

# News FROM HOME

NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME

## A Decade of the Education Revolution



Photo by Enterprise Marketing

A myriad of programs at the HLCCTL empowers adults and youth to achieve their fullest potential.

Ten years later, and it still never fails to happen: Newcomers turn the corner onto the 1900 block of North Judson Street, and they are astonished to see the beautiful modern facility dominating the street. But what is even more astonishing is what is happening inside the building in the lives of the students of all ages.

In 2003, with the phenomenal leadership of Lynne and Harold Honickman, along with the invaluable partnership of the Comcast Corporation, Project HOME opened the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL). It was a direct response to one of the most glaring needs we saw in the North Philadelphia neighborhood where we are engaged in comprehensive community development work: severe education deficits, both for young people and for adults, which hampered the kind of economic opportunity that could lift people out of poverty. Within the Center's 38,000 square feet are manifold expressions of state-of-the-art technology, including hundreds of computers, interactive education programs, music and recording equipment, video production facilities, and more.

Since its doors opened, the HLCCTL has been a beacon of hope as well as a hub of innovation in technology and education for our neighbors. More than 200 young people

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## Journey Toward Wholeness

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[www.projecthome.org](http://www.projecthome.org)



Photo by Jen McAleese

Kevin Weldon (center) enjoys a moment with MANNA co-workers Keith Lucas and Lynn Jamison, both chefs.

Although it is a beautiful view, could you ever imagine the limbs of a pine tree being your roof and vista from the dirt floor of your home? For Kevin Weldon, this was his view as he lay underneath the tree in Pennypack Park where he lived on and off for the last twenty years.

Kevin's struggle with homelessness began in 1990 when his wife left him. He started to drink, and he eventually lost his job as a police officer. He lived

on the streets and did not care anymore.

Kevin lived a life of despair until March 2012, when he unexpectedly ran into his sister-in-law. She told him that his daughter, whom he had not seen in over twenty years, was looking for him. This gave Kevin the motivation he needed. On a rainy Monday in May, with one token in his pocket, he found his way to a job seminar at the Veterans Administration. Little did he know his life was about to change. Kevin found his way to Project HOME's St. Elizabeth's Recovery Residence.

I first met Kevin at the informational meeting for our PECO Veterans Employment and Training Program. I could tell immediately he was tired, haggard, and depleted, yet I saw that glimmer of hope in his eyes. We accepted Kevin into the program and were able to secure him a work placement at MANNA, a great partner of Project HOME, which serves 16,000 meals weekly to homebound persons living with AIDS or cancer. Kevin and MANNA bonded immediately. Kevin was a very eager learner and worker. No job was too small or big for him.

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## Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

On May 30, I attended the graduation ceremony of The Williamson Free School of Mechanical Trades in Media, PA. I was there with the family of Khalaf Dow, who was graduating. Khalaf lived at Project HOME's Rowan Homes residence, and spent years participating in programs at our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL). His presence at the ceremony that day was the result of remarkable persistence, courage, and hard work.

The commencement speaker at Williamson was Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett. We were stunned when the Governor recounted the story of Khalaf and Project HOME in his talk. "The path was hard," the Governor said, "and it takes, as Khalaf reminded us, five values that underlie everything taught at this school: Faith, Integrity, Diligence, Excellence, and Service. But he is graduating today with the skills to succeed and a bright future."

It was deeply gratifying to hear the Governor's words. He was acknowledging the vision that was present when we first began dreaming over a decade ago of what would eventually become the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs. We were increasingly aware that the lack of quality education was a key factor in trapping young people and families in poverty. Our efforts to end homelessness and to do effective community development in an economically distressed neighborhood could not succeed unless we provided meaningful education and workforce development opportunities, for both adults and youth.

For ten years now, the HLCCTL has been part of a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy. A critical component to the success of students like Khalaf is that they benefit from the combination of affordable housing and educational supports. Often, when families are mired in poverty, they are unable to seize educational opportunities even when they are available.

The HLCCTL proves that when the resources are available, all our children have a realistic chance to succeed. When families have stable housing and opportunities to enhance their work skills, all our neighborhoods can thrive. We are grateful that, with the support of so many amazing people and organizations, we have been able for ten years now to provide these resources to the great people in our community. We long for – and work for – the day when all our neighborhoods have adequate education resources and economic opportunities so all our citizens can achieve their fullest potential. We believe, with a combination of public and private leadership and a serious investment in children from struggling neighborhoods, the success of the HLCCTL can be replicated on a larger scale.

Thanks to all of the countless supporters, friends, and volunteers of the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs. Thanks for helping to create success stories like Khalaf's and for sharing a vision of hopeful futures for all our young people. Let us continue to work together to create more success stories – which will make us all stronger.

*A. Mary Scullion*

Photo by Rodney Alenza

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

## Journey Toward Wholeness

He made 700 eggplant parmesan meals, opened thousands of cans, shredded by hand 100 pounds of carrots, and loaded the trucks. He was not paid for additional working hours, he volunteered his time consistently.

Jen Stackhouse, MANNA Development Manager, says of Kevin, "He approaches each task with dedication and pride. Seeing Kevin in the MANNA kitchen is a reminder that anything

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*"Employment is a critical component  
in overcoming homelessness;  
it is also essential to human dignity."*

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is possible and that it is never too late to learn, change, and grow."

Working at MANNA made Kevin feel productive, valued, and

loved – feelings he had not received or given to others in a very long time. He has also enjoyed the camaraderie and support of our veteran group consisting of nine other veterans on a similar journey toward recovery and wholeness. "The PECO internship was a great experience," Kevin says, "and I love working at MANNA and the people who work at MANNA."

The Veterans Training and Employment Program uses the restorative power of work, education, and community to help formerly homeless veterans re-make their lives. For many veterans, the journey back from homelessness entails rebuilding the foundation of their lives in order to reclaim their independence and dignity.

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The Veterans Program is a vital part of our employment efforts. We have long recognized that not only is employment a critical component in overcoming homelessness, it is also essential to human dignity. Kevin is proof of the importance of the program: Since starting the internship, he has started to feel alive and engaged, and a contributing member of society. He has reconnected with his family, daughter, and grandchildren. Post-internship, he has been hired by MANNA part-time as a food packager.

We are grateful for those partners who fund our programs and hire our interns – PECO/An Exelon Company; The Raynier Institute and Foundation; Independence Blue Cross; JP Morgan Chase Foundation; The Franklin Institute; Fresh Direct; Loews Hotel; MANNA; the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania; Morgan Lewis; Otto Haas Charitable Trust; Pitney Bowes; St. Joseph's University; SEPTA; ShopRite/Browns Family Stores; Working Film Establishment.

We invite local businesses and employers to partner with us to help end homelessness by hosting Project HOME interns. For more information on our internships and how you can get involved, contact the program coordinator Jen McAleese, 215.232.7272 ext. 3028, or [jenmcaleese@projecthome.org](mailto:jenmcaleese@projecthome.org).

— Jen McAleese

*Jen McAleese coordinates the PECO Veterans Training and Employment Program.*



# A Decade of the Education Revolution

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take advantage of the K-8 Afterschool Program and the Teen Program each year, while 800 adults annually participate in the Adult Learning and Workforce Development Program.

Its inaugural decade has been marked by great successes. We have tracked significant improvement in school performance by our youth. In a neighborhood that not long ago was a desert for post-high school education, more than 30 of our youth

*“Education is the single most important way to prevent homelessness.”*

LYNNE HONICKMAN  
*Project HOME Trustee and donor*

have gone to college, with several graduates getting jobs and serving the community. (See details on this year's graduates on page 4.) Students express their gifts in the digital arts. Young people produce award-winning videos and develop their own recording companies. Young entrepreneurs learn to start their own businesses. Meanwhile, adult community members acquire employment and strengthen the economic stability of their families and of the neighborhood as a whole.

“I think the impact of the center has been huge – and certainly gratifying. Access to computers, the internet, and the ability to effectively use this technology are critical to participation in today's world,” reflects Lynne Honickman. “All the programs focus on the integration of technology with art, education, and enterprise, hence arming our kids, as well as many adults, with the skill sets needed to succeed in the 21st century.”

Honickman adds, “Watching this process thrive, witnessing the progress of so many of our students – it is both a humbling and exquisite experience.”

Perhaps most important is what the HLCCTL stands for. Lower North Philadelphia has been victimized by decades of economic and social disinvestment and systemic racist practices, including red-lining. Largely because of political neglect, basic social systems in these neighborhoods – including schools – are often in miserable shape, offering the most meager of services. As the job base has hemorrhaged, meaningful economic opportunity is minimal, and families, residents, and communities collapse under the stress of the struggle for survival. Drugs, crime, and family breakdown all exacerbate the alienation and marginalization of these distressed communities. A deeply compromised and grossly under-resourced education system virtually traps the vast majority of these young people in the grip of poverty.

This magnificent facility exists because we refuse to accept second-class citizenship for anyone. We insist that the residents of North Philadelphia have the right to the same resources that would allow them to succeed and live in a healthy community. We dare to believe our kids deserve the best. We see in them tremendous potential, as much potential as children from the wealthiest suburbs. And over the past ten years, we have witnessed a hope-filled education revolution: adult learners and young students succeed, grow, and build a new future for themselves and their communities.

The Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs is a symbol of a social vision in

which each man, woman, and child is given the opportunity and resources to flourish and achieve his or her fullest potential. We dare to believe that even the men and women who live in our streets and in our poorest neighborhoods deserve the best and brightest future, and that they have gifts to contribute to a healthy and thriving community.

A decade later, those gifts are coming to fruition. And we look forward to many more gifts in the decades to come.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to our amazing partners who make the programs at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs possible year after year. Foremost among them are our dear friends and visionary civic leaders, Lynne and Harold Honickman; the Roberts Family and Comcast Corporation; also, PNC Bank; Canada Dry; the Raynier Institute and Foundation; the Brinkman Family Foundation; Origlio Beverage; the Hamilton Family Foundation; Independence Blue Cross; and Balfour Beatty.

## Get Involved!

We can only end homelessness with your help!

**DONATE**

**ADVOCATE**

**VOLUNTEER**

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



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

# A Sense of Family

The Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs is important to me because it is educational. The environment is comfortable and the people are friendly. In music class I am given the opportunity to express myself.

**Bernard Conner** is a student at Murrel Dobbins High School and a participant in our Teen Program.

The HLCCTL encouraged me to attend college, and without the center I don't think I would have finished college. The motivational and caring environment was very important to me.

**Tanisha Clanton** lived for many years with her family at our Rowan Homes and was a frequent participant in HLCCTL programs. She graduated from Albright College in 2012.

My experience enrolled in the HLCCTL was a rewarding one, as I learned the basics of Microsoft Excel. This course enhanced my options to create a better work resumé. Also, I enjoyed my creative writing class as I found that it lightened the burden of feeling stressed as I found myself newly unemployed after 29 years. The creative writing class helped me find the reservoir of my familiar.

**Mee Lin Youk** is an adult learner at HLCCTL, where she has participated in different classes.

I started coming to the HLCCTL in 2008, when my daughter was in the K-8 program. I joined and completed the Connect To Work program and my daughter is now in the Teen Program. The HLCCTL is like a refuge for us, and the computer lab gives me access to the world, plus the photography class has opened my eyes to things that I never thought would appeal to me.

**Alease C. Pressley** is a neighbor of the HLCCTL who attends the open computer lab.

The people and mentors at the HLCCTL are like my family. They make you feel like you belong. My favorite parts are the showcases that the teens present four times a year. We get to be as creative as we can be!

**Jarell Irving** is a student at Mastbaum High School and a participant in our Teen Program.

# HOME Happenings

◆ On May 8, Project HOME officially unveiled plans for the Stephen Klein Wellness Center, a 30,000-square-foot state-of-the-art medical facility that will provide comprehensive wellness services in our community-development neighborhood in lower North Philadelphia. A partnership with Thomas Jefferson University's Department of

Rendering by Brawer & Hauptman, Architects LLC



Rendering of our future Stephen Klein Wellness Center

Family and Community Medicine, Philadelphia developer Stephen Klein, Leigh and John Middleton, and the YMCA, the Wellness Center will support Project HOME's strategy to end and prevent chronic street homelessness in Philadelphia. The Center will expand our current health programs, and offer primary care, behavioral health and health education services, dental and physical therapy services, a pharmacy, and a fitness facility – all to residents of the second-poorest zip code in the city.

◆ The education revolution continues at Project HOME. Seven of our high school students graduated this spring, and all of them are heading to college, including Penn State, Bloomsburg University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Institute of Technology. Meanwhile, four alumni from our Teen Program are graduating from post-secondary education, taking their hard-earned degrees into the work force. "We're really excited about decisions our students are making to choose to go to college and to persist, especially considering the challenges they face in their communities," says Tomika Brown, who coordinates our College Access Program. Congratulations to our talented young people and to the staff that support them.

◆ Our young people aren't the only things blossoming at Project HOME. Our new community garden is being lovingly tended by residents of our St. Elizabeth's Recovery Residence, teens from our entrepreneurship program, and children from our Rowan Homes, as well as friends from the neighborhood. Already lettuce, spinach, broccoli, collard greens, kale, and radishes have been harvested

for use by kitchen coordinators in our entry-level residences, with more fresh produce to come throughout the summer. Garden clubs are starting at various other residences as well – all with the goal of building community while encouraging connection to the earth and thoughtfulness about our food.



Photo by Michael Gainer

◆ Our former thrift store has a new site and a new name. HOME Spun Boutique (formerly Our Daily Threads), an employment initiative for formerly homeless persons, recently re-opened at 1523 Fairmount Avenue, in a beautiful storefront location. Come in to see the new store, peruse its great merchandise, and meet its friendly staff, pictured below. Hours are Monday-Friday, 11:00 am to 6:00 pm, Saturday, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm For information on HOME Spun Boutique, call 215-232-6322.



Photo by Michael Gainer

Left to right: C.B. Williams, David Brown, Jenna Bryant, Ocie Laurel



## 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](http://www.projecthome.org)



# I am Project HOME

PRISCILLA "MISS T" BENNETT

Photo by Jim Harris



The kids enter the classroom bursting with energy, loud and boisterous. Within a few moments, with her strong but gentle presence, Miss T has them focused, attentive, eager to learn, and open to another day of possibilities at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL).

Watching Priscilla Bennett – or Miss T as everyone knows her – in her Kindergarten-1st Grade classroom, her love and passion for these children are evident. It is clear that she grasps the frailties and challenges of her young charges from this economically struggling neighborhood, but also sees their potential to learn and grow – what she calls “the fire in their eyes.”

Miss T is a veteran of seventeen years with Project HOME. She started volunteering at our Diamond Street Afterschool program during our early years in the neighborhood, and was hired in 1993 to assist with the program, which eventually moved to the HLCCTL. She is a product of the Diamond Street neighborhood. “I’ve lived here all my life, and I’ve watched these children all their lives.” She notes that some of the children from the Diamond

Street program now have their own children in the HLCCTL.

In an effort to more deeply understand the issues and enhance her skills, she received a degree in Early Childhood Education from Chestnut Hill College last December, and is now working on a master’s degree in clinical psychology, with a focus on childhood and adolescent therapy.

“We want to link home, school, and after school, so we can deal with the whole child,” says Miss T. “So little in their life is consistent, so if we can be a consistency, we have a chance to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty.”

She frequently intervenes to support families or to advocate for necessary services from school or service agencies. Recognizing that healthy children need a healthy community, she engages in much community organizing and advocacy, responding to neighborhood issues and concerns.

Miss T, who has two grown children of her own, insists that “children will be what they see.” To her, the most important gift is what she and the staff can model. “We all want to be a positive presence in their lives.”

It’s abundantly clear that Miss T is a positive presence – to the children, to the community, and to all of us at Project HOME.

## 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](mailto:michaelgainer@projecthome.org).

Also, follow us on social media:



[www.facebook.com/projecthome](http://www.facebook.com/projecthome)



[www.twitter.com/projecthome](http://www.twitter.com/projecthome)



[www.youtube.com/projecthomephilly](http://www.youtube.com/projecthomephilly)

And don't miss the great stuff on the Project HOME Blog –  
[www.projecthomeblog.org](http://www.projecthomeblog.org)

## Spirit of Generosity

SUSAN AND JOE MILLER

Courtesy of Club Services of America



Susan and Joe Miller know about long term, committed relationships. They met at West Pittston High School in 1953, and their relationship is still going strong 61 years later. So, it’s no surprise that after meeting S. Mary Scullion through their parish priest Fr. Ed Hallinan

in the mid-1980’s, Joe and Susan are still committed to Project HOME’s mission. They have been longtime volunteers and donors since before Project HOME became a reality! And they passed this commitment down, as well: their granddaughter Rebecca has volunteered at Project HOME.

Joe’s expertise is in investments, though he took a bit of a circuitous route to his career. After working as a disc jockey and salesman at a commercial radio station while studying speech and journalism at Bucknell University, he served in the Army Artillery for two years. His rotation ended just weeks before his division was sent to Vietnam. Instead, Joe heard about a sales internship at Merrill Lynch, interviewed, and later became one of the company’s youngest-ever vice presidents in his early 30s.

Project HOME’s portfolio was worth less than \$100,000 when Joe began volunteering at Project HOME, but he helped grow the investments in those first years. Both Susan and Joe volunteered in other areas at Project HOME, serving meals, painting residences, and connecting with residents.

When Project HOME began working in the St. Elizabeth’s neighborhood, Susan and Joe saw a great need and set up a scholarship fund for the children in the area. And each Thursday, Susan and another volunteer, current Trustee Claire Reichlin, would meet on an education committee, diving through best practices and working on plans “to ensure that formerly homeless and other children are given chances to break the vicious cycle of poverty,” says Joe.

Meanwhile, Joe had moved on from Merrill Lynch to join other partners at Valley Forge Investment Corporation. Later, Valley Forge Asset Management was founded, which when sold in 2000 had nearly \$900 million under investment. During those years, as Project HOME grew, he and Susan continued to support our efforts. Joe says a strong factor in their supporting Project HOME financially was good leadership. “We saw how hard neighborhood leaders Helen Brown, Priscilla (Ms.T) Bennett, and Chris Whaley were working to help change the lives of the children. As a group, they are a combination mother, motivator and sergeant!”

When Joe and Susan have been thanked for their long-standing financial support of Project HOME, Joe demurs: “You’re expected to do that if you can do it. What I’ve done is miniscule compared to what Project HOME is doing.” Project HOME disagrees. Many relationships don’t last long. But just like Susan and Joe’s marriage, their commitment to Project HOME’s mission has not wavered—in almost 30 years. And Project HOME is very grateful for that.

### 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

- HOME Spun Boutique, 215-232-6322
- HOME Page Café, 215-320-6191

### Administration

215-232-7272

### Homeless Outreach Hotline

215-232-1984

### Human Resources Hotline

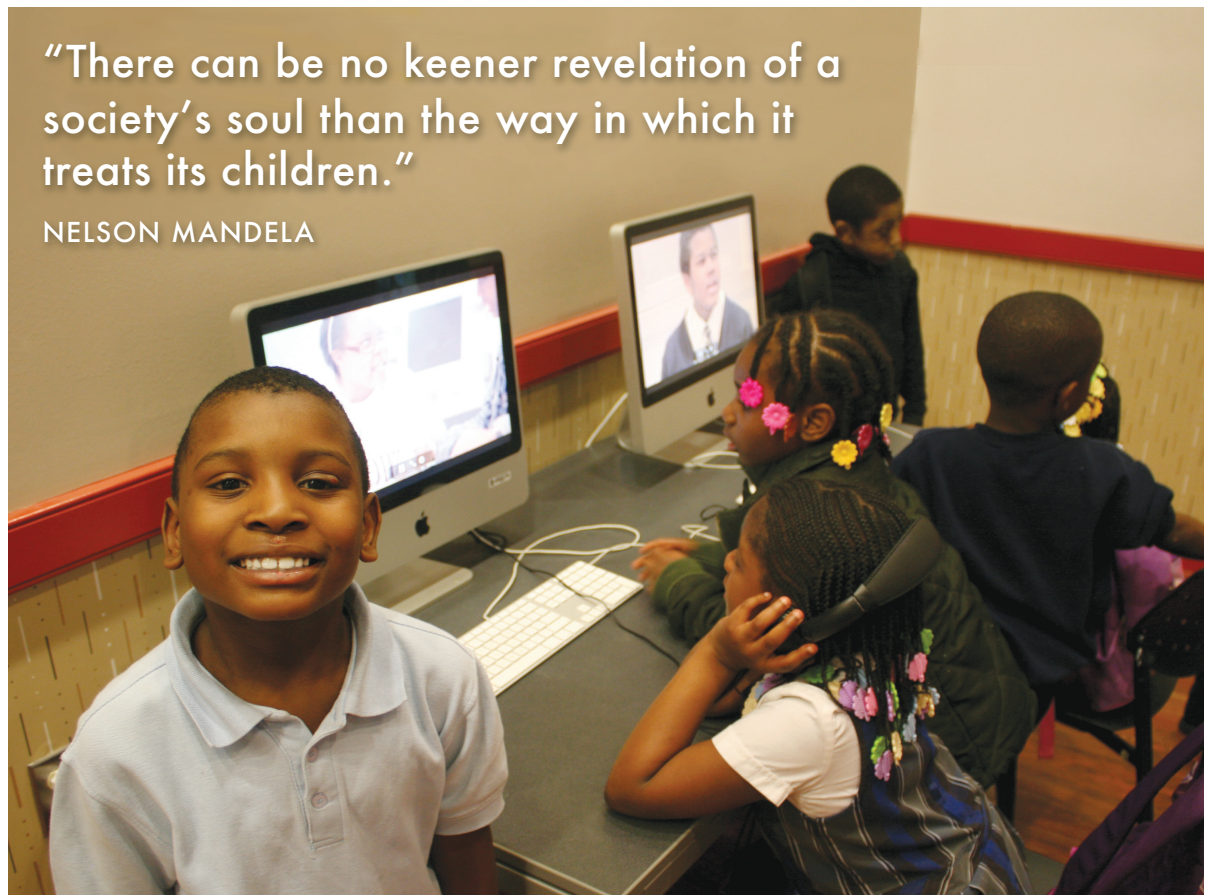
215-232-7219 x5200

[www.projecthome.org](http://www.projecthome.org)

## NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."

NELSON MANDELA



Camani Chase and his fellow students at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs enjoy the 2nd Annual Lynne Honickman Digital Arts Festival on April 17, 2013.

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