides over 1,200 medical visits each year to our underserved North Philadelphia community.

The Independence Foundation's mission – to support organizations that provide services to people who do not ordinarily have access to them – certainly dovetails with Project HOME's mission. Jennifer Bohnenberger, Program Director for Arts, Culture, and Human Services at the Foundation, says that she looks for organizations with strong leadership first and foremost, and then looks for projects at those organizations where the Foundation can create the most impact. Jennifer's first site visit after she was hired by the Independence Foundation 14 years ago was to Project HOME's 1515 Fairmount residence. Jennifer says she realized then that co-founders S. Mary and Joan McConnon were good examples of that strong leadership.



Susan Sherman and Jennifer Bohnenberger,
The Independence Foundation

"Susan and Jennifer are also great examples of strong leadership," says Amy Burns, Vice President of Development at Project HOME, "and not just at the Foundation. Susan has provided valuable guidance and leadership at Project HOME throughout the years, as a trustee and in other volunteer positions. And Jennifer's leadership was so impressive at her previous employer, Staples, they named a store after her!"

The Independence Foundation's current partnership with Project HOME involves our newest residential project at 810 Arch Street in Chinatown. The Independence Foundation was looking for the right project, "something significant," when they learned about the project: Project HOME has teamed up with the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) to build a 94 unit affordable housing residence which will provide permanent, affordable housing for formerly homeless men and woman, as well as Chinatown seniors.

The Foundation has a longstanding interest in Chinatown; in fact, Susan received an award from PCDC in 2002 for her work on behalf of that community. A decade later, Susan and Jennifer agreed that the 810

Arch project was the right fit. Always strategic, they committed a matching grant of \$100,000 – matching gifts to the project 4 to 1, to enable Project HOME to raise \$500,000 in total.

With this match the Independence Foundation continues the partnership born 17 years ago over those sandwiches, and honed through both strategic grantmaking and careful stewardship. Project HOME is immensely grateful for that lunch, after all.

For information about participating in the 810 Arch Matching Grant, contact Amy Burns, Vice President of Development and Public Relations, at 215-232-4786, ext. 3044.

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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
- Hope Haven I/II, 2827-28 Diamond Street
- Connelly House, 1212 Ludlow Street
- Kairos House, 1440 N. Broad Street
- Kate's Place, 1929 Sansom Street
- James Widener Ray Homes, 2101 W. Venango
- JBJ Soul Homes, 1415 Fairmount Avenue
(opening winter 2013-2014)
- Rowan I, 2729-A W. Diamond Street
- Rowan II, 1901 N. Judson Street
- 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
- Community Development Corporation
- Education and Advocacy
- Healthcare Services
- Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs
- Outreach Coordination Center
- Volunteer Program

Businesses

- Our Daily Threads, 215-232-6322
- HOME Page Café, 215-320-6191

Administration

215-232-7272

Homeless Outreach Hotline

215-232-1984

Human Resources Hotline

215-232-7219 x5200

www.projecthome.org

NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME



Photo by Lynne Honickman

Two of our most veteran staff members, Priscilla Bennett (Miss T) and Helen Brown, joined our Trustee Lynne Honickman and hundreds of persons in a Ceasefire PA rally outside Senator Pat Toomey's office on April 8, urging him to back common-sense gun safety laws. Miss T and Helen are both deeply involved in our community development work in lower North Philadelphia, where one of the primary issues is neighborhood safety.

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