

# News FROM HOME



NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME

## Hearing the Cry

Photo by Alfredo Borba



Pope Francis's visit to Philadelphia this coming September is an opportunity to advance the cause of justice.

The City of Philadelphia is abuzz with expectation for Pope Francis's visit this September for the World Meeting of Families, a triennial international Catholic conference on the family.

This dynamic pope has seized the imagination of millions around the globe — Catholic and non-Catholic alike. This is due in large part because he has spoken out so forcibly about those who are poor and suffering. “The times talk to us of so much poverty in the world and this is a scandal,” he said. “In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry.”

In the depths of our humanity, all of us hear this cry, and it calls forth from us our truest selves. Pope Francis has given us a gift, by urging us to refocus on the truth of poverty and struggle in our world, both in its global and local forms. He is inviting us to tap the wellsprings of compassion and goodness within us, and he is urging us to re-envision our society along the lines of justice and human dignity.

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## Good Work

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

Photo by Michael Gainer



Josie Nyame proudly works at the Free Library as a restroom attendant.

Josie Nyame remembers vividly that low point of her life: “My whole world was crumbling around me.” She had been evicted from her Section 8 housing, and her four children placed with their father. Homeless, sleeping on the steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum and on a bench in Logan Square, she knew she had to change her life.

A long journey of recovery began, which eventually led Josie to Project HOME. She moved into our

Kate's Place residence two years ago, and soon began working with our staff toward employment. She was placed in a job as a restroom attendant at the Parkway Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia. “Today,” Josie says, “I have been in recovery for seven years, and I wouldn't change a thing. I have seen myself grow mentally, spiritually, and physically. This is the start of my new life. I proved to myself and to my family that I could do it. I have never felt so happy and alive.”

Josie's story bears out an important lesson: Housing alone is insufficient. Ending homelessness also demands education, medical care, and a pathway for re-entry into the wider world through gainful employment. The Haas Initiative for Integrated Recovery, Employment, and Social Enterprises, developed by Project HOME's Employment Services staff and funded by the Otto Haas Charitable Trust, is critical to our mission.

Over the years, Project HOME has experimented in a variety of efforts to provide meaningful work and income for residents, including several in-house businesses. In recent years, while continuing to identify jobs for residents within Project HOME, we have focused more on equipping residents and finding

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## Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

There are events in our lives which shape us in significant ways. One such event was held in Philadelphia in 1976 – the International Eucharistic Congress, a global gathering of Catholics that brought millions of visitors to the City. As a student at St. Joseph’s University, I worked on a committee to host the second day, which was focused on “Hunger for Bread.” The speakers that day included Mother Teresa; Dorothy Day, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement; Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of Recife; and Pedro Arrupe, head of the Jesuit order. Each one shared their reflections on responding to world hunger and building justice.

indicated that our society was radically headed in the wrong direction

Much has changed since those days. In many ways, all that has been accomplished in the past 25 years at Project HOME grew out of seeds planted during that Congress – as well as the seeds planted in those early relationships with the men, women, and children experiencing homelessness.

I think of this as we anticipate Pope Francis’ visit to Philadelphia in September. In my work with the World Meeting of Families’ Hunger and Homelessness Committee (which also includes Anne Ayella, director of the Archdiocese’s Nutritional Development Services, who was also part of our St. Joseph’s group at the 1976 Congress), we talk about a “legacy.” We believe the Pope’s visit can be a transformational moment for our city as we face new challenges, including youth with special needs and veterans on the streets. Hunger and poverty touch the lives of an increasing number of people in Philadelphia and beyond.

What legacy can we help create? What seeds can we plant in this year that can bear new fruit of compassion and justice? We are eager to work with all of you to discover the answers.

*Sister Mary Scullion*



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

It was a truly unforgettable and formative experience. These were among the Church’s and the world’s most passionate and prophetic voices for justice, compassion, and liberation. However, perhaps even more formative was what led up to that magical day. As college students, we had served meals at St. John’s Hospice, did a service learning project in Appalachia, and helped to paint and clean a building at 12th and Sansom Streets above the Ugly Pub which was soon to become Mercy Hospice. Mercy Hospice was dedicated to a new homeless population of women, many of whom were deinstitutionalized from Byberry, who were now living on the streets of Center City. The lives of the homeless men, women, and children we encountered in these places were prophetic, and

## Hearing the Cry *(continued from page 1)*

This is a message that Philadelphia needs to hear. Our city has a poverty rate of 26 percent — the highest among the 10 largest cities nationwide. Almost one of every three children lives in poverty. Thousands experience homelessness. Food pantries and soup kitchens are strained to meet the growing needs of people facing food insecurity. As Pope Francis says, a scandal indeed.

The Project HOME community is positioned to play an important role in light of the Pope’s visit. Our Executive Director Sister

Mary Scullion was asked by the World Meeting of Families to chair a special Committee on Hunger and Homelessness. Several of our residents and staff, along with advocates and partners, will be working to mobilize people of faith

Pope Francis has said, “The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need.” He will undoubtedly reiterate that message next fall here in Philadelphia — a message that echoes deep in our own historical origins, as a community founded to be a “city of brotherly love and sisterly affection.” We hope our city, our region, and our nation will hear Pope Francis’s message, and we will respond to the invitation to true greatness — a greatness rooted in human dignity, compassion, and justice.

We invite our friends and supporters to join us in seizing this tremendous opportunity. We will report in future newsletters and on our website of activities and events related to the papal visit. Stayed tuned – and continue to hear that cry of our sisters and brothers who are poor and struggling.

### A Lasting Impact

Pope Francis’s presence in Philadelphia, even for a few days, can have a lasting impact on our city. What is your vision for how Philadelphia could be different in the aftermath of the Pope’s visit? What are some concrete ways we can leverage his visit to advance the cause of ending hunger and homelessness in Philadelphia?

To add your own voice to this important dialogue – and to find out how to be involved in raising issues of hunger and homelessness in light of the Pope’s visit – go to [www.hungerandhomelessness.org](http://www.hungerandhomelessness.org)

*“The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need.” – POPE FRANCIS*

and conscience in our region to raise awareness about the issues of hunger, homelessness, and poverty in anticipation of the pope’s visit. We will create venues for the voices and stories of those who are economically struggling. We will reach out to our schools and our faith communities, to create deeper understanding of the issues and opportunities to respond.

We will be inviting all members of our community to envision how the pope’s visit can spark new opportunities for services and programs to those in need and new resources for effective solutions of housing, education, health care, employment, and income supports. Even for a few days, the pope’s presence here can engender deeper impulses of charity and broader support for public policies that foster true social and economic justice.



## Good Work (continued from page 1)

them work opportunities in outside businesses and organizations.

And the program has taken flight. A few years ago, a vital partnership was struck up between Project HOME and the Free Library of Philadelphia, with financial support from Bank of America. Currently, seventeen residents are employed at either the HOME Page Café or as restroom attendants (like Josie Nyame).

Project HOME staff shepherd participants through the employment process and offer educational opportunities grounded in recovery principles, including at our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs. Staff work individually with each resident to coordinate supportive services, such as GED and recovery. Participants learn to create resumés, and they experience a surge of self-worth when they see their work history in printed form. They learn career planning and how to use computers for job searches. The initiative prepares them for interviews and invites them to presentations with potential employers. When a resident is hired or engaged in an internship, the program provides on-site job coaching and regular check-ins.

Our long-standing partnership with PECO, employing veterans both at PECO and at other businesses throughout the community, served as a model for our residential internships. Interns work with employers twelve hours and participate in three hours of job training each week. Most of these internships result in permanent placement with the partner company. (See page 5 for more on this vital work supported by PECO).

In the last fiscal year, through the Haas Initiative for Integrated Recovery, Employment, and Social Enterprises, 115 people were placed in employment. People like Robert Long, a military veteran who lost both career and marriage to a devastating addiction which eventually led to homelessness. A resident of JBJ Soul Homes, he participated in the PECO Veterans Training and Employment Program. He is interning at PECO, maintaining work management schedules via computer, and will stay on for an additional six-month training period after the end of the internship. Or people like Steven Reed, whose untreated schizophrenia led to years of homelessness. He was finally able to move into our Kate's Place residence, and today this former teacher is working as a volunteer tutor in the afterschool enrichment programs at our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs.

These are just some of the success stories, and we are grateful for every placement. But we know more success stories are possible with more partners in the business community and private sector. We

need many more employers to offer internships and hire residents. Housing is essential, but employment restores dignity – and heals our community.

### Join the Good Work!

We are grateful to our many invaluable partners who make success in the Haas Initiative for Integrated Recovery, Employment, and Social Enterprises possible. Special thanks to the Otto Haas Charitable Trust, PECO, the Raynier Institute and Foundation, and Independence Blue Cross for continuing to provide funding for these life-changing internship programs. Their long-standing support is reinforced by our internship and job placement partners – Allied Barton; AmeriHealth Caritas; AC Linen; Fresh Direct; Fresh Grocer; Penn Jersey; SEPTA; Sheraton Society Hill Hotel; and Walmart. Their investment in employment stabilizes lives in a way that nothing else can.

### You can be part of this important work.

If your business is able to offer employment or an internship, we will work with you. For six months, Project HOME pays the intern's salary, provided you seriously consider hiring the intern at the close of the internship. We provide job coaching for direct hires as well as interns. Please consider participating, and invite colleagues and friends as well. Contact Nitasha Rivera, Employment Specialist, 215-232-7272, or [nitasharivera@projecthome.org](mailto:nitasharivera@projecthome.org).

### Grace

By Reginald Young

*Reginald Young is a resident of JBJ Soul Homes and a member of both our Resident Advisory Board and Speakers Bureau.*

Let each moment be a reminder for us of what true grace is. Grace is an attitude of the heart that lives every moment of life with thanksgiving. It is that constant though silent acknowledgement that I did not create myself nor any of the gifts that bless my life. It is that delicacy of kindness and respect that sees every other life as another gift, another reflection of Divine Generosity.

An ancient holy man said, "If the only prayer we say in our entire lives is 'Thank You,' it is enough." And it is enough. Because once we realize that the only appropriate response to the awesome gift of life is gratitude, it is enough to make us holy, happy, and wise. It is enough to let us live every moment with grace.

Even if the past year has brought a measure of loss, sadness, or struggle, we have still been blessed with courage, hope, and support. Through grace, we have found the opening in the defensive walls around us. Through grace, we have kept our footing in the icy times. Through grace, our lives have spun their own kind of song.

Don't let anything obstruct your awareness of grace. It is the light of God's life within us, and no darkness can ever extinguish it.

Whatever form your thanks may take, may it build your heart and your family's heart with strength and beauty.

## PLANNING A MORNING MEETING? REMEMBER BREAKFAST!



# HOME PAGE café

Let HOME Page Café  
bring the food,  
so you can focus on more  
important things.

Email [nathanmatlin@projecthome.org](mailto:nathanmatlin@projecthome.org) or call the café at 215-320-6191.

The HOME Page Café provides employment to persons breaking the cycle of homelessness.

# HOME Happenings

◆ **We were thrilled** to open the doors of the brand-new and beautiful Stephen Klein Wellness Center. Years in the planning, the 28,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility at 2144 Cecil B. Moore provides a range of holistic healthcare services geared toward the needs of persons struggling with poverty and homelessness. This remarkable facility would never have happened without lead funders Stephen Klein, Leigh and John Middleton, PNC, Elizabeth Moran, Jefferson University Hospitals, and the Raynier Institute and Foundation. Staff, neighbors, and both new and old patients love the new facility, which sends a strong message of dignity and represents a commitment to providing top-quality healthcare to the most vulnerable persons. For more information on the Wellness Center, see [www.projecthome.org/skwc](http://www.projecthome.org/skwc), or call 215-320-6187.

◆ **One of the very first visitors** to the Wellness Center was Pennsylvania Governor-elect Tom Wolf, who came on December 22, as we were moving in. He toured the Wellness Center, Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs, and JBJ Soul Homes, meeting with staff, residents, and neighbors while learning about our work in the community. We dialogued extensively about policies that would have a positive impact on poverty and homelessness. We delivered over 700 signatures from supporters urging the new governor to uphold his promises for affordable housing, jobs, and services and to show leadership on these critical issues. To read more about our ongoing dialogue with Governor Wolf, visit [www.projecthome.org/action](http://www.projecthome.org/action).



Project HOME resident Reggie Young gives Governor-elect Wolf hundreds of comments from supporters calling for action on housing, jobs, and services.

◆ **On January 21**, hundreds of volunteers, outreach workers, and service providers braved the cold and fanned out across Center City and other parts of Philadelphia to count and survey persons living on the streets or in shelters. The Point in Time Count is an annual nationwide event



Sam Santiago from Project HOME's Outreach Coordination Center shares stories of persons on the streets who passed away in 2014 at the December 18 Homeless Memorial Day gathering at Dilworth Park at City Hall. Hundreds gathered to remember homeless and formerly homeless persons who died in the past year and to recommit to working to end homelessness. Project HOME was a co-sponsor of the event.

required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to get a measure of the U.S. homeless population and provide a baseline for developing services and policies. Last year, the Philadelphia Point in Time count identified 5,738 people experiencing homelessness on that date in Philadelphia: 370 unsheltered individuals (living on the street or staying in a café); 2,629 people in families living in emergency or transitional housing; and another 2,739 unaccompanied individuals in shelter. The numbers from this year's count should be available in the coming weeks. Thanks to the nearly 300 volunteers who made this event possible – and helped us in the effort to end homelessness.

◆ **The Project HOME community** salutes Dainette Mintz, who is retiring as the City of Philadelphia's Director of the Office of Supportive Housing. Dainette spent 32 years working in city housing programs, and during that long span she worked tirelessly to meet the needs of low-income Philadelphians for housing. She has been a great friend and partner of the homeless advocacy community, and her efforts contributed to Philadelphia having the lowest homeless rate of any major U.S. city.

## Stay Connected!

Keep in touch with HOME Happenings because you are a valuable member of the Project HOME community. Do you want to receive our Enewsletter 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.projecthome.org/blog](http://www.projecthome.org/blog)

Photo by Harvey Finkle

Photo by Harvey Finkle



# I am Project HOME

ALEXIS PUGH

Photo by Michael Gainer



**A**lexis Pugh likes to think big. The program manager of Project HOME's Employment Services, Alexis comes to the work with a varied background in business, ranging from restaurant management (including owning and operating a lunch truck on the Temple campus) to mortgages and real estate, which took her from her hometown of Philadelphia to Seattle. "I was the consummate sales person," she says.

But the real-estate bust brought her back to Philadelphia, and a time of life transition. While doing part-time summer work helping with a work-readiness program for youth, she discovered a passion. "I loved developing people and rebuilding their lives and tapping their skills. I just wondered, how I could do it on a full-time basis." Alexis eventually found work in the nonprofit sector, using workforce development skills for different populations, including youth, ex-offenders, and veterans. Her journey led her to Project HOME in 2012.

Since joining the staff, Alexis has used her skills and the extensive network of business contacts she built over the years – as well as Project HOME's already existing network – to push the Employment Services program to new possibilities. Working with creative and committed staff, and building

on a certainty of our residents' capabilities, the program exceeded expectations, finding competitive marketplace employment for 53 persons in the first year. (See "Good Works" on page 1 for information about our program.)

"The best thing about this job," Alexis says, "is witnessing the experience of the residents – seeing them grow, make transitions, and build self-confidence. It's exciting and deeply gratifying to know that I am part of that process for them." She has seen many residents obtain good jobs, with income sufficient to move out on their own.

One of the biggest challenges, she says, is to convince potential employers to "throw away the blinders. I want them to look past issues of homelessness, poverty, and disability. This isn't a population that is throw-away or lost. There are some unique gems with great qualities who can really help build your business."

Alexis's department is taking on a particularly daunting challenge in the coming year: working with business partners to find competitive marketplace employment for persons with severe mental-health issues.

Alexis knows the economy is struggling, but she still thinks big. She wants to expand the number of partners in the private market. She wants to challenge companies and large institutions like corporations and universities to commit to large numbers of hires at a real living wage. She wants to see more formerly homeless men and women proudly moving into their own homes with a solid income. She wants her work to have a real effect on the poverty level.

When you see Alexis's energy and compassion, you can't help but think big, too.

## Spirit of Generosity

PECO is one of the Greater Philadelphia region's most active corporate citizens, providing more than \$5 million in financial support to educational, arts and culture, diversity, environmental, economic development, and community programs and organizations in 2014.

Project HOME is one of many local organizations that has benefitted from PECO's leadership and vision. Over the years, PECO has supported many Project HOME efforts designed to ensure that low-income and formerly homeless individuals and their families are able to achieve their full potential.

Understanding the critical need for affordable housing in Philadelphia, PECO supported Project HOME's early efforts to develop homeownership opportunities for low-income, first-time homebuyers in our target North Central Philadelphia community. PECO provided a generous grant that allowed us to develop a Financial Literacy Program, which empowered adults in North Central Philadelphia with the knowledge to take control of their finances and become educated consumers of financial products.

PECO also directed their support to our Adult Learning and Workforce Development program at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs. There, we have been able to impact the lives of hundreds of neighborhood adults through access to adult learning offerings, including GED and computer classes, as well as opportunities to develop work skills.

Photo by Michael Gainer



Sister Mary Scullion joins Craig Adams, Executive Vice President, Exelon, and President and CEO, PECO, in congratulating resident Donald Brown, 2014 graduate of the PECO Veterans Training and Employment Program.

PECO has always been committed to supporting veterans in the Philadelphia region. In 2010, PECO partnered with Project HOME to address a growing problem: veteran poverty and homelessness. The PECO Veterans Training and Employment Program was developed to address the specific needs of veterans by providing opportunities for unemployed or underemployed veterans to gain the experience required to re-enter the job market.

The PECO Veterans Training and Employment Program has provided critical services to veterans. Participants engage in a six-month paid internship during which they meet with Project HOME staff to develop goals and review their progress. We provide veterans with assistance through a mentorship program, and they receive coaching on job searching, resumé and cover-letter writing, and interviewing. Participants are connected with other Project HOME services when appropriate, which may include primary and mental healthcare, housing, or financial assistance. The program tailors training to each individual's interests and skills so they can pursue occupations that are meaningful and stimulating.

We salute PECO's commitment to ending and preventing veteran homelessness. PECO's commitment to giving back to those who have given so much is being realized at Project HOME, one graduate at a time.

*PECO's strategic partnership with Project HOME has inspired other investments. Other funders of our employment initiatives include: Otto Haas Charitable Trust; Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP; Raynier Institute and Foundation; Haines Family Foundation; Independence Blue Cross; JP Morgan Chase; and Citizens Bank.*

**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
- 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
- Neighborhood Services
- Advocacy and Public Policy
- Health Care Services
- Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs
- Outreach Coordination Center
- Volunteer Program

**Businesses**

- HOME Spun Resale Boutique, 215-232-6322
- HOME Made Products, 215-232-7272, ext. 3075
- HOME Page Café, 215-320-6191

**Administration**

215-232-7272

**Homeless Outreach Hotline**

215-232-1984

**Human Resources Hotline**

215-232-7219 ext. 5200

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

**NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME**



Photo by Monica Medina McCurdy

Staff of the Stephen Klein Wellness Center pose with their very first official patient on opening day, December 22. Lenora, quoted here, is a local community leader and a member of the Wellness Center community advisory board. These words are stenciled onto the walls of the Wellness Center, as part of an art installation by world-renowned muralist Meg Saligman. For more details on the Wellness Center, go to [www.projecthome.org/skwc](http://www.projecthome.org/skwc).