



THE CHANGED LIVES BEHIND THE NUMBERS

At **Project HOME** we take your generous gifts very seriously. That is why we author a report to show you just how your donations provided valuable opportunities for many Philadelphians this year. We call it our annual report, but really it is the stories of the individuals who have come in thanks to the resources you have provided.



Dominique loves the Honickman Learning Center Comcast Technology Labs because of all the opportunities it has given her 6-year-old daughter, Diamond.

Photo Credit: Dave Tavani

HOUSING

"We had a resident move on to California and establish a really successful career," said Christina Fidanza, vice president of supportive housing operations. "These are the kinds of success stories that we love to hear!" That is just one story from our 1,157 residents across Project HOME's 19 residential buildings. We have also seen about 98% of our young adults remain in stable housing after one year. Young adults like Michelle who came to Project HOME in 2019 after some time spent in the foster care system and, after she turned 18, in a women's shelter. Now Michelle has the support she needs, she is practicing self-care, and developing her skills as a resident leader in her new home at Gloria Casarez Residence.

"When I opened the door to my apartment for the first time, it was a 'wow' moment," Michelle reflects. "There is a sense of 'I can't believe this is happening.' But getting in here with Project HOME is the best step you can take. It opens doors to new resources and helps you get beyond housing insecurity."

If our young adults are given the support they need — such as mental health counselling, housing, and employment— at the right time in their lives, it ensures that they never experience housing instability again.



OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPLOYMENT

Employment is the reason that Dominique is one of 264 adult learners who have participated in Project HOME's Adult Education and Employment program at the Honickman Learning Center Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL). She chose the customer service representative class to learn fundamental computer skills, but what she values above all else is the empathy it has given her. "It's taught me how to manage customers who are frustrated and to know how it feels to be the person on the other side."

Adult education offers other professional certificate programs designed to lead to both competitive employment and post-secondary and GED learning. These opportunities have been life-changing for Dominique. "It broadened my experience and gave me positive energy being around people," said Dominique. And she's willing to spread that positivity to others. "Since I came over to the center, I've been sharing the news about the HLCCTL with others to encourage them to come here."

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→ Young adult Michelle felt a 'wow' moment when she opened the door to her new apartment with Project HOME.

Photo Credit: John Ndicu

ROOTS BRANCHES

Reflections from Sister Mary

“We will need your support as we register voters, reach out to candidates, and make sure homelessness is on the agenda throughout the election year.”

Times are tough for many. We are still feeling the impact of the pandemic and the economic downturn of the past few years. Particularly hard hit are those in our society without homes, living on the streets, struggling to survive economically, and at risk of becoming homeless. An ever-tightening housing market that is catering to those with resources is continuing to shrink the supply of affordable housing.

The reality of homelessness has become more visible in many communities and is forcing a public reckoning. Cities like Los Angeles and New York are labeling homelessness a public emergency and developing highly publicized plans to respond – though those responses are mixed in focus and possible impact.

Twenty-four years ago, the city of Philadelphia reached a similar crossroads, grappling with a crisis of homelessness. Like 2023, it was an election year for a new mayor. Project HOME brought together dozens of advocacy organizations, nonprofits, religious groups, and others into an unprecedented coalition we called “Election 1999: Leadership to End Homelessness.” (Years later, this same coalition would evolve into *Vote For Homes!*) Throughout the campaign, we engaged in extensive outreach to candidates (including one of the largest candidate’s forums of the entire campaign), large-scale voter registration, and public education efforts about the urgency of the issue, and a Voter’s Guide. Shortly after winning the election, Mayor-elect John Street called on many coalition members to create a first-ever city homelessness task force to help develop policies for his new administration.



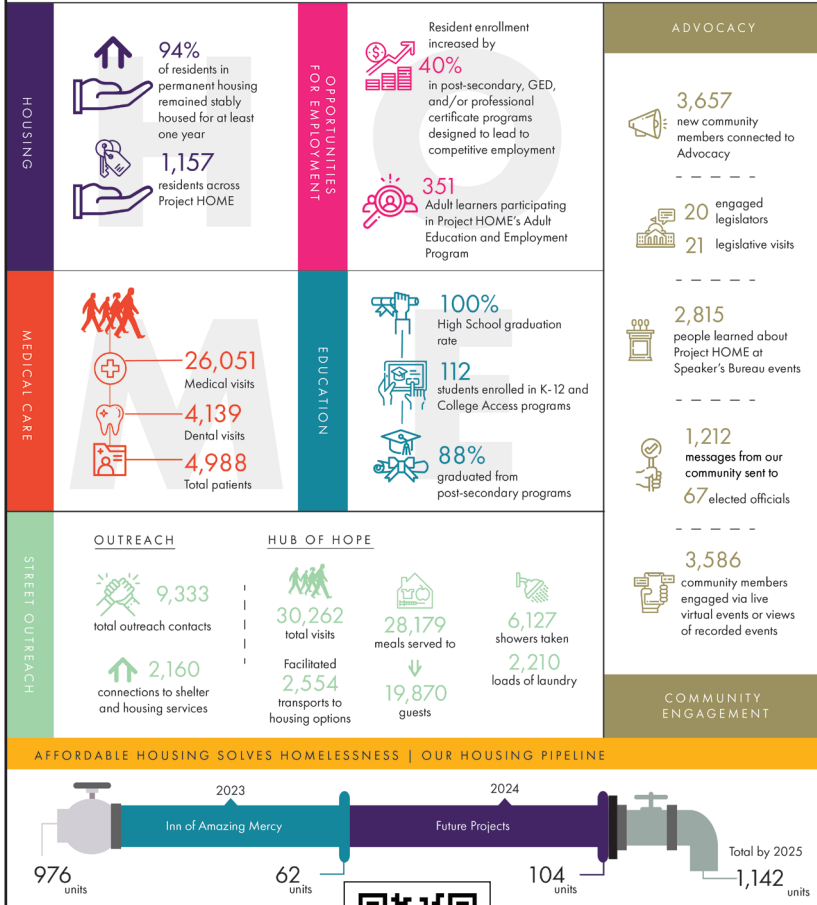
Sister Mary Scullion of Project HOME. Photo Credit: Lisa Suszek

The resulting partnership between city government, homeless advocates, nonprofits, and the business community was a groundbreaking effort that helped Philadelphia become a national model for addressing homelessness. Though we faced many bumps in the road and ongoing political struggles, as a community we were also able to develop thousands of units of supportive housing that significantly decreased the numbers of people forced to live on our city’s streets.

In Philadelphia this year, we will be electing a new mayor and a new City Council – which is a crucial opportunity for our community to take stock, to forge new directions, to tackle issues with new vision and energy. Project HOME will once again be working with other groups to make homelessness a key issue. We have a tremendous track record of proven solutions that can be the basis for concrete and comprehensive policy approaches. History tells us that when we can generate the political will, we can make real progress – both in reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness and enhancing the health of our entire city.

We will be reporting on our efforts in the coming months – and we will need your support as we register voters, reach out to candidates, and make sure homelessness is on the agenda throughout the election year.

We have no illusions: the challenges are daunting – and our efforts in Philadelphia are impacted by both state and national politics. But when we see members of our community unsheltered, not only on the streets in Center City, but in every neighborhood throughout our City; when we witness the terrible suffering of so many people struggling with substance use especially on the streets of Kensington; when we see the economic divides that corrode our community; when we see our young people losing hope for real opportunities in life – we know that we must act. We draw hope from the powerful stories of transformation of our residents and your enduring support of our work. This election year, with your help, we will turn that hope into real action and lasting change.



OUTREACH

Of course, to be able to take advantage of the many resources Project HOME can offer, resources we have thanks to your kindness, our incredible outreach staff must first help folks come in. "Some of the challenges our staff are seeing is not enough accessible shelters for people with disabilities or shelters that don't allow service animals," said Candice Player, vice president of outreach.

Project HOME's newest residence, Inn of Amazing Mercy, will offer beds in Kensington that are low barrier. We will welcome people with animals, wheelchairs, or a substance use disorder to start their journey home. But the need is great. "Just in the last year, our outreach staff have made over 9,000 connections with individuals experiencing homelessness and placed over 2,000 people in a home," said Player.

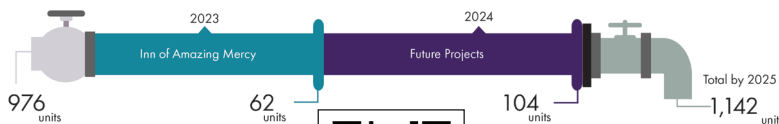
One of those connections was with Judith, 67, who lost her home when her apartment building partially collapsed in Philadelphia's Logan section in September of last year. That day, Judith was in the hospital with pneumonia, but her partner was home and sadly he did not survive his injuries from the collapse. "I lost everything that day," said Judith.

Outreach worker Tanya Baker worked tirelessly after the tragedy to find housing for Judith.

The work that our staff do at Project HOME is not always easy, but it is life-changing and lifesaving. At the beginning of this new year, we celebrate how far we have come together, we thank you for your unwavering support, and we continue to make sure that we have the resources to bring everyone home.

"Since I came over to the center, I've been sharing the news about the HLCCTL with others to encourage them to come here." – Dominique

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLVES HOMELESSNESS | OUR HOUSING PIPELINE



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EDUCATION

The other reason that Dominique loves the HLCCTL is because of the educational opportunities it provides to her six-year-old daughter, Diamond. "She's been able to meet lots of different people and I don't have to worry about her," said Dominique. Diamond and 129 other students are enrolled in K-12 programs where 100% of seniors graduated high school and 88% enrolled in post-secondary programs last year. Dominique hopes to bring her older son Dominic to the HLCCTL so they can all learn in the same place. She says it's such a happy environment for them. "Everyone is so welcoming and has a lovely smile on their face."

MEDICAL CARE

Smiles are never in short supply at the Stephen Klein Wellness Center (SKWC). On a cold Wednesday afternoon, patients are laughing in waiting rooms, catching up with their primary care physicians, and greeting old friends in the corridors. Many patients, like Ayesha, have been coming to SKWC since it first opened its doors in 2014. "The staff here have given me so much and I love coming here," she said.

Like many of the resources across Project HOME, finding staff since the pandemic has been tough, but that has not slowed their work. In 2022, the Stephen Klein Wellness Center had nearly 18,500 medical visits and over 4,000 dental visits, treating each patient with the care and attention they need.



Photo Credit: Dave Tavani

Ayesha getting her daughter Nyla checked out by Doctor Nayeli at the Stephen Klein Wellness Center.

HOME HAPPENINGS



MARKING HOMELESS PERSON'S MEMORIAL DAY

Every winter solstice we take time to remember our unsheltered neighbors who died. On December 21, hundreds of community members gathered at Thomas Paine Plaza to spread words of hope and healing for the lives lost due to homelessness. We are also mourning the loss of Michael Hinson, CEO of SELF, who was a treasured partner and friend, and William Eisenhuth a powerful mental health advocate. We've made tremendous strides with providing housing to those who need it most, but the fight isn't over. We must continue to elevate our voices and elect public officials who are committed to ending street homelessness for all Philadelphians. You can [send a message](#) to our current (and future) mayor here to emphasize the solutions needed.

PEW PODCAST BROADCASTS from Project HOME

A core element of Project HOME's mission involves sharing about our programs and opportunities for Philadelphians. Pew Charitable Trusts, a global nongovernmental organization seeking to improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life, recorded a podcast episode with us about our efforts to build and strengthen communities. Sister Mary explained the history behind our vision and how it has transformed over three decades. You can listen to the full episode with the Pew Charitable Trusts here: bit.ly/3XNWkm7 (For more on Pew Charitable Trusts relationship with Project HOME, read Spirit of Generosity on Page 5).



GET YOUR LATEST WHERE TO TURN GUIDE

Our website is regularly updated with resources, services, and programs for people experiencing homelessness in Philadelphia. To access and download the latest copy of [Where to Turn](#), please scan the QR code below. Email suggestions on ways to improve this resource to wheretoturn@projecthome.org. You can also sign up to receive email alerts when we make updates by visiting this link: bit.ly/3Wq4EHY



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HEART

By Richard Bogue

My heart, a sacred book, speaks of the many, many loving friends and acquaintances I've known; each has inscribed something on the pages of my heart.

Sometimes a friend has chided me, warned me, pleaded with me, and then finally turned and walked away.

Sometimes in the dead of night I read what others have written and, afraid, I resolve to change my ways. I recall the sweet, sweet women I hurt when I was young, women I've hurt but not forgotten.

Then sometimes in the dead of night I consult my heart and feel sorry for myself; I pity myself. At those times the loving words of others come back to me. With dawn, with sunrise, the love in my heart triumphs.

The book of my heart is unfinished. A work in progress. What I might yet write I cannot say. But one thing is certain: this book, my heart, is sacred: all the pain I've caused others and all the good I've done, it's all written here, in my heart.

Richard Bogue was a beloved member of the Project HOME community and lived at our 1515 Fairmount Avenue residence for over twenty years. We sadly lost him this past November.

SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY:

Pew, Gratitude for Growth Grant and a 25-year Thanksgiving Tradition



For over 25-years Pew staff have been organizing a food drive for the Helen Brown Community Center thanks to former and beloved staff member, David Sims who began the tradition.
Photo Credit: Project HOME

Grants Manager for Pew who passed away in 2019 at the age of 51. "He was very sweet, too. He would personally visit or call all of the managers at Pew and get them to chip in extra for the food drive for the Helen Brown Community Center."

In addition to the joy that came with organizing, tracking, and delivering the items, Sims and Jean Dobron (who helped start the food drive 25 years ago), always "looked forward to big hugs from Helen Brown when they dropped off the donations," according to Leva.

To Leva and her Pew Cares colleagues, Rhonda White and Katy Saris, it wasn't a matter of "if" the food drive would continue, but how they could carry on in Sims' footsteps. "We all knew how fond people [at the Helen Brown Community Center] were of David," reflects Leva. "Carrying the food drive forward and continuing it as a 'Pew Cares' project was the only fitting way to meet the deep need for food during Thanksgiving, and to honor David's memory – his whole being."

During the throes of the first winter of the COVID-19 pandemic, the food drive would need to take on a different format. The traditional in-office food drive would not be possible. The Pew Cares team found a solution by collecting monetary donations and placing an order for food delivery. This model has continued as it allows current Pew employees in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. – and even Pew retirees – to play a meaningful role, regardless of their location.

"We celebrate the 25 years of generosity and leadership of Pew employees," says Terry Guerra, Project HOME's program manager at the Helen Brown Community Center. "Each year they gladden Thanksgiving meals across Helen Brown Community Center neighborhood and supplement the healthy meals well into the winter."

By every measure of the word, the Pew and Project HOME partnership demonstrates the transformational power of relationships. Our lives are truly changed by the power of each other.

In February of 2022, The Pew Charitable Trusts awarded Project HOME a five-year, \$3.5M Growth Grant that, today, is accelerating the creation of more than 150 units of supportive housing, expanding access to supports and treatment for substance use disorder, strengthening Project HOME's plans for long-term sustainability, and supporting Project HOME's integration of DEI throughout every aspect of our work.

"We're seeing more people affected by serious behavioral health issues, mental illness and substance use," Sister Mary Scullion told KYW when the multi-year commitment was announced. "This grant will help us to reach our goal of 1,000 units of affordable housing."

In the same interview Kristin Romens, project director for the Pew Fund for Health and Human Services, said that Pew sought to award Growth Grants to "tenacious organizations" that have "data and evidence of positive results... and a desire to grow." With Inn of Amazing Mercy opening in the first year of the Growth Grant, it is clearly having its envisioned impact.

"David was very, very convincing...he would go to everyone for the food drive for the Helen Brown Community Center."

- Anita Leva, Pew Charitable Trusts

There's even more to the Pew and Project HOME partnership, though.

An equally meaningful connection between Pew and Project HOME has been in place behind the scenes since 1997 through what Pew colleagues lovingly call the "David Sims Memorial Food Drive".

The food drive – which originally supported Project HOME's community-focused work in the Saint Elizabeth's neighborhood and today supports the Helen Brown Community Center food pantry – got its start under the umbrella of 'Pew Cares,' a staff-organized and led volunteer program.

"David was very, very convincing," Anita Leva, senior administrative assistant with Pew's legal affairs team, remembers. She's referring to the late David Sims, a



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“Housing is a human right that requires investment, above all, in human beings.”

- Marquita Davis speaking on Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day



Marquita Davis spoke at the 26th year of Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day on December 21st at Thomas Plaine Plaza in Center City. The memorial honors friends and family lost in 2022.

(For more on this event and how you can help honor those lives lost, see HOME Happenings on page 4).

Photo Credit: Rich Wexler