

# News FROM HOME



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

## Can We Talk About Poverty?

Photo by Harvey Finkle



Project HOME resident Hyacinth King speaks at a rally during the 2008 election campaign at the Constitution Center calling on presidential candidates to address homelessness and poverty.

In a few weeks, Philadelphia will be on the national and world stage as it hosts the Democratic National Convention. Thousands of delegates and party officials, media, and visitors will descend on our city for a critical moment in what has been a strange and exceptionally contentious election year.

The politicians and press are coming to a city that gave birth to the American vision of a society boldly rooted in freedom, a city which has a rich and powerful history of

struggle for social transformation and the fulfillment of our national project of liberty and justice for all.

But they are also coming to a city with a staggering 26 percent poverty rate—and half of those Philadelphians live in deep poverty, below half the poverty line. (The official federal poverty level for a family of four is \$24,300.) Almost one of every three children in Philadelphia experiences poverty.

Just a few short miles from the glitter and gleam of Center City and the convention spots are communities struggling with crumbling infrastructures and living under the constant threat of violence. Children are trapped in failing schools that suffocate prospects for stable futures.

No doubt the four days of the convention will be marked by soaring rhetoric and stirring sentiments. Great promises will be made, and much hope will be kindled among the faithful for national renewal. But we must ask: Will anything of the lofty speechmaking and party platforms from inside the convention halls truly address the wrenching struggles of poor, hungry, and homeless Americans, in Philadelphia and throughout the nation?

So far in this election year, the realities of poor Americans have barely registered a blip in the political discourse. Politicians of all stripes are making commitments to improve the lot of the middle class, which is certainly necessary. But it is unconscionable—and ultimately dangerous—to ignore the plight and the

*(continued on page 2)*

### IN THIS ISSUE

Can We Talk About Poverty?	1
We Belong to Each Other	1
Roots and Branches	2
Overcoming	3
HOME Happenings	4
I Am Project HOME	5
Spirit of Generosity	5
Mission/Residences/Services & Programs/Businesses	6

## We Belong to Each Other



Photo by Harvey Finkle

Daniel DiProspero had been a guest of the Hub of Hope each year since 2013. This year he came back to proudly display keys to his new apartment.

*From January to April, Project HOME operated the Hub of Hope, a winter walk-in engagement center located in the concourses beneath Center City for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. These reflections were written by Karen Orrick, who managed the Hub.*

**F**ather Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles and a dear friend of Project HOME, describes violence as stemming from “a lethal absence of hope. It’s about [people] who can’t imagine a future for themselves.”

How can we infuse our systems, our services, our communities, and our world with more hope? How can we cultivate spaces that are safe, rejuvenating, and restorative?

This question was urgent for those of us who worked at this past winter’s Hub of Hope. Once again, we had many successes: Over 1,700 different persons visited the Hub, many of were connected to services, from healthcare to housing, from mental health to recovery, and were able to take positive steps toward breaking the cycle of homelessness. And the daily life at the Hub was marked by a deep sense of community among participants, volunteers, staff, and neighbors. Like a neighborhood coffee shop, people were able

*(continued on page 3)*

## Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

On June 8, our Arts Program hosted the opening of our new seasonal exhibit at 1515 Fairmount Avenue. Friends, visitors, and members of our community enjoyed the latest artistic expressions of many of our residents: remarkable charcoal portraits, the fruit of an amazing collaboration with Studio Incamminati (see page 4 for more details).

One of the exhibiting artists was Eddie Covert, a Project HOME alumnus, who now lives on his own but stays active in our Arts Program. Eddie was beaming with pride at the opening. He says that ever since he was a child he had a dream of being a successful artist, but he never had opportunities, especially owing to many struggles over his 68 years. Coming to Project HOME

not only gave him support he needed to get his life on track in general. In addition, our Arts Program was a perfect fit for him – tapping this long-standing love of the arts and expanding his talents in drawing and painting. Over the past few years, he has sold many works (including one piece at the opening).

For almost three decades we have been developing concrete solutions to poverty and homelessness. But it isn't enough to simply get people off the streets – we need to create systems and environments where people truly flourish. Eddie shows what happens when people who have lived on the margins are given a home with real opportunities to tap their gifts.

The beauty he and our other artists create nurtures the broader community.

As we write in the page 1 article, we must send a message to the Democrats who will hold their national convention in Philadelphia – and to their Republican counterparts. They need to open their eyes during this election year to see the millions of Americans struggling with poverty, hunger, and homelessness. But they also need to see that with the right investment of resources, both public and private, people can flourish, succeed, and contribute their gifts to the common good.

We must find ways to replicate these successes at a larger scale – and that requires leadership, vision, and commitment at the national level. To continue to ignore poverty in America will take a significant toll on our national health. But if we address it, if we make a national commitment to craft policies and provide resources to expand real opportunities for affordable housing, quality education, and jobs at livable wages for all our citizens, especially those struggling for survival, I believe we will all be better for it. When I look at Eddie Covert, I am sure of it.

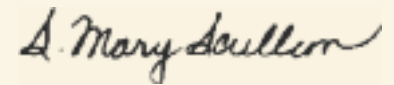


Photo by Dave Herring

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

## Can We Talk About Poverty? (continued from page 1)

aspirations of millions of our fellow citizens whose daily lives are marked by food insecurity, a struggle for survival, and increasing alienation from the American dream.

Joel Batchelor, a resident of Project HOME who is active in our Advocacy Committee, knows from his personal struggle the urgency of getting political leaders to address homelessness and

to break the grip of poverty. Learn the harsh truths of what happens in lives and communities abandoned by our elected officials and decision-makers—but also see the kinds of personal and social transformation that are possible when we have the political will.

We urge you, as you continue to address the middle class, to also include in your party's platform a specific and concrete commitment to aggressively confront the poverty that affects millions of your fellow Americans.

And we urge you to work for a national debate between the major party candidates focused specifically on poverty and how we as a nation can address it.

Millions of Americans are looking to you for truthfulness and real leadership.

*Project HOME will be collaborating with other organizations to raise issues of poverty, hunger, and homelessness during the Democratic National Convention July 25-28. For more information, see [www.projecthome.org/election](http://www.projecthome.org/election).*

*We are also working with the Vote For Homes coalition to mobilize homeless and low-income Philadelphians to vote in November. To help in this effort, sign-up to learn about trainings and volunteer opportunities at [www.voteforhomes.org](http://www.voteforhomes.org).*

---

*“Will any of the lofty speechmaking and party platforms from inside the convention halls truly address the wrenching struggles of poor, hungry, and homeless Americans?”*

---

poverty directly. “The reason we elect officials to office is because we think as a group that they have empathy for our particular needs,” he says. “Without that empathy, they’re just politicians.”

We have a message for the Democrats when they are in town (and we would say the same to Republicans in Cleveland): We urge you to take a break from the many gatherings between convention business to engage in real encounters and conversations with persons experiencing poverty and homelessness. Listen to stories of struggle from citizens who may be absent from the party agenda, but who have much to offer if we can create public policies that really expand to provide resources and opportunities

## We Belong to Each Other (continued from page 1)

to be human across many lines of differences; they were able to joke, relax, work, inspire, check-in with, and support one another.

But it was also a tough winter. Much human brokenness and fragility came through the doors of the Hub. Our guests included persons with severe untreated mental illness, deep addictions, and a sense of profound alienation. Many of these

---

*“How can we infuse our systems, our services, our communities, and our world with more hope?”*

---

persons were also experiencing anger and depression. We had some difficult moments, including episodes of aggression and conflict. We also saw upfront some of the more difficult realities affecting those on the streets – the increasing number of young persons, as well as the destructive effects of new kinds of drugs.

After one incidence of violence, we were concerned that a university partner would pull their student volunteers from the project. Instead, the volunteer coordinator responded that she was “sitting with the question of how such outbursts stem from fundamental, structural violence,” and added that she was “very grateful to be in partnership with an organization that is attentive to and responsive to not only the effects but the root causes.” She continued, “Please let me know of any support that we might be able to provide ... as you continue to serve and support those who are in pain ... and to embody compassion, strength, and courage.”

In a wounded world, we must reach for courage, for kinship, and for each other to remake a society that makes more sense. Environmentalist David Orr says, “The plain fact is that the planet does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane.”

At the Hub of Hope, hope was one of our main currencies for operating. Relationships were another. Hope and relationships were the basis of our economy of healing. People came out of every corner to make this project work. Joe from Philly Fair Trade Roasters wanted to provide all the coffee—even though he was assured that we served over 200 cups a day. Michelle wanted to come in every evening to sign people in. Tim worked in the building above and wanted to start his day talking to his downstairs neighbors. Terez brought

cupcakes every Monday and muffins every Friday. Heather delivered over 100 pairs of socks.

Daniel, one of our guests, returned one day to show off his new house keys. Brandon, who had cussed us out last year decided that this year he wanted to go in to treatment. Bill, normally grouchy and reclusive, forged an unlikely friendship with our greeter.

Social programs work. Public infrastructure builds strong communities. In the midst of an ever tightening economic climate, we need to respond with vital resources and strong political will to fund solutions that will help us all heal.

We belong to each other. We are connected to one another deeply. We are wounded by our absence of contact with one another, and without our own sense of being part of the whole. One aspect of Project HOME’s mission is to “create a safe and respectful environment where we support each other in our struggles for recovery.” This recovery is for all of us to find, together.

*You can read a full report on the 2016 Hub of Hope at [www.projecthome.org/hub2016](http://www.projecthome.org/hub2016).*

### Information That Matters to You

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

Go to [www.bit.ly/PH\\_Subscribe](http://www.bit.ly/PH_Subscribe) or 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 Michael Gainer

### Overcoming

By Felisha Mitchell

*Felisha Mitchell is a resident of our Women of Change safe haven.*

Homelessness is just a state of mind,  
Caught somewhere between success and time.  
The secret is in the way you think,  
Knowing the universe will never let you sink,  
But you must always keep a positive approach,  
Never afraid of being a mooch,  
Just for a little while...  
Until life turns its ugly head,  
Enough said because I'm not dead.  
To all you naysayers,  
Say hello as you start to climb life's escalator,  
Never let anyone knock you off your square,  
Whether a mansion or a cardboard box,  
Be proud and knock them off their socks.  
Think small, win small; think big, win big!  
So cliché,  
To life's ricochet,  
In your favor,  
As you savor  
The little morsels called life,  
Bite down and chew,  
As you dissect the colors and hues  
Of nature!  
Homelessness affords time  
To stop and smell the roses,  
You are not Moses,  
You cannot cross the Red Sea overnight,  
But little by little, I just might  
Overcome depression,  
Overcome suppression,  
Overcome oppression,  
By my positive expression,  
Of homelessness.

# HOME Happenings

◆ **As Project HOME** seeks to advocate for justice in the broader society, we are also trying to embody the most just practices within our community. As part of that, we are committing to increase our minimum hourly wage over the next year to a “Just Wage” of \$15 an hour for all full-time, part-time, and substitute employees. This helps us ensure that all our employees are able to support themselves and their families. We are grateful to talented staff in our Accounting and Development departments and to our donors and leadership circle for sharing the vision and commitment to realizing this Just Wage.

◆ **Several Project HOME** community members participated in an eight-week still-life charcoal drawing course with the talented artists at Studio Incamminati. This course built upon a previous course last fall, and provided an opportunity for our artists to further develop their skills. Their work is currently on exhibit at 1515 Fairmount Avenue. Thanks to our friends at Studio Incamminati for this wonderful collaboration.

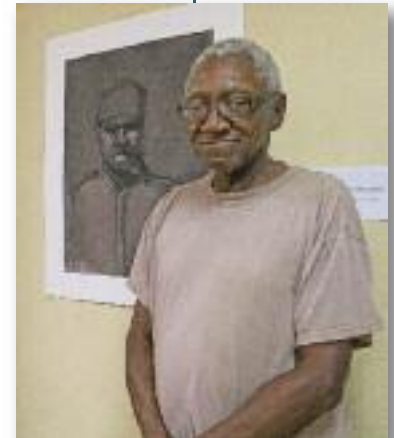


Photo by Michael Gainer

Eddie Covert was one of the Project HOME artists whose work from the collaboration with Studio Incamminati is currently on exhibit at 1515 Fairmount Avenue.

◆ **We are once again** collaborating with Meg Saligman, the world-renown artist who designed last year’s Knotted Grotto ([www.projecthome.org/mercyandjustice/undoing-knots](http://www.projecthome.org/mercyandjustice/undoing-knots)). She is working on an art infusion for both the Republican Convention in Cleveland and the Democratic Convention in Philadelphia. This non-partisan, participatory public art installation, entitled “Common Ground,” is designed to engage people in conversations about our shared and diverse visions of “the Good Life.” You can participate in the project by voting online at [www.voteforthegoodlife.com](http://www.voteforthegoodlife.com).

◆ **The K-8 After-School Program** at the Honickman Learning Center Comcast Technology Labs finished with reason to celebrate. This year, 87 percent of our students showed improvement in literacy and technology, and 86 percent showed improvement in math. The program also implemented a fun incentive program where students earned “Honickman Bucks” for attendance, good behavior, and completing math and reading lessons. Every Friday students spent their “bucks” at the “Open Market” where they bought toys, candy, and food.



Photo by HughE Dillion

A lively crowd of over 300 Project HOME supporters gathered at the June 2 “Bring Philly HOME” event hosted by the Young Leaders Committee. Funds raised at the event will support our street outreach, supportive housing, and comprehensive services and programs to empower our ongoing work of ending chronic street homelessness in Philadelphia.

◆ **Project HOME has** been frequently honored for our work, but we received an unusual award in May. The Bicycle Coalition of Philadelphia named us one of Philadelphia’s most bike-“Phriendly” businesses. Project HOME was noted for offering secure bike parking for their employees and residents, making efforts to foster bike culture, and offering a bicycling encouragement program. The award is part of the Bicycle Coalition’s efforts to make Philadelphia a more bike-friendly city.



◆ **One of our community members**, John Bowie, was featured in *Grid*, the local magazine on sustainability, for his work with Serenity Soular, a company that is working to bring solar energy installation jobs to economically struggling North Philadelphia neighborhood. John lives at our JBJ Soul Homes residence and is part of our support staff. You can read the article at [www.bit.ly/PH\\_Sunshine](http://www.bit.ly/PH_Sunshine)

Nazir Griffin is a 3rd grade student in the K-8 After School program at our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs.



Photo by Mary Smith

# I Am Project HOME

TRICIA DRESSEL

Since moving to Philadelphia almost sixteen years ago, Tricia Dressel has had plenty of experience with nonprofits and community-based organizations. But when she had the chance to join the Project HOME staff three years ago as our Director of Human Resources, she knew it was an opportunity she had to seize. “I had always admired the work of Project HOME and the impact it had at a community level. And I saw such strong leadership in [co-founders] Sister Mary Scullion and Joan McConnon.”

Since 2013, Tricia has made her mark, and is now a vital part of that strong leadership. Overseeing the Human Resources department is a hefty chore – with twenty sites and almost 400 staff. And she recognizes that rapid organizational growth and the many diverse locations present challenges. But she is committed to empowering every staff person to be as effective as possible and to finding ways that everyone stays connected to the vital mission and values of Project HOME.

“I think about the value that each person who works here adds to our community,” Tricia says. “I am in a unique position to really reach out to folks across the community – from our Trustees to our support staff.

The job suits her personality in many ways. “I am intensely curious about people, and I want to understand their motivations.” At the core of her work, she feels, is learning how to tap into people’s strengths, so they can continue to improve their skills and their contributions to the success of Project HOME, in whatever role they play in the organization.



Photo by Michael Gainer

Her love of the spirit of community at Project HOME spills over to other parts of her life. Tricia has a strong commitment to the ongoing movement for justice in the LGBT community. She also loves her South Philly neighborhood, where she is an avid player in a bocce league.

“I have witnessed Tricia living out our values of dignity and respect by the way she engages and supports our staff,” says Associate Executive Director

and CFO Joan McConnon. “Her warmth, gentleness and caring are a blessing to all of us.”

Tricia’s enthusiasm for her work is obvious, as she speaks of the “awesome staff” and the “talented people who could work for many different organizations” but choose to be here. “It’s an amazing job,” she says. “It’s a privilege.”

## Spirit of Generosity

THE RICHARD G. & AUDREY A. BRINKMAN FOUNDATION



Richard and Audrey Brinkman, courtesy of the Brinkman family.

The “E” in Project HOME spoke to Richard Brinkman in a particular way. Education wasn’t just important in Brinkman’s life—it changed his life. More important, access to education shaped his life, and the ripples are still being felt in his own family

Brinkman grew up in Indiana and graduated from Indiana University and also did graduate school work there. He was responsible for paying for his own education. He did it over time by joining three separate branches of the armed services.

That’s right: Brinkman was an Army, Navy and Air Force veteran, all to pay the college bills.

Once his military obligations ended, Brinkman became a traveling auditor, eventually landing in New Jersey. He joined a Fortune 500 corporation and worked his way up the accounting side, stayed at the same company for 33

years, eventually becoming Chief Financial Officer. The *Wall Street Journal* once lauded his “financial wizardry.”

All that time, Brinkman never forgot his roots. If access to college was key for him, he could help smooth the way for others. When his beloved wife Audrey died after 29 years of marriage, he set up a need-based scholarship in her name at Indiana University for aspiring business students. At this point, over a dozen students have been helped by it.

He had a small family but set things up before his death so his three grandchildren would be able to go to college. Then he set up a foundation that also would focus on education, on access. The goal was simple: to try and help those like him who understand the struggle to even get to college.

His family had settled in the Philadelphia area, where Project HOME’s important work was well known. After Brinkman died in 2008, his family saw that the education work done by Project HOME could make a tangible difference, guiding motivated students toward schools, helping even in small ways to provide important opportunities. The staff at Project HOME perfectly matched Brinkman’s own desire to excel.

Since 2011, the Richard G. & Audrey A. Brinkman Foundation, through its support of Project HOME’s College Access Program (CAP) at our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs, has helped 21 students complete college and graduate school degrees; supported the 45 CAP alumni currently in college; and is preparing 33 current juniors and seniors to graduate high school and begin college programs.

Though they may be unaware, these students’ drive toward academic excellence and achievement are greatly honoring the legacy of Richard Brinkman.

1515 Fairmount Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19130

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Philadelphia, Pa  
Permit No. 01219

### 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
- Francis House of Peace, 810 Arch 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
- Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs
- Outreach Coordination Center
- Personal Recovery Services
- Stephen Klein Wellness 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

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

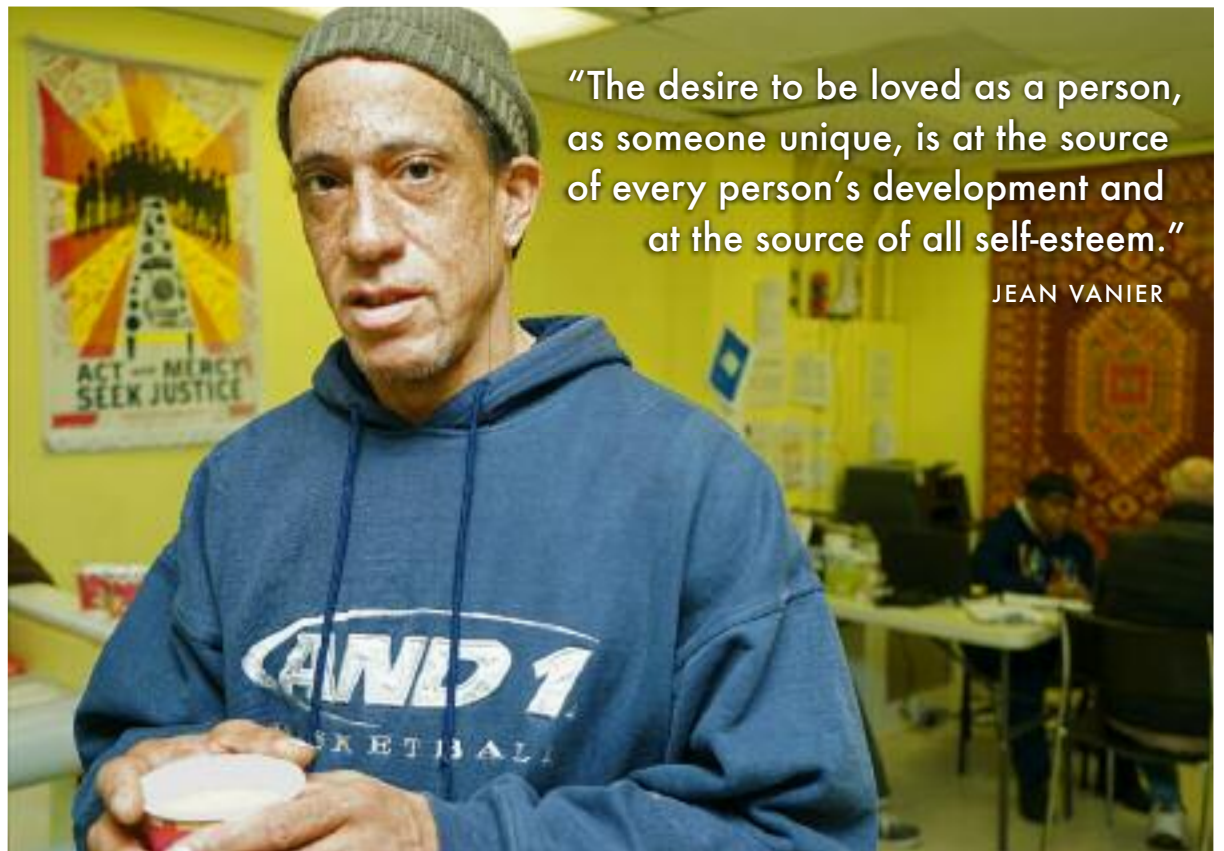


Photo by Harvey Finkle

**"The desire to be loved as a person, as someone unique, is at the source of every person's development and at the source of all self-esteem."**

JEAN VANIER

Chuck Collins, a guest at last winter's Hub of Hope, is now a resident at our St. Columba safe haven.

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



Union Bug

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.