

Spirit of Generosity
Inn of Amazing Mercy and the Fitzgerald Family



The whirring of drills, the steady thump of a chorus line's worth of hammers, and the buzzing of saws combine each day to cut through the crisp fall air at Project HOME's newest project at 115 E. Huntingdon Street in Kensington.

To our ears, however, these are not simply the sounds of construction. They are a symphony of hope, recovery, and new beginnings in waiting.

Thanks to a generous lead gift from the I Am the Vine Foundation, Project HOME's next permanent supportive housing residence in Kensington will be called Inn of Amazing Mercy.

The I Am the Vine Foundation, led by Ward and Kathy Fitzgerald, with active involvement from their three children, has provided not only capital support to the Inn of Amazing Mercy project, but also capacity building for Project HOME's expanding trauma-informed behavioral health offerings, and the organization's development and communications department.

"Any foundation wants to provide gifts to organizations that have integrity of mission, a worthwhile cause, the ability to create impact, and a history of efficacy," said Ward Fitzgerald. "Project HOME has held a mission rooted in the corporal works of mercy and has created positive results for over three decades. Inn of Amazing Mercy is worthwhile and will hold an impact as it is strategically situated at the center of Philadelphia's opioid use disorder crisis. Philadelphia needs to become the leader in solving this horrific social cancer and provide hope where it is needed most."

Inn of Amazing Mercy's leasing process began in full in September, and when the building opens in late 2022, it will offer 54 units of permanent supportive housing, eight respite beds for individuals who are experiencing chronic street homelessness and who are ready to begin recovery, a hub for Project HOME's growing street medicine program, and a satellite of

the Honickman Learning Center Comcast Technology Labs. Inn of Amazing Mercy will expand on Project HOME's recent success in Kensington that started with the Maguire Residence, which opened in 2019.

Project HOME co-founder and executive director Sister Mary Scullion sees Inn of Amazing Mercy bringing hope and recovery to Kensington.

"Project HOME has developed a model that pairs housing with the critical supports of education, healthcare, and employment all of which is much needed in Kensington," said Sister Mary. "Inn of Amazing Mercy represents a loving, supportive refuge for the Kensington community and a commitment from those who support it that we recognize the need, and we're here to address it thanks to amazing partners like Kathy and Ward Fitzgerald and the I Am the Vine Foundation."

Sister Mary's optimism is shared and amplified by the Fitzgeralds.



"We hope that Inn of Amazing Mercy will become a homestead for healing for those in need," shared Ward. "We further hope it effects the hearts and minds of those around the United States and the world so that the Inn can expand its work or become a model for other benefactors to create similar Inns in other cities."

For Kathy and Ward, the I Am the Vine Foundation is a family foundation in the truest sense of the word. "Kathy and I are blessed to have three caring and bright children," reflects Ward. "It is important to us that our children understand that our resources are not ours or theirs, but rather, to be used to work in partnership with anyone experiencing poverty, homelessness, hunger, illness, or loneliness. Our ability to make evident to our children and have them accept and participate in this vision in a journey we embrace together and are hopeful it produces fruit for many years."

For the residents who will soon call Inn of Amazing Mercy home, that vision and the vine in the Foundation's name are already bearing fruit.

Amazing mercy, indeed.



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"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."
-Winston Churchill



Scenes from the Helen Brown Way street sign unveiling, including the North Philly Footstompers, who performed in honor of their founder

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"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
-Nelson Mandela

Education is power. It is essential to ending the cycle of poverty and homelessness, to opening new pathways to higher education and employment, to building hope for what might be accomplished in the future. Our education programs, based at the Honickman Learning Center Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL), provide high-quality learning opportunities for children and adults in a safe and supportive environment. If numbers tell a story, our impact in this area is growing. Despite the obstacles, including the COVID crisis, our community is benefiting in measurable ways from our deep commitment to empowerment through education.

1. Keystone Stars

Lekeisha Eubanks-Evans is senior director of Education and Workforce Programs at Project HOME. She oversees our education programming and was responsible for the effort that led to our four-star rating from Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS program. The STARS program is a continuous quality improvement systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early childhood and school-age care and education programs. Ratings range from one to four and there are specific benchmarks for every aspect of the learning environment, from safety to program content and resources, staff education, training, and community involvement. Earning four stars is a rigorous task.

It takes dedication and a solid commitment to providing children in our community with the best educational experience possible. "I am so proud of this accomplishment," Lekeisha said. "It's a grueling process that we've been working on for the past five years." Striving for excellence is the standard across all of Project HOME's children's education programs. From Kindergarten through 12th grade, our students are encouraged to achieve. They receive academic and social support, and the opportunity to focus on digital learning in our state-of-the-art STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) lab.



A student and teacher from our highly-rated K-8 after school program

2. Camp

After two COVID-related down years, registration for our summer camp program rebounded this summer and staff feel confident the upward trend will continue next summer. The K-8 day-camp program is held at the Honickman Learning Center Comcast Technology Labs with students enrolled in the six-week program participating in academic enrichment activities, science and technology projects, outdoor activities, and free field trips. This year our campers visited The Franklin Institute, enjoyed indoor and outdoor activities at The Funplex, spent time roller skating, bowling, and at the movies. For Lekeisha and her team, camp is about learning, fun, and something more- creating an environment that is "safe, caring and nurturing" and allows the children in our community to thrive.



Student cooling off at our recent Summer Camp



Anthony Spadeo earned his Certified Peer Specialist certificate



Three recent graduates of our College Access Program



CAP Scholarship recipients with Lynne and Harold Honickman

MAKE THE HOLIDAYS BRIGHT!
HELP PROJECT HOME

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving Meals

Every year, Project HOME provides a Thanksgiving meal to every resident. Help provide a meal to remember. A gift will help support over 1,000 Thanksgiving dinners.

WINTER HOLIDAYS

Gift Card Drive

Collect \$30 gift cards to Target and boost holiday spirits in our community.

HOME for the Holidays

Make a holiday wish come true for our children and families.

Scan the code to choose an opportunity

3. Adult Education

Adult learners are being welcomed back to in-person instruction at the HLCCTL again. While our digital-only offerings kept our students connected to the program during the worst of the pandemic, our program staff and teachers are excited by the return of the steady hum of activity. Our adult education curriculum supports the critical shift from homelessness and poverty to learning and earning. Our Certified Peer Specialist, ServSafe Food Handler, and Customer Service Representative certificate programs are among our most popular and are joined by classes that teach everything from basic computer skills to music production. Project HOME has long believed that employment is critical to developing or regaining the sense of dignity and self-worth essential to breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

4. CAP

Enrollment in our College Access Program (CAP) also rebounded this year. And, once again, we proudly celebrated our students' 100 percent high school graduation rate. Preparing these students and their families for a successful transition to post-secondary education is at the heart of our efforts. CAP provides a wide range of programming to keep kids on track academically and to engage them in creative pursuits that support and enhance college readiness. Lekeisha is especially proud of what CAP and K-8 students learn in the STEAM lab. "Our kids are exposed to integrated media and arts technology," she said. "They are coding, learning about robotics, and doing architecture projects on our 3D printer." And while she knows programming matters, Lekeisha also believes the encouragement and support students receive is key to their success. "Encouraging and supporting them keeps me going, too."

Changing Lives

WE'LL REACH OUT ANYWHERE TO CHANGE A LIFE.

SCAN TO CHANGE A LIFE

CAN YOU HELP US GET THERE?

Roots and Branches

Reflections from Sister Mary



Joyce Hagan

Solutions to homelessness are multi-faceted: comprehensive programs, targeted services, and affordable supportive housing. Project HOME has spent well over three decades building the organizational capacity to provide such resources. At the same time, we recognize that the essential element to empower our community to break the cycle of homelessness is personal: a spirit of care and compassion, of understanding and acceptance. We tend to each person's wounds, we affirm each person's gifts, and together we forge a community rooted in dignity and love. At the heart of our mission is what Father Greg Boyle from Homeboy Industries so beautifully terms "extravagant tenderness."

On October 12, at our 14th Bring Philly HOME celebration, we presented our inaugural SPARK (Service, Partnership, and Radical Kindness) Award. The Award honors a person in our community who goes above and beyond in working to advance our mission, someone who is truly inspirational in their dedication and commitment to fostering a beloved community.

We are excited to honor Joyce Hagan with this year's SPARK Award.

For years, Joyce has been a consistent presence at the Hub of Hope, our welcoming center that provides a critical point of entry for some of the most vulnerable persons experiencing homelessness. As a regular volunteer, she supports the guests in countless ways – which includes the simple but powerful act of spending time with people, listening to them, and affirming them. As a member of our



Sister Mary Scullion of Project HOME

Board of Trustees, Joyce also works to assure that the nuts and bolts of our organization are solid, so that we can deliver the necessary programs and services.

Part of honoring Joyce is sharing how she is a spark to others: To witness her simple, caring interactions with deeply wounded persons can inspire others to similar acts of goodness and giving.

So many of you who share this mission also deserve such honor and certainly our immense gratitude. It takes a collection of sparks to light the path HOME for our sisters and brothers experiencing homelessness. And there are many kinds of sparks: a job with life-sustaining wages; access to health, wellness, and safety across our community; educational opportunities that unlock the imagination of every student or adult learner.

But the core spark is always the simple acts of care, compassion, and human connection. Each of us has the potential to be sparks of extravagant tenderness.

With enough sparks, that tenderness can give birth to a more compassionate and just society for all of us.

S. Mary Scullion

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.



Scan the QR Code or contact:
michaelgainer@projecthome.org

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Home Happenings

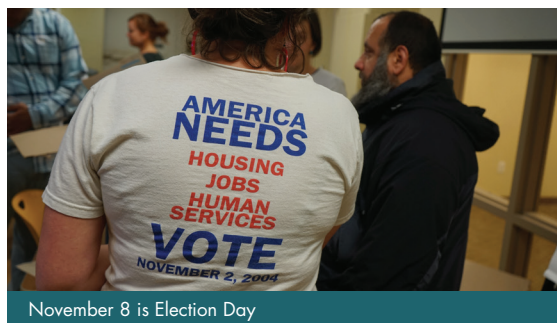
Two Gifts in One



Our Social Enterprises program offers multiple gift options, including our subscription boxes

The holiday shopping season is fast approaching, and with it an opportunity to purchase unique gifts — including signature candles, mugs, and gift boxes — from Project HOME. Our residents help create these products, providing them with opportunities for employment, and your purchase helps us continue the work. [Visit https://projecthome.org/socestore-pn](https://projecthome.org/socestore-pn) to shop online.

Your Vote Counts

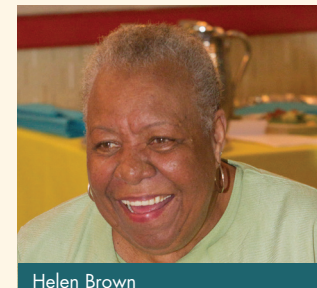


November 8 is Election Day

November 8 is Election Day and now, more than ever, your vote matters. Candidates vying for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, and Pennsylvania's State House and Senate seats are on the ballot. The outcome of this election will shape the legislative decision-making that directly impacts our lives and our communities. Project HOME is working to ensure that everyone who has the right to vote is registered to do so. You can request a mail-in ballot until November 1. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on November 8, and mail-in ballots must be returned by 8 p.m. that day.

Take the time to learn about the candidates and the issues. Encourage friends and family members who are not yet registered to sign up now. If you still need to register, go to <https://projecthome.org/votereg22-pn> or to PA Online Voter Registration. If you have questions or problems registering, contact the Commonwealth's Voter Registration office at: 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

A Sign For Her Times



Helen Brown

You could almost feel her presence, her commitment to the community, her dedication to improving the lives of others. Helen Brown, Project HOME's long-time community activist

passed away four years ago. But her passion and no-holds-barred approach to problem solving were alive in the anecdotes shared by neighbors, community leaders, and more than a half-dozen speakers gathered outside the Helen Brown Community Center in North Philadelphia. They came to remember "Miss Helen" and to carry out a City Council resolution renaming the 1800 block of North 23rd Street "Helen Brown Way." Council President Darrell Clarke, Congressman Dwight Evans, and Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon, the Executive Director and Associate Executive Director of Project HOME, were among those who unveiled the ceremonial street signs after talking about Miss Helen's tireless fight for community-based services, neighborhood revitalization, and home ownership. Miss Helen was fearless in her outreach to city officials and elected leaders. She had their numbers. She knew how to get things done.

In addition to her enormous hugs, Ms. Helen was known for her commitment to young people.



She helped establish the mega-award-winning North Philly Footstompers, a youth drum and drill team that wrapped up the day's events with a heart-pounding performance.

You can read more about Helen Brown, her life, and her work by scanning the QR code with your phone.



The new Helen Brown Way street sign is unveiled