

News FROM HOME

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



Social Enterprise Businesses Take Flight

How can your gently used books, or clothing items make a difference in the life of someone you haven't even met? Well, bring them to a store at 1523 Fairmount Avenue where you can leave your items, shop for something new, or purchase beautiful gifts made by Project HOME residents. If you're wondering what this one-stop shop is, it was called HOME Spun Resale Boutique, but it's being relaunched as Project HOME Thrift.



Allen Turner, Project HOME Books.

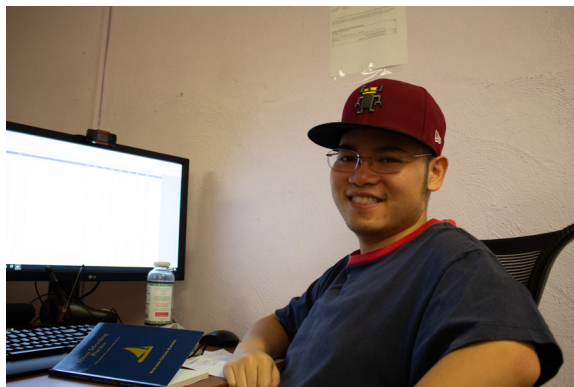
Favorite thing at Project HOME: "Traveling, meeting donors, and my awesome co-workers."



David Brown, Project HOME Thrift.

Favorite thing at Project HOME: "Being part of an organization to end homelessness in Philadelphia."

The thrift store, run by Project HOME for nearly a decade, is one of three social enterprise businesses. Your books will go to a newly established business venture called Project HOME Books - an online bookstore with an inventory of over 25,000 books for sale through Amazon and other online marketplaces. The beautiful smelling candles in the store are resident made, as is the artwork. Both are part of another social enterprise business called Project HOMEmade.



Biao Huang, Project HOME Books.

Favorite thing at Project HOME: "It lets me connect with people, while letting me be me."

What's a nonprofit doing running a business, let alone three? Well, part of Project HOME's mission is to provide opportunities for employment. "Our social enterprise programs create community, income, and a steppingstone in recovery from homelessness," said Barb Hadley, Vice President of Employment and Education. Right now, the various businesses have eight employees. Five more are brought on for the holidays. Last year they provided seven internship opportunities, and about fifty residents have earned income from candlemaking.

Kai Oceans is one staff member offering candlemaking workshops for Project HOMEmade. "After being through the shelter system, it's nice to have the stability of employment" said Kai. "But more importantly, I've seen residents bonding over this process." Before COVID, residents would gather to craft candles with creative names like *Pomp Up Your Life* or *When Life Gives You Lemons*. Nowadays, Kai has been doing all that work himself and has picked up some new skills like the packaging and logistics of delivery. "Packing the products is truly a very intimate and important part of having a business and interacting with your clients," said Kai. "What they open up and see will directly tie back to you." It's one of the things that has brought him a sense of normalcy during the pandemic.



Macnair Dash, Project HOME Books.

Favorite thing at Project HOME: "Coming to work, reading new books, and having something to do."

Last year, Project HOMEmade received a huge boost of support from Philadelphia culinary giant, Di Bruno Bros. when they offered to redesign and sell their gift boxes. The boxes include mugs featuring resident artwork; specialty food items; a resident-made candle; beautiful stoneware coasters; and other products. The partnership tripled holiday sales for Project HOMEmade.

This year Di Bruno Bros. is working with the social enterprise team again to develop a mobile kiosk featuring Project HOME's gifts and specially designed items as a partnership that can be placed in their stores and at other retail outlets across the city and state. "We are incredibly grateful to Di Bruno Bros. for lending their creative skills and expert retail knowledge to help us share our residents' stories and talents with a larger audience," said Nic Watson, Director of Social Enterprise. "These kiosks also provide Project HOME with an opportunity to educate the community about homelessness in Philadelphia and its solutions."

When a resident is part of a social enterprise business, they can do their work within Project HOME surrounded by services, housing, medical care, and further educational opportunities. For David Brown, the Senior Sales Associate at Project HOME

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www.projecthome.org

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Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

Wesley, a resident leader at Project HOME and a member of our Board of Trustees, recalls his time in prison and subsequent period of homelessness as “years of darkness wallowing in failure.” His worst prison, he says, was the mental prison in which he was trapped. Now, he looks back and is amazed at how much he has changed in his time at Project HOME – employment, public speaking, artistic endeavors, reunion with family, and a sense of personal security and pride.

For Wesley, like countless Project HOME residents and alumni, the numbers and stats don’t tell the whole story. It’s a story of coming home. When we are truly home, great things can happen.

Each of us has been affected by the COVID pandemic. Our friends and neighbors who are economically vulnerable are hardest hit, including some who are homeless or near-homeless, and struggling with poverty.

Even in ordinary times, millions of Americans are working hard and struggling every day to put food on their tables and keep a roof over their heads. During the pandemic, we have seen longer food lines and homeless encampments. Meanwhile, high rates of unemployment and small-business closings have been adding to the already high numbers of hungry and homeless in Philadelphia and the rest of the country. Affordable housing seems even more out of reach – yet more urgently needed than ever.

We are all yearning for the pandemic to ease and for the economy to bounce back, but we must seize the moment and work to create a stronger economy that ensures all people have real opportunities to thrive. As Wesley and so many of our residents demonstrate, safe, secure, and affordable housing makes all the difference in people’s lives.

Nonprofits like Project HOME have been working on the ground for years to ease this housing crisis. But in this time of unprecedented hardship, nonprofits can’t be expected to carry the load alone. Back in 2008, the federal government found the funds to bail out financial institutions. The same kind of response is necessary now to partner with the nonprofit sector to provide the very basic necessities of housing and food that is so completely transformative. We need policies, programs, and resources that will prevent families from falling into homelessness and poverty during this pandemic and help them thrive when it is over. Substantive federal investment can transform the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

Our legislators in Washington D.C. must act with urgency. Many Congressional leaders have promoted bills such as the Heroes Act, which provides critically needed rental assistance and important increases in nutrition programs like SNAP. Another is HR2, a massive infrastructure bill designed to ensure that people have the jobs and income that can provide food and shelter. But these bills are stuck in the Senate. Congressman Dwight Evans from Philadelphia has introduced the Making Housing Matter Plan to provide short and long-term relief for renters and homeowners. We urge our supporters to contact their elected officials about these important legislative initiatives: http://bit.ly/PH_pnews-housingrelief.

A crisis is a time when communities come together. Even in the midst of this painful economic episode, the United States has more than enough food, housing, and resources to prevent every citizen from being hungry, homeless, poor, lacking healthcare, or stuck in poor educational systems. When all of us, including local, state, and federal governments, play our part, we can put the nation and ourselves on the road to true economic healing.

S. Mary Scullion

Photo by Lisa Suszek



Sister Mary Scullion of Project HOME.

You Can Only Be a Failure if You Stop Trying

Jovan is a graduate of the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs’ College Access Program (CAP). He graduated from Simon Gratz High School and majored in criminology and theatre at Millersville University. He also interned with Project HOME’s advocacy department. Jovan spoke to the graduating class at a CAP ceremony.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate all the rising freshmen. I wish you nothing but the best on your road to success. Five years ago, if someone were to ask me, “do I ever see myself delivering a speech?” my response would most likely have been no. But what happened? What changed about me?

“Use the fear of failure as endurance and motivation to be great.”

Opportunity is what happened and fear is what changed me. The fear of failure is what I was most afraid of while entering college. Fear of changing my ways and what I was used to is what held me back from seizing the opportunity to be great. One thing I realized in life is that it is not failure that kills your dreams. It’s the fear of failure. Most people do not achieve their dreams in school because of one failed test, and because they are afraid of failing again. You can only be a failure if you stop trying.

The most successful people in the world (such as Bill Gates, Oprah, Mark Zuckerberg, and even the Honickmans) all failed at something. But they are the most successful people in the world today. Why is that? It’s because they knew that failure is one step closer to success.

My biggest challenge going into college was math. I hated math, and I still do. And I did fail at math my sophomore year, but that didn’t make me a failure. You see, I can only be a failure if I gave up trying. I will work smarter and harder than I ever did before. Did you know that Thomas Edison failed ten thousand times while trying to create the light bulb but it was the ten thousandth and first time that worked? He only needed one try for it to work, and he never gave up in spite of all the times he failed.

I tell you this to say that if you really want to achieve something, don’t let fear of failure get in the way of your accomplishing that goal. Use the fear of failure as endurance and motivation to be great. If you were to ask me today whether I am afraid of failing, my response would be no. I am not afraid of failing. I am afraid of what I would become if I let the fear of failure stop me from seizing opportunities in life.

Your fear may be different from mine. Maybe you fear public speaking or adapting to new things. Always keep this in mind: if you do what you have always done, then you will be what you have always been. Something has to change. Never be afraid of



College Access Program (CAP) alumni, Jovan, speaking to the CAP graduates.

challenging yourself to do something new.

Failure is only a chapter in your success story. It is a hurdle in life, but your endurance will lead you to success. I urge you to continue to aspire and strive for nothing but greatness. Good luck on all of your goals and future endeavors, and thank you for this opportunity!

Photo by John Ndicu of mzizi.media

I Am Project HOME – Emmanuel Sofolawe

By Michael Gainer, Communications Manager



Emmanuel Sofolawe has been working as a Communications Coordinator at Project HOME for the last three years. He's pictured here with Evockeeah, co-chair of our Resident Advisory Board, at our 30th anniversary celebration in 2019.

Emmanuel Sofolawe is not particularly comfortable being interviewed about his communications work in support of Project HOME's mission.

He would prefer the focus stay on his frontline colleagues who are connecting with Philadelphians experiencing homelessness or providing essential services to our residents.

His work as Communications Coordinator is worthy of attention, though. Emmanuel's extensive skills help us to increase donations, both monetary and in-kind; to recruit volunteers; to amplify our advocates' voices; and to ensure the

success of our social enterprises. And that just barely scratches the surface.

What Emmanuel really aims to do through his work is to inspire the belief that we can end homelessness. He firmly believes it's possible. He'll keep working until you believe it too.

His concern and care for folks experiencing homelessness predates his September 2017 start at Project HOME, though. He can still remember what his mother told him as a young boy when he expressed a desire to help.

"One day, you are really going to bless these people," he remembers her saying.

He held her "affirmations" close and, while working overnight at several Center City hotels as a valet and a doorman, he began to build on them.

Emmanuel credits a seasoned overnight hotel colleague, Art, with normalizing respectful engagement—and identification—with the folks looking for help among the ever-changing pockets of hotel guests. Emmanuel needed no special prompting, though; he builds relationships by nature.

Over time, he learned their names, where they were from, and their struggles. He helped defuse situations where others would have called the police. Emmanuel's good intent was innate, but he honed technique through observation.

"Observing how [Art] would talk to people; they were friends," Emmanuel said. "He would laugh and joke with them, help them, pull them aside and talk with them." He always engaged, never dismissed.

He coupled those experiences with his existing empathy and deep listening skills and applied them to his interactions with folks rarely afforded those simple dignities. He mourned with one man who had recently lost a sister and missed his family. For others, he acknowledged their struggle and validated their frustration with a system that had failed them.

He saw their humanity and shared in it.

But he needed to do more.

Emmanuel came to Project HOME having developed commendable communications skills while working in the nonprofit field and as an owner of his own graphic design business. He can do it all: graphic design, photography, and communications strategy. He launched Project HOME's Instagram account, maintains all of Project HOME's social media communications and has developed several videos, including the most recent Giving Tuesday Video: <https://bit.ly/2A2pM2x>. The most important skill he brought with him, though, was his existing connection to the mission.

The people we serve are always at the center of the work he does. As are Emmanuel's colleagues. Over the last year, he has embraced a growing leadership role in our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work, lending his voice to ensure his peers have the best possible working environment.

"The idea that there is a brighter side to things—that is a reality to me. And I think the work that Project HOME is doing accentuates that," he said. "That belief [that homelessness can be solved] is so real. And it is evident in the people we serve, and in the individuals who are working at Project HOME."

Social Enterprise Businesses Take Flight

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Yishya Byard, Project HOME Thrift.

Favorite thing about working at Project HOME: "Being able to help people in some way."

Thrift, it was the education piece that he needed the most. "Project HOME opened a door to the quality education I deserved and wasn't able to access as a kid," said David. "Now I've got all the tools I need." Allen Turner, who works for Project HOME Books, also tapped into Project HOME's educational resources at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL). He took some computer certification exams and once, after failing, Allen struggled. But an HLCCTL instructor encouraged him to keep fighting and said he believed in Allen. "And honestly," said Allen, "that's the first time anybody actually said that."

That kind of support is integral to Project HOME and its Social Enterprise department. With that support, Allen's leadership has blossomed. "Allen's passion for the work, optimism, and dedication to finding solutions are key to the success that we've had in launching this business," said Nic Watson.

Project HOME Books needs that kind of leadership because this newest social enterprise business has perhaps some of the most ambitious goals of the three ventures. It's designed from the ground up to be scalable. "If we can maintain the stream of book donations at all times, then we can really take off and reach new heights," said Barb Hadley. Project HOME Books aims to keep an inventory of at least 30,000 books, drawn entirely from donations. With that amount, the business can not only sustain itself, but it can grow to add more staff beyond the five employees it already has. "By sorting through the donations and selling the books online, we can get these books into the hands of book lovers, and the money from the sales supports jobs at

Project HOME," said Nic Watson. "It's really a win for everyone!"

So, the next time you step into Project HOME Thrift with your clothing items or box of books to donate to Project HOME Books, and as you shop for gifts from Project HOMEmade, you'll know just how much of an impact your donation or purchase can have on an entire community of residents at Project HOME.



Kai Oceans, Project HOMEmade.

Favorite thing at Project HOME: "The creativity and flexibility in my role."

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference Teaching Kids Kindness



Ella (11) and Annabel (9) Hovnanian pack the car with sandwiches to bring to Project HOME

Starting last December, Tamar Hovnanian and her daughters, Ella and Annabelle began making about 350 sandwiches per month and donating them to Project HOME and other organizations. They called their idea *Every Sandwich Counts*. When their neighbors got word that this was happening, sandwiches and personal care items started showing up at Tamar's door.

"Over 400 families in the South Jersey area have joined the campaign. At some point a tradition of leaving positive/loving messages on the sandwiches started, which really brought into focus what this is about," said Tamar. "This is a human to human connection." Through this effort over 30,000 sandwiches have been delivered. Both Ella and Annabelle have seen what a difference can be made when people come together as a community to help friends and neighbors.

◆ Bringing Philly HOME—Virtually



On Wednesday, September 16, we held our first-ever virtual event to support our mission to end and prevent chronic street homelessness. Our Rising Leaders committee set an ambitious goal of raising \$150,000 through this virtual event, and we are so thankful to report gifts have surpassed \$200,000. Sending a HUGE thanks to all who gave.

You can watch the inspiring recording at http://bit.ly/PH_BPH20-YouTube

◆ 8th Annual Backpack Giveaway



Residents from our James Widener Ray Homes residence in North Philadelphia gave back to the community this past Labor Day in their annual backpack giveaway. The event was co-organized by Project HOME resident and

employee David Brown and Kenny Ingram. Congressman Dwight Evans attended to hand out the backpacks and connect with the neighborhood. We are so grateful to

Father Kevin Lawrence and his congregation of St. John's Baptist Church in Manayunk who prepared the hundreds of backpacks. Thank you to all who made this important initiative possible.

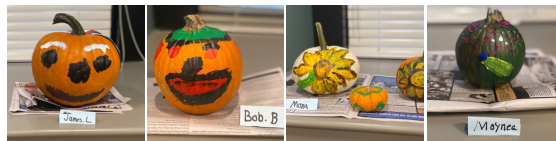
◆ Still Making Art

Congratulations to our residents who won in our recent Still Life Art Contest: Cynthia (first place), Anthony (second place), and Najeebah (third place). See the winning pieces below.



◆ Pumpkin Party Fun at Maguire Residence

Our newest Maguire Residence held a pumpkin painting party to celebrate the fall season. It brought joy to everyone involved and especially the staff who arrived at work to beautifully painted pumpkins!



◆ Further Steps for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

In our last issue of News from HOME, we laid out our intentions to becoming an anti-racist organization. We have worked in large groups across the organization to design what the way forward will look like for year one of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan. The transparency of this work is vital to its success, which is why we will continue to update you, our community, on what's next and where we are. You can find our latest statement here:

http://bit.ly/PH_2020-DEI-Next

◆ Be Someone's Superhero



Ja'Bree helping with food at the Hub of Hope in Center City

Thirteen-year-old Ja'Bree asked the Make-A-Wish Foundation to help him make a difference in someone else's life, all while dressed as a superhero. Make-A-Wish, Wawa, and Project HOME came together to provide Ja'Bree with a superhero outfit, hundreds of packed lunches, and connected him with the incredible people who show up at Center City's Hub of Hope every day.

Education Cliff Notes

By Brendan Sculley



Tabatha is a graduate of the HLCCTL's College Access Program. She received a bachelor's in psychology, with a minor in education, and a master's in special education.

We are excited to use this newsletter to begin regularly sharing the talents and accomplishments of Project HOME's Teen and College Access Program students. The hope

is that this column can serve as an outlet to share some of their experiences on a quarterly basis.

The HLCCTL staff have carefully crafted and developed a program that prepares teens and families of North Philadelphia and surrounding neighborhoods to achieve college success and career readiness. We provide academic courses and life-skills workshops including paid summer internships, free college tours, SAT prep, college scholarships, along with support throughout college to help students graduate.

The Teen and College Access Programs include electives such as Digital Photography, Digital Music, and Robotics to supplement academic and personal development experiences. Due to COVID-19, we have pivoted to a completely online platform, like the majority of the world. However, we were still able to provide paid summer opportunities for our students with career exploration and a virtual digital literacy curriculum. We also celebrated the graduation of nine high school and five college students and presented over \$114,000 in scholarships.

Our students currently attend schools such as Howard University, Drexel University, and the Community College of Philadelphia. They have graduated from universities such

as Temple, Rutgers, and University of the Arts. They have earned Associates, Bachelor's, and Master's degrees in the fields of communications, animation, social work, criminal justice, education, and more.

These exceptional students reach these goals through their own perseverance and work ethic. What we provide is the extra support and guidance needed to make post-secondary success realistic and affordable.

We look forward to our high school and college students from the Teen and College Access Programs sharing some of the highlights from their journeys in this space. We will also let you know from time to time how the greater Project HOME community may become involved, whether through participation in the scholarship process, or our summer internship program.

As they say around here, "It is the power of WE" that makes us special.

Brendan Sculley is Program Manager for the Teen and College Access Program at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL).



HELP PROJECT HOME THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

GET INVOLVED



THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving Meals

Every year, Project HOME provides a Thanksgiving meal to all our residents. While COVID-19 will force all of our Thanksgiving traditions to change, you can still make a difference by making a gift to sponsor a nutritious Thanksgiving meal for our residents.

For more information go to:
http://bit.ly/PH_holidayneeds20-pn
or use the enclosed envelope to make a difference.

How You Can Help:

\$25

Sponsors a Thanksgiving meal for a Project HOME resident.

\$100

Sponsors a Thanksgiving meal for Four (4) Project HOME residents.

\$250

Sponsors a Thanksgiving meal for Ten (10) Project HOME residents.

\$500

Sponsors a Thanksgiving meal for up to 20 Project HOME residents.

\$1000

Sponsors a Thanksgiving meal for an entire Project HOME residence of up to 40 residents.



WINTER HOLIDAYS



Gift Card Drive



Sponsor a Family



Run a Holiday Drive

FOR MORE INFO: John Owens (vcoordinator@projecthome.org)

Information That Matters to You

Receive 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 or contact michaelgainer@projecthome.org

Also, follow us on social media:



www.instagram.com/projecthomephl



www.facebook.com/projecthome



www.twitter.com/projecthome

And don't miss the great stuff on the Project HOME Blog

www.projecthome.org/blog

Spirit of Generosity: Lenfest Foundation and Temple University

The generosity of our partners directly impacts the lives of people in our community, often changing them forever. We are thrilled to announce that Project HOME was one of several lucky recipients of a grant to fund opportunities for employment and education, the "O" and "E" in HOME. The grant came from Temple University's Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative (LNPWI). The right kind of education with direct connections to jobs can really lift individuals, families, and whole communities, and we are deeply grateful to Lenfest and Temple for this tremendous opportunity.

LNPWI is investing significantly in North Philadelphia. "The whole point is to provide [people in] North Philadelphia and the area surrounding Temple University with opportunities so that they can get into training programs to find employment," said Shirley Moy, Executive Director of LNPWI.

Project HOME's piece of the funding is focused on a training-to-jobs connection for Certified Peer Specialists (CPS). A CPS is someone who supports others in their recovery process. It is a relationship that is characterized by mutual trust and respect, sharing of experiences, learning about the recovery process, supporting the peer in multiple settings, achieving goals and moving toward a more meaningful life in the community.

The funding will go a long way to support CPS training, a group of Project HOME's adult education program which targets two specific populations. The first is people in recovery from homelessness in our residences of whom more than 90 percent have a history of mental illness, 50 percent have a history of substance-use-disorder and over 50 percent have co-occurring disorders – these may be serious barriers that prevent individuals from finding and keeping employment, let alone high-wage-paying employment. The second group is low-income individuals in the economically depressed region of Lower North Philadelphia. A huge importance is placed on learning and employment opportunities in this neighborhood, where a third of adults are not employed.

Temple University has been a long-time partner in supporting two of our founding pillars: Opportunities for Employment and Education. Back in 2017, they offered a training program to our Project HOME community, building skills to fill jobs in the technology industry, and now they continue to support our work through this new initiative.

The Lenfest Foundation has also supported us over the years, and as an organization, Lenfest is committed to finding solutions now for a life-changing impact for generations to come.

The generosity and vision of both the Lenfest Foundation and Temple University help people lift themselves up and out of poverty. It allows North Philadelphians to obtain all the things they deserve, including a valuable education, meaningful work, a family sustaining wage, an opportunity for advancement and pay increase, and achieve work-life balance. This is how we truly end poverty and the cycle of homelessness in this city.



More than 1,000 Philadelphians attended Temple's most recent annual Neighborhood Job Fair, facilitated by the Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative, last May.

Photo courtesy of Temple University: Mike Sperando

Our Mission

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

Our Residences

- 1515 and 1523 Fairmount Avenue
- Connelly House, 1212 Ludlow Street
- Francis House of Peace, 810 Arch Street
- Gloria Casarez Residence, 1315 N. 8th Street
- Hope Haven I/II, 2827-28 Diamond Street
- James Widener Ray Homes, 2101 W. Venango Street
- JBJ Soul Homes, 1415 Fairmount Avenue
- Kairos House, 1440 N. Broad Street
- Kate's Place, 1929 Sansom Street
- Maguire Residence, 1920 E. Orleans Street
- Rowan I, 2729-A W. Diamond Street
- Rowan II, 1901 N. Judson Street
- Ruth Williams House, 2415 N. Broad Street
- Sacred Heart Recovery Residence, 1315 Hunting Park Avenue
- St. Columba, 4133 Chestnut Street
- St. Elizabeth's Recovery, 1850 N. Croskey Street
- Women of Change, 2042 Arch Street

Support Services & Programs

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

Businesses

- Project HOME Thrift, 215-232-6322
- Project HOMEmade, 215-232-7272, ext. 3023
- Project HOME Books, 215-232-7272, ext. 302

Administration

215-232-7272

Homeless Outreach Hotline

215-232-1984

Human Resources Hotline

215-232-7219, ext. 5200



"You can overcome anything given the right tools and resources. As long as we continue to create, there's always hope."

~Casundra, Project HOME and Studio Incamminati Artist

Photo by Project HOME

www.projecthome.org

Social Enterprise's Project HOMEmade program has many candlemakers and artists, including Casundra who has trained at Studio Incamminati.

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