

TEXT FOR 2010 SECTION

1.

THE NEXT TEN YEARS

We take time this year to celebrate – the accomplishments, the people, the stories of success, the transformations and breakthroughs, the spirit of hope. But we can't rest long on the laurels: Sisters and brothers are still out there, on the streets, in the grip of poverty.

We give thanks. We pause and take a breath. We roll up our sleeves and get back to it,...

Twenty years ago, as we began working with those men and women who were seeking to break the cycle of homelessness, we could hardly have fathomed all that would unfold. We had a sense of what kind of solutions were needed and could work, but we hardly imagined all that would be accomplished. Even as we believed in the best impulses in people, little could we have foreseen the amazing and extensive community that would partner with us to make our vision come to life.

Two decades later, we still have no crystal ball that gives us the luxury of certainty about what lies ahead. But we have learned innumerable lessons along the way, with which we can chart a course for moving forward.

The core issue continues to be housing – safe, decent, affordable. We are committed to completing at least 150 new units of housing – permanent, affordable housing for formerly homeless men and women; renovated home-ownership units for low-income working families, and specialized units to better serve homeless veterans and those with physical disabilities.

Just as when we started, employment and education are critical components to empower persons to overcome homelessness and poverty. We will continue to provide employment and job training through our business initiatives (The H.O.M.E. Page Café, The Back H.O.M.E. Café, and Our Daily Threads Thrift Store); we will also continue to work with allies and partners in the nonprofit and private sectors to expand and create employment partnerships and employment-readiness and technology programs.

Without doubt, issues of healthcare will only become more complicated and more critical to the well-being of people and communities seeking to break the grip of poverty. Working with our neighbors and our health partners, we will create a Wellness Center in our north central Philadelphia neighborhood. This state-of-the-art facility will provide primary care and holistic health care and prevention to hundreds of low-income men, women, children, and families.

As we see the success of the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs, we are all the more convinced of the centrality of quality education for our youth and

adults. We will work to enhance our capacity to serve more children and youth, particularly teens, at the Center by developing a more interactive, engaging curriculum. We will work to multiply successes in enabling our youth to make the transition to college, and empowering our neighbors to achieve employment.

We will continue our mission of education and advocacy: dispelling myths, illuminating the realities, unpacking the issues. We will continue to speak out for the dignity and rights of all persons, especially those at the margins. We will redouble our efforts to effect positive systemic change for low-income and homeless people through legislation and public policy. We will do all we can to broaden our community of hope, so more people join in this mission to make ours a more just and humane society.

In short, we will seek, with the help of our community of supporters, to get better at what we do. We will seek to do more of what works. We will try to be well positioned and well-equipped to meet new challenges. We will try to be open to new wisdom, new ideas, new directions.

The mission is the same. The journey is the same. We are still on the road home. But each day we get closer. And, en route, closer to each other.

2-3

1515/1523 Fairmount

It's hard to imagine the building in its original incarnation some eighty years ago – a casket factory. After all, it's bustling with life most days.

Folks from the streets come in to meet with outreach staff. Visitors come in daily, for meetings or social get-togethers or to check out the latest art exhibit. Customers are eating at the Back Home Café or checking out the sales at Our Daily Threads Thrift Store. Staffers are often dashing through the halls and between floors, but usually stopping to converse with residents or to greet folks waiting for their appointment with outreach. On a given day, the large community space in the back could be the scene of a political advocacy meeting, a presentation for a group of students, a holiday party, or a memorial service for a resident who passed on. It's also the hub of the entire spiraling web of Project H.O.M.E. that expands throughout the city, with administrative offices and plenty of meetings.

But more than anything else, it's a home. 1515 Fairmount—along with its neighbor, 1523—is a permanent supportive residence for 54 men and women who have overcome chronic homelessness.

Most residents appreciate the bustle of the building. They feel a balance between privacy and community. Each person's room has its own character and provides a sense of safety, while the cluster setting in which they live allows for interaction with fellow residents. “It

is a wonderful shelter above my head,” according to Shirley [LAST NAME?], who both lives and works at 1515, “but it also allows me to meet so many different people and create friendships when I did not have any.”

“I’ve turned my life around with help from many wonderful people.” – Richard Bogue

1515-1523 Fairmount are, in many ways, the heart of Project H.O.M.E. The building’s ambiance of residents, staff, neighbors, and visitors conveys the interconnectedness that draws us together as a human family.

Needs:

One main quote from a resident

One smaller quote from a resident

One smaller quote from a staff

4-5

Kairos House

The old-timers on staff remember that day in 1991 when they first visited the building which Project H.O.M.E. would rent to utilize for its fourth year of emergency winter shelter. “It was disgusting!” remembers one of the staff from that time, with a visceral shiver. A heroic team of volunteers helped clear out the horrid mess from the filthy, long-neglected facility, filling several dumpsters. Within a few weeks, a clean, brightly painted first floor opened up for about thirty men from the streets.

But we knew the temporary patch-up was just a start. Within a year, after having purchased the building, we renovated the top two floors into our first transitional mental health residence, for both men and women. Staff and residents dubbed the new facility “Kairos House,” from the Greek word in the New Testament meaning a “ripe or opportune time,” a time of special significance. We were certain it would be a place of transformation and growth.

In 1994, when then-HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros visited Kairos House, the entire structure had been fully renovated, and, with the help of Shelter Plus Care subsidies, 36 men and women had rooms of their own in a quality facility offering intensive supports to help with mental health issues. Sec. Cisneros rightly praised the residence as an effective use of public funds that make a real difference in combating homelessness.

“The compassion that staff, volunteers, and residents have for us makes Kairos House home to me,” explains Twanna. [DO WE WANT LAST NAMES?] “I am grateful for having the experience of working at Kairos House,” says NAME, a residence who also has a job at the front desk. [IS SHE A RESIDENT??] “It provides a positive home for many people and encourages me in my own life.”

At Kairos House, because of a commitment to community and relationships, the staff becomes intimately involved in the progress and life of the residents, and in turn are deeply affected and enriched by their lives. “Every day something special happens,” says Program Manager Carolyn Crouch. “Members of the community participate in the new creation each and every day, building their next steps in life while reinventing ways to uphold the dignity of each resident, no matter where they are on their path to recovery.

QUOTE:

6-7

Women of Change

Around 1995, we were seeing something in Center City that we hadn’t seen much of in awhile: women living on the streets, struggling with serious and untreated mental illness.

So it was good timing that we received funding from the U.S. Department of Human Services to operate a new kind of facility: a “safe haven,” specially designed to meet the needs of certain chronically homeless persons who did not function well in most shelters or programs.

The result was Women of Change. And its beginnings were auspicious: Rather than a drawn-out NIMBY struggle (“Not In My Back Yard”), we were able to have constructive dialogue with Logan Square neighbors, who worked with us to ensure smooth operation of the new residence.

Twenty-five women reside in the safe haven. For some, coming to Women of Change was the first time they came in off the streets to seek support. And, confirming the name of the facility, many women affirm that in fact it is the first time they have felt safe and supported, which empowers them to seek help.

“It is so clean and comfortable here,” says NAME. “The staff makes me believe that I have the strength to make this journey back, back to myself and to a home. I take it one day at a time, but with their support, I will do it.”

For me, it’s been a life saver. Women of Change sure changed me!” Carol Parker

One main quote from a resident

One smaller quote from a resident

One smaller quote from a staff

POSSIBLE QUOTE:

“The staff makes me believe that I have the strength to make this journey back, back to myself and to a home. I take it one day at a time, but with their support, I will do it.”
-- NAME

8-9

In Community

In 1991, Project H.O.M.E. had only three years under our belt. At that time we offered only entry-level shelter and transitional housing for homeless men. That year, the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Mental Health approached us with a unique proposal. OMH wanted to try an experimental new program of “supported independent living” for persons with mental health disabilities.

The result was In Community, launched in February, 1992. We started by renting 12 efficiency apartments in the Adelphia House in Center City. It grew quickly, from 12 units to 40, thanks to Shelter Plus Care funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 1998, the Adelphia House was purchased and renovated by a top developer, but we had to file a lawsuit to ensure that our residents would not be evicted due to their disability.

The experiment clearly worked. Of the 32 residents, many have lived there for ten or more years, some since the very beginning. Many residents work or attend school. Many are involved in mental-health recovery groups and peer support counseling. Many residents form close bonds, celebrating holidays together and supporting each other in all sorts of ways.

“We’re sort of like a family,” says NAME. As NAME, another resident, explains, “It took me nine years to find a place where I’m comfortable, and this is it.” Jeannine Litiski, who served as In Community’s Program Coordinator in the late 1990’s, says, “The beauty of In Community is that our residents are integrated into the community. They can have both support and independence.” Sounds like a good deal for any of us.

QUOTE:

“Living at In Community has allowed me to make new friends, to use my talents for the benefit of the community, and to know that that you can create your own sense of community.”

-- A. Dionne Stallworth

10-11

St. Elizabeth's

Maybe there's significance to the fact that the building was once a convent, a home for persons devoted to a religious life. After all, as any of the residents of St. Elizabeth's will affirm, recovery is a profoundly serious business, a matter of almost – one might say – monastic discipline, a lifestyle that requires both an intentional community and dependence on one's higher power. And ultimately, it is a life that issues in service and compassion to others.

Project H.O.M.E.'s St. Elizabeth's Recovery Residence (named because of the old parish where it is located) opened in 1993 in an effort to respond more effectively to the struggles of men whose homelessness was bound up in serious addiction. The residents themselves helped in the development of the program. Through their hard-earned wisdom, they helped develop a rigorous and highly structured, multi-leveled program that would provide serious opportunity for recovery.

Just walking into St. E's, you can feel the strong bond that is created between the residents and the staff (many of whom are living their own recovery). Residents say that they immediately feel a sense of dignity and respect when they enter the doors, and it allows them to begin the arduous, but critical, work of the recovery program. "St. Elizabeth's meant a new way of life to me," says Anthony Gindraw, a former resident of St. Elizabeth's who now lives independently. "It helped me to build my self-esteem. It gave me motivation to work hard and to be grateful for everyday that I wake up."

In 2008, St. E's was renovated and its program redesigned so that at least half the residents would be homeless veterans, including those who are physically disabled.

Another quote from a resident

A main quote from a resident

One smaller quote from a staff

MAIN QUOTE:

12-13

Rowan Homes

The stability of the home, particularly for a family that has been homeless, is truly the seed that plants a person's feet firmly on the ground and allows all other growth and development to take place.

Up until 19xx, Project H.O.M.E.'s homeless programs were targeted specifically for homeless individuals who were dealing with behavioral health issues of mental illness and/or addictions. That changed in 199. Thanks to the remarkable vision and compassion

of Rena Rowan, who had previously partnered with other programs supporting homeless families, we opened Rowan Homes (see page xx).

Rowan Homes provides 39 permanent apartments for formerly homeless families with special needs, either on Judson Street (where residents can take advantage of the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs on the same block) or on Diamond Street. Rowan families are offered comprehensive services, including case management, adult and youth education, job placement and retention services and access to quality health care. Residents are also encouraged to participate in on site groups that focus on parenting, health issues for adults and children as well as recreational activities such as arts and crafts and cooking class for the children.

For Yvonne Bailey, who works at the H.O.M.E. Page Café (see page xx), living at Rowan Homes allowed her the confidence to start working in a customer-service environment. “What makes Rowan so special,” she says, “is that it offers a safe, affordable place where I can provide a future for my daughter. Both of us can take advantage of all the educational and occupational opportunities at Project H.O.M.E.”

Tanisha [LAST NAME?] remembers the exact day nine years ago that she and her mother moved into Rowan Homes. She was ten, and this was the first “real” home she could ever recall. The stability that this “real” home brought to Tanisha allowed her to focus on her studies and “her attitude” and last year, Tanisha graduated and now attends college outside Philadelphia.

QUOTE:

14-15

St. Columba’s

St. Columba’s is named after a sixth-century itinerant Irish saint who was known as a seafarer and wanderer. The name is appropriate, since the residence itself has a bit of a nomadic history.

St. Columba’s was first opened in 19xx by our friends at Bethesda Project to provide a dignified and caring place for many of the older, especially frail homeless men to at least come in from the streets. With minimal funds, they were faced with having to close it, but after some dialogue, Project H.O.M.E. agreed to take over the residence in 1992. In the next few years, we had to move the site twice, until it finally landed at its present location, completely renovated, at 42nd and Chestnut Streets in West Philadelphia.

St. Columba’s is a “safe haven” for 40 chronically homeless men who have a serious behavioral health diagnosis and, in many cases, frail physical health as well. Many of the men are elderly and have logged many years living on the streets. Many are unable to seek appropriate services and support at other shelters. But St. Columba’s offers a

welcoming environment for them. Several of the residents assert that coming here was the first time they received respect from the “system.” They talk about how they feel safe and cared for. QUOTE

The staff at St. Columba’s work hard to create a home atmosphere in the chaos of these men’s’ lives. “We cheer for each another’s triumphs and feel each other’s heartaches,” says NAME. “It makes us a family.”

QUOTE:

16-17

Hope Haven

They look just like ordinary row homes in a typical North Philadelphia row home neighborhood. But for us, these buildings represent an important stepping stone in Project H.O.M.E.’s history. In 1990, after three years of providing emergency winter shelter for men, we were able to procure the old convent of Most Precious Blood parish, which we opened up as our first transitional residence for x men. It was our first expansion beyond simply shelter, and a step toward the full continuum of supportive housing which we envisioned.

That presence on Diamond Street, and the relations with neighbors there, deeply enriched all that we did in Project H.O.M.E. Within years, it bore the fruit of the two Hope Havens, which today provide 20 units of permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless men. Residents are all graduates of drug or alcohol addiction treatment programs (many from our St. Elizabeth’s Recovery Residence) and are seeking a supportive group-living environment in order to continue their recovery. The two renovated row homes in the neighborhood create an intimate, family environment. The guys there help each other through the transition of having been in a more regimented program to near independent living. As John [LAST NAME?], who has lived there several months describes it: “I love the comfort of Hope Haven. It is a safe place to live, but it is the strong community that makes it *my* home.”

Another resident quote

“We have a strong sense of community. Our neighbors know us and respect us. We can hold out heads up. We have each other to support one another.” Mike McGee

QUOTE:

“Now I’m doing it the way it’s supposed to be done and things are starting to bloom. Its’ a blue day and the sun is shining. I’m already a star.”

18-19

Kate's Place

When the Dominican Sisters came to us in 1999 with a problem, we really didn't think it would be possible to help them.

For over forty years, the Sisters had run the historic building just off Rittenhouse Square as an affordable and safe place for single women, mostly low-income or in transition. Due to rising costs, the Dominicans were no longer able to operate the facility, but hoped the building could continue to serve persons in need rather than be sold to become expensive condos. We had never done anything on that scale – as many as 150 units – and originally balked at the prospect.

But we try not to let the impossible stop us. And in 2004, we opened Kate's Place, a distinctive residence offering affordable housing in the midst of some of Philadelphia's highest priced real estate. "It is a beautiful building that is convenient for transportation and feels secure with great staff," says James [LAST NAME?], a resident since it opened and formerly a resident of 1515 Fairmount. Kate's Place is unique in that it is 144 units of mixed-income affordable housing for single adults. There are people living in near-market rate units, there are working low-income people who could not otherwise afford to live in Center City and there are those who are formerly homeless and living in subsidized units, many of whom previously lived at our other residences and who bring to their new home Project H.O.M.E.'s sense of community.

For Duwan McClain, who always wanted to live in Center City, it is a dream come true that she thought she could never afford: "I get to walk everywhere, which give me a sense of freedom. But the benefits of Kate's Place are not just its great location. The round-the-clock staff helps me feel safe, and I am never alone." And the on-site services—made available to all residents—help residents to manage their lives and gives them meaningful activities to feel part of the larger community.

QUOTE:

20-21

Celebrations

"Isn't it just too much sometimes?" "Don't you get burned out?" "Do you get overwhelmed constantly having to face all this suffering?"

True, this vocation defined by a constant engagement with struggle, pain, disability – as well as the frequent maddening intransigence of social and political systems. There are times of discouragement and frustration.

But then there is the annual Thanksgiving service, at which the expressions of gratitude are raw, piercing, powerful. There are the community arts festivals, hearing Richard's moving poetry, Carolyn's halting but beautiful classical guitar, Denean's lusty blues and gospel songs. There are the holiday parties with their let-loose dancing, the birthday celebrations, the art openings, the neighborhood festivals, the grand openings of new residences.

Celebration is part of the thread that weaves together the many strands of life at Project H.O.M.E. We gather together. We acknowledge what is good and wonderful about each other. The labels that trap us in social definitions melt away. The social boundaries that keep us apart are defied. We remind each other of who we truly are.

CAPTIONS:

Paul Helwig's days playing in country-western bands fell prey to addiction and many years on the streets. After coming into Project H.O.M.E. and stabilizing his life, he began to perform again, here at a "potlatch," a community arts festival.

Father Ed Hallinan, a long-time friend whose ministry has included folks who are homeless for decades, leads the Project H.O.M.E. community in a Christmas service.

OTHER PHOTO?

22-23

"Friend-Raising" Events

Quite bluntly, it takes money – lots of it. Whether it's real estate or cleaning supplies, salaries or housing subsidies, food supplies or the electricity bill, the mission of Project H.O.M.E. – and the extent to which we have been able to realize it – is an expensive enterprise.

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of so many friends who have responded to the call and who have invested of their resources. But more than that, it is those persons, from all walks of life, who have invested some deeper – something of their heart, their passion, their sense of themselves. The many gatherings, events, benefits, galas all – we hope – will result in the critically needed resources. But just as important, they draw people into the vision, the community, the spirit of being part of a movement.

CAPTIONS - ??

24-25

"Friend-Raising" Events

CAPTIONS - ??

26-27

Afterward by Lynne

When people ask me what it is that I find so meaningful in working with and for the Project H.O.M.E. mission, I have to go inward and follow the markers of heart and reason...that led me to this remarkable enclave.

Fifteen years ago, I was driving through the inner-city neighborhoods of North Philadelphia while taking a shortcut to North Broad Street. Within minutes from my residence on Rittenhouse Square, I found myself in what looked like a war zone. The tremendous chasm between where I lived and what I had and what I was seeing shamed and saddened me.

Believing that one of the greatest blessings of our democracy is that our government must respect each person, treating all equally and fairly, I couldn't reconcile the seemingly anonymous man lying on a grate...teenagers hanging out on a corner during school hours... homes in degradation.... with hope for the future. The latter forced me into deep thought about my place in the world.

I believe we're responsible for extending and protecting the rights of free speech, racial and gender equality, equal rights for all under G-d. So it was only natural that my belief in those sacred rights and their survival would find its source working as a guardian and advocate for the mission of Project H.O.M.E.

My husband, Harold and I had grown up in happy and committed families. Both of us were nurtured with love, order, and opportunity. Homelessness was a vacant word, a word without serious meaning. It was something that happened to other people. We believed in family – in the universal as well as the personal family. In our ignorance we thought everyone was protected—if they just had family. But in time I came to understand that all of us are just three unlucky happenstances away from homelessness. “There but for the grace of G-d go I” took on a new dimension.

The Talmud teaches that saving just one life is the same as saving the world, that the task of at least trying to repair the world is “equal to all of the other commandments combined.” And it is this legacy that we strive to pass on to our children. But violence, inequity, bigotry, and defamation violate everything a family stands for.

I've read we're supposed to take care of children and give them a safe haven while they learn how to fight the world's battles. We're supposed to teach them truth, kindness, personal dignity, respect for others, humanity for all. That, I believe, is one of the main things we're here for: to keep our kids from harm's way and to help them grow confident,

compassionate, educated, and secure. But to deny anyone the right to an appropriate education, a safe home, and job opportunities violates everything a family stands for.

In coming to Project H.O.M.E., I thought that I could serve as a connector from one world to another. I learned that I could become much more – that “kindness” is a universal language and often is the best medicine

I learned patience from the remarkable staff. I leaned into their hearts and learned that compassion is holding someone close even when he or she may not know they want or need you, that their need to resist me would become my need to connect. I learned from Sister Mary and Joan McConnon that the adopted family has the same power to heal, nurture, and protect as does the flesh and blood: I had found devoted mentors

I was partnering here because Project H.O.M.E. is a strong, joyous, special place where human rights and dignity are prized and human potential is encouraged and nourished. The Project H.O.M.E. community is suffused with struggle, commitment, compassion, love – and those enduring virtues succeed in insulating against the inevitable storms. That’s how strong and committed the Project H.O.M.E. family is.

In the end I can tell you that the incredible and sustaining draw for me to partner and support this blessed crusade to end homelessness is each individual’s enormous capacity to touch LOVE. There’s an indescribable thrill in being a small part of a community’s rebirth: Working shoulder to shoulder, I am nurtured as I nurture, taught as I teach, embraced as I embrace, valued as I value, loved as I love. It just doesn’t get any better than that.

Now you know the secret. I expect the whole world will want to serve here.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANKS

It has been our privilege and joy to be a part of documenting Project H.O.M.E.’s journey of twenty years.

Sister Mary and Joan give solace and strength to each one of us through their passionate belief in the right of every human being to live with dignity. Their spirit of faith, hope, optimism, and trust is the beacon that lights and engages the entire Project H.O.M.E. community, from residents to Board of Trustees. And it is this community that lit the way for the birth of this document.

The Editors

We have watched with much gratitude and pride the creation and growth of this incredible documentation of twenty years—a testament to the skill, heart, mind, and commitment of a devoted community.

Our great friend Lynne Honickman spearheaded this project from the beginning, serving as co-editor, part project manager and part artistic collaborator. Her noble spirit soars and hovers over every page.

Pamela Kerr, designer and co-photo editor, worked tirelessly, giving of her enormous talent, determined to produce a truly beautiful and moving book to mark our 20th anniversary celebration.

Will O'Brien, co-editor, lent his writing skills and his years of experience to tell the story of our community and our journey.

The care, skill and devotion of these three colleagues to this project are without peer.

The efforts of Amanda Aronoff and her fabulous development team provided critical direction and encouragement that allowed this project to come to fruition.

And to each of the great photographers, beginning with the amazing Harvey Finkle, who has documented our entire twenty-year voyage. Thanks also to Rodney Atienza , Alan Kolc, Stuart Rome, Joanna Leightner, Jim Harris, [OTHERS?] To these brilliant professional photographers who worked pro bono and dazzled us with their talent, you have our unending appreciation and gratitude. [DID THEY ALL WORK PRO BONO?]

To Dean Pugh and CRW: Thank you for your expertise and professional integrity, both to the printed matter and to Project H.O.M.E.

To each and everyone in the Project H.O.M.E. community who participated in and encouraged this project – thank you, for all and everything that you are and have done to make this a joyous journey.

Sister Mary Scullion and Joan McConnon

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Celebrating Harvey Finkle

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Photo of Christmas Dreams

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The Common Good by MS

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Final photo and quote

