

# News FROM HOME



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

## An Exercise in Grace



Hub of Hope staff worker Carmen Green works with a guest to access services.

For the past six winters, Project HOME has operated an innovative seasonal program called the Hub of Hope. Located in the Center City transit concourses, the Hub of Hope functions as a walk-in engagement center for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Each year, it has proven to be an invaluable point of entry for some of the most vulnerable persons living on the streets. Each year, hundreds of persons accessed critically needed services, such as physical and behavioral healthcare, recovery services, and benefits. Each year, many of them moved into transitional or permanent housing, taking major steps to break the cycle of homelessness.

The Hub of Hope grew out of the realization that many of the men and women on the streets needed a centralized location in the areas where they stayed. It needed to be a low-barrier, supportive environment

where they could be inspired to seek the help they needed, which could start right there onsite. Like everything we do at Project HOME, we worked with many tremendous partners to combine targeted effective services with a commitment to a spirit of relationship-building and community. Each season, we heard feedback from volunteers, participants, and staff that being at the Hub felt like a family.

Michelle Sheppard was a Hub guest in its first years, later a volunteer and now a staff member (and Project HOME resident). “The Hub gives people hope,” she says. “People can come get coffee, and they can laugh, joke, and be themselves. It lifts their spirits because people do care. When I was out there, that’s what the Hub did for me. It gave me strength to go on.”

With six years of proven success, it was time to take a risk and expand the program. Beginning in 2018, under the leadership of SEPTA and the City of Philadelphia, the Hub of Hope will expand, moving into a permanent location in the concourse to offer year-round services.

*(continued on page 2)*

## The Persistence of Love



Photo by Mike Furlong

Mike Saunders (sitting) with some of the “Friends of Mike” – Jane Hickman, Joan Hutton, and Sandy Marulanda

It was not unusual for Joan Hutton, a long-time staff member of Project HOME, to stop and talk to persons on the streets of Center City who appeared to be homeless. But Mike Saunders was special.

Joan first met Mike at his “spot” at 18th and Walnut, by the window of the Anthropologie store. She was immediately struck by his friendliness, his bright spirit and clear intelligence, his engaging conversation. They became friends, and she often visited with him, sometime with other friends or family. Mike had been there for years, the result of many rough times in his life, including incarceration, diabetes, severe anxiety, and the loss of a leg. Joan offered to get him help through Project HOME, for which Mike was grateful, but he continually insisted he needed “my own place.”

Joan wasn’t the only person taken in by Mike’s friendliness. She discovered there was a group of neighbors who had similarly befriended him and who were all supporting him in whatever ways they could.

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## Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

The beautiful story of Mike (page 1) bears witness to the “Power of We:” People come together in a spirit of compassion for struggling sisters or brothers, recognizing the core humanity we all share – and result is true miracles of love.

The “Power of We” can also happen at a societal and institutional level. As we report on page 1, this year we will be expanding our successful winter Hub of Hope program to year-round. This is only possible because our invaluable partners, SEPTA and the City of Philadelphia, have worked with us for many months to secure a permanent site and prepare the new expanded program. Equally valuable has been the cooperation of merchants at Suburban Station and the partnership of several key nonprofit partners who provide critically needed services.

We are heartened that public officials and many in the business community have recognized the value of a program that is truly effective in addressing one of most urgent social

crises. At a time when many are pushing for shrinking the role of the public sector, or when municipal governments are hampered by stingy budgets, we are grateful that public officials and civic leaders in Philadelphia choose to invest in upfront solutions that are not only humane, but ultimately are practical and cost-effective, benefiting the city as a whole. These kinds of partnerships have borne the fruit of much success in Project HOME and in the City of Philadelphia over the past nearly three decades.

We need the personal relationships, as so beautifully manifested in Mike’s story. We also need the commitment of our institutions and governmental systems, in partnership with nonprofits, grassroots programs, and service providers. We need the “Power of We” – as persons, as communities, and as a society. By coming together, we are strong and can accomplish anything.

*Sister Mary Scullion*

Photo by Dave Hering



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

## An Exercise in Grace *(continued from page 1)*

The model of the Hub will not change: our Outreach Coordination Center staff, working with many of our partner agencies, will coordinate onsite services, healthcare, case management, and recovery. We will connect persons who need housing stability with short-term respite beds. We will continue the use of peer case aides, persons who themselves have experiences of homelessness and behavioral health struggles, to provide support and function as role models.

“I’m really excited,” says Program Manager Angie Lewis. “Every year at the end of winter, we have felt that the work was unfinished and that many people were still in need of services. The year-round space will allow us to deepen the relationships we already have, while strengthening our partnerships and the comprehensive services we offer to fill in the gaps for people who really need services.”

The Hub of Hope is a daily exercise in grace where great needs are linked to great resources. The Hub lives in the hearts of so many people who contribute large and small amounts to make it work. We are grateful that we can expand this work, and invite many more people on the journey home.

*Along with the many partnering agencies, we will need committed, caring volunteers to continue the success of the newly expanded Hub. Volunteers play a critical role in fostering a spirit of hospitality, helping orient and support guests, offering refreshments and activities. If you are able to help, contact [hubofhope@projecthome.org](mailto:hubofhope@projecthome.org).*

*You can read the full report on the 2017 Report on the Hub of Hope at [projecthome.org/posts/2017/05/hub-hope-outcomes-report-2017](https://projecthome.org/posts/2017/05/hub-hope-outcomes-report-2017).*

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*“That’s what the Hub did for me. It gave me strength to go on.”*

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A larger space will now allow us to provide laundry, bathrooms and showers, lockers, and expanded hospitality services. The “Living Room” will be a safe and comfortable space for some of the most vulnerable individuals who come through our doors to rest and participate in recovery-oriented groups and activities. As in past years, we anticipate that supportive relationships will form, that can be transformative not only for the guests, but also for staff and volunteers.

We are grateful for the many wonderful agencies and organizations who have made the Hub a success in past - including Arch Street United Methodist Church - and will continue supporting its success in its new year-round setting: Bethesda Project; Behavioral Health Special Initiative; Center City District; The City of Philadelphia (Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services and the Office of Homeless Services); Einstein Healthcare Network; Jefferson Hospital; Jon Bon Jovi Soul Foundation; the Journey of Hope Project; Metro Market; the Outreach Coordination Center and Outreach teams including Hall Mercer, Horizon House, Mental Health Partnerships, ODAAT, SELF Inc., and Project HOME; Pennsylvania Recovery Organization/Achieving Community Together (PRO-ACT); Prevention Point Philadelphia; Project HOME Interns and Volunteers; Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC); Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA); Stephanie Sena and the Student-Run Emergency Housing Unit of Philadelphia; Project HOME’s Stephen Klein Wellness Center; Valley Youth House; and key funders Bank of America; Leigh and John Middleton; Aileen and Brian Roberts; and A. Morris Williams, Jr.

## The Persistence of Love (continued from page 1)

Jane Hickman, who lived in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood at that time, also stopped to talk with him often, and they became friends. Whenever he saw her on the streets, she recalls, he would call out a “very endearing” greeting. “He was a sweet guy, and he really cared about our friendship.” John Adams, another neighbor who befriended him, spoke of Mike as “a very kind and loving person.”

At one point, Mike’s various friends began to note his absence, as did the nearby merchants. Weeks passed, and nobody knew what happened to him. Then, in early January 2016, Joan received a call from Mike. He told her that on Christmas day he had been hit by a bus, suffering a concussion and serious injuries, requiring a pin in his leg. He doesn’t even remember what happened, only that he woke up in a hospital bed. He would soon be discharged from rehab.

Now in a wheelchair and physically weakened, Mike’s needs were more pressing. He had a brief and difficult stay in a shelter. Project HOME’s Outreach staff as well as staff from our Stephen Klein Wellness Center worked with him and were able to secure him a temporary room at our St. Elizabeth’s Residence. We put him on a waiting list for his own apartment at our Kate’s Place residence – a prospect he called “his dream.” But the next 18 months were a roller coaster of ever-more complicated medical issues, including stints at hospitals and rehabs.

During this time, his various friends came together to form a “Friends of Mike” group, committed to helping him achieve his dream. “He had a hard life,” Jane Hickman says, “and we all felt he deserved a second chance.” They divvied up tasks – legal support, filling out paperwork, visiting him in the hospital and rehab centers, advocating for him in the hospital, paying his rent. (He secured an apartment at Kate’s Place, but the health needs delayed his moving in.) They purchased a wheelchair for him and paid his cell phone bill so he could keep in touch.

They also learned the difficulty of navigating support systems – the long hours of waiting, the endless paperwork and labyrinthine bureaucracies, but mostly the almost unimaginable obstacles a person must overcome to get much needed healthcare, housing, or other services. As determined and positive as Mike was, his complicated needs and the inhospitality and stinginess of social systems made it painfully clear how hard it was to be poor in America.

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*“It would be easy to say that Mike’s story ended sadly.  
Yet it is also a story that shines through with beauty.”*

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This past May, Mike finally achieved what he had long sought: He moved into his own apartment at Kate’s Place – just a couple blocks from his usual spot on the streets. After months of travail and seemingly endless roadblocks, he had arrived home. Even though his health was still frail, he wanted to get involved, to be active in the Project HOME community. During our voter registration drive during the recent election, Mike was willing to make phone calls. He was eager to support other Kate’s Place residents – or do whatever he could to help.

Qasim Moore, who was Program Manager of Kate’s Place at the time, says that even despite his frail health, Mike always had a warm greeting for other residents. “He lit up the room wherever he was.” He was home.

Less than a month later, the many health problems took their ultimate toll. Mike passed away peacefully in the night – on his own bed, in his own room.

At his funeral, a large circle of family and his many friends from his time on the streets, as well as Project HOME staff, came together to grieve but also to celebrate this remarkable person and the love he elicited from such diverse people. Mike’s mother, Dorothy Saunders, met many of her son’s friends and supporters. “They were so wonderful to my child – there are no words to express how much they did for him.”

It would be easy to say that Mike’s story ended sadly, yet it is also a story that shines through with beauty. A man whose life was marked by enormous adversity nonetheless exuded love and care. A group of people befriended a stranger in need and journeyed deeper into the heart of compassion.

Mike persisted through his many trials. The friends of Mike persisted through many challenges in getting him the help he needed. Through all the pain, love persisted.

And it still does. That’s why we tell this story.

*We want to recognize and thank the many amazing people who played such a loving and supportive role in Mike Saunders’ life: Joan Hutton; John Adams; Fred Mann; Jane Hickman and Mike Furlong; Sandy Marulanda and Joe Aversa; and any others we didn’t mention here. We thank you for your compassion and commitment.*

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# HOME Happenings

◆ **As we are going to press**, residents are settling in to their new homes at Ruth Williams House, 2415 N. Broad Street (see the article about this new residence in the last edition of *News from HOME*). The brand-new building with 88 affordable apartments will soon be full, and residents will have access to opportunities for employment, education, healthcare, and much more. We welcome these newest members of the Project HOME community. Meanwhile, we are moving ahead on our next residential development, a 30-unit LGBTQ-friendly residence for young adults who have aged out of foster care and/or are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We look forward to breaking ground on December 6. This project is the result of the hard work and advocacy of many members of our community and civic leaders, and a partnership with the City of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Housing Authority. More details to come!



Photo by Harvey Finkle

Some of the first residents sign leases for their new apartments at Ruth Williams House on September 29.



Photo by Joy Gorodetzer

Monica McCurdy, our Vice President of Healthcare Services

◆ **Our Vice-President** of Healthcare Services, Monica McCurdy, was recently honored by the Pennsylvania Health Access Network (PHAN) with its 2017 Patients First Award. PHAN's mission is to work toward making our healthcare system more affordable, equitable, and accessible for all, with a particular emphasis on empowering health consumers to raise their voices. They cited Monica's

tremendous role in building up our Stephen Klein Wellness Center (SKWC) as a "patient-centered health home" for some of the most vulnerable citizens in the Commonwealth. Congratulations to Monica and to all the committed staff and community stakeholders who work every day to make the SKWC a success.

◆ **Project HOME is continuing** to respond to the opioid crisis in our city, including vigorous efforts to prevent opioid-related deaths. We invited Prevention Point Philadelphia to conduct trainings for our staff and residents, focusing on understand overdoses and learning to properly administer Narcan (naloxone nasal spray, an opiate overdose-reversal drug) in the event of a suspected opiate overdose. These trainings were part of broader efforts to provide all members of the Project HOME community the necessary training and equipment to combat opiate overdoses and save lives.

◆ **We have long known** how talented our young people are, but recently the broader public got a taste. The artists of Inner Power Records, which was founded by students at our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCLT), performed at the July 4th "Welcome America!" event on the Parkway in Center City. Also, NBC10 host Vai Sikahema interviewed Inner Power co-founder and artist Mickel Lewis (KingKelz) and HLCCLT staff member Paul Dunnville about the mission and value of Inner Power Records. To see that interview, go to [bit.ly/InnerPower\\_NBC](http://bit.ly/InnerPower_NBC).

◆ **For the past three years**, our HOME Spun Resale Boutique has been the recipient of generous donations of fine men's clothes from Boyds Philadelphia. Once again this year, we received a huge donation of hundreds of high-quality suits, sports coats, and shirts – their biggest donation ever. These fine items began selling immediately at great prices (and had many members of our community looking very sharp!). These donations greatly increase our sales, so the Boutique can fulfill its mission of providing employment for our residents. We thank Boyds and all of our great donors. For more information on HOME Spun, go to [projecthome.org/homespun](http://projecthome.org/homespun).

◆ **This past September** the Project HOME community lost a caring leader and highly respected friend, Gerard "Gerry" Grandzol, who was tragically killed during a robbery attempt outside his home. Gerry was an active member of Project HOME's Young Leaders Committee and contributed so much to our organization. We will always remember his amazing spirit, dedication, and the kind generosity he shared with our community. Our hearts and prayers go out to Grandzol family during this difficult time.



Gerard "Gerry" Grandzol

# I Am Project HOME

## EUNID MANN

Photo by Michael Gainer



It takes just a few minutes talking with Eunid Mann to feel how passionate she is about her job at Project HOME. She brings her full self and her life experience to her work every day.

Eunid went through her own journey of many years of struggle with homelessness, addiction, and mental illness, including a roller coaster of frequent recovery followed by relapse. She first came to Project HOME in 2000: she and her two children were

among the first residents in Project HOME's Rowan Homes. But, still in the clutches of guilt and shame, and still unwilling to acknowledge mental health issues, she was evicted (though she still affirms the kindness and support of staff there). "I hit bottom," she says, recalling those tough times. "I felt rage and pain that had never been addressed."

Eventually Eunid's life stabilized, and she was able to pick up the thread of her time at Penn State, where she had pursued psychology studies with the hope of becoming a counsellor. "I've always valued helping others – it's a core part of who I am." But, as she put it, she had to "walk this walk myself for a long time." Eunid became a Certified Peer Specialist (CPS), and was hired as a case aide at

Project HOME. (A CPS is a person who acknowledges a personal history of behavioral health challenges, and who receives training to support others in their recovery process).

Her gifts were soon evident, and she was offered a position as part of our Personal Recovery Services (PRS) team. In supporting and empowering many of our residents, Eunid combines the skills she has learned with the genuine empathy that comes out of her experience. She especially wants to equip residents with mental health challenges to develop their own natural coping skills and not depend entirely on systems for support. (She notes, "The systems close at 5 o'clock.")

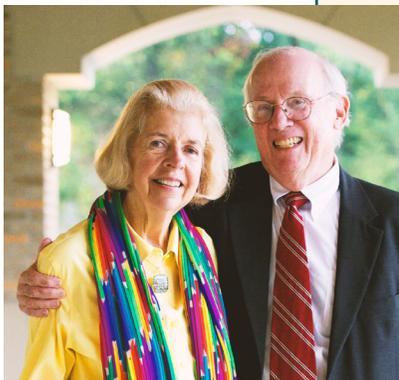
Chris Hausman, the PRS Program Manager, describes Eunid as "a driving force not only of the PRS team but of Project HOME as a whole. She beautifies the principles and values of recovery so that everyone around her is given the choice and freedom to be the best that they can be. She leads by example and is a shining beacon of hope and resilience for staff and residents alike."

Eunid is grateful for the spirit of community and genuine care she finds at Project HOME. "I thought my dream of a career of helping others was over because of my past mistakes." But recently her daughter assured her: "Mom, that's your calling."

Eunid's passion is a gift to everyone she serves, and to the entire Project HOME community. We are so glad she is able to follow her calling with us.

## Spirit of Generosity RUTH WILLIAMS

Project HOME's newest residence is named, in part, for Ruth Whitmore Williams. Ruth Williams House has 88 units of affordable housing for formerly homeless adults and youth. Like all permanent supportive housing at Project HOME, Ruth Williams House will provide access to healthcare, job training, and education to help everyone reach their fullest potential.



This was extremely important to Ruth, an educator and philanthropist who lived up to her life-long motto, "Love, Teach, and Share." She and her husband, Morris, were early supporters of this new project, and she was able to attend its groundbreaking ceremony shortly before she passed away. At the ceremony Morris shared, "You should know that Ruth and I have supported Project HOME from afar for years, but we were especially impressed by your vision to leverage public and private dollars toward such a bold goal: for Philadelphia to be the first city to end chronic street homelessness."

Born in Summit, N.J., Ruth lived there until entering the College of Wooster, in 1958. A year later, she met Morris on a summer job in Vermont. They were married nearly 55 years.

Starting in 1974 and continuing for almost 30 years, Ruth taught preschool-aged children at the Gateway School and was also its director. After retiring in the early 2000s from Gateway, Ruth stayed involved in education by volunteering at the Thomas M. Peirce Elementary School in North Philadelphia. She helped reopen and staff the school's then-closed library. "That was typical of her love of children and education, and her desire to help," Morris said.

Together, Ruth and Morris supported many organizations and causes throughout the Philadelphia region, including the Salvation Army, the Free Library of Philadelphia, CARE, and the Children's Literacy Initiative. Ruth served as president of the Pine Tree Foundation, which enhances educational opportunities for children. She also was an elder of the Gladwyne Presbyterian Church and a Trustee at the College of Wooster.

Though we are saddened that Ruth will not see this new residence opened, her leadership and generosity will be reflected in the life of every individual who finds strength, safety, and encouragement within its walls. May we all share our gratitude by living out her motto to "Love, Teach, and Share" just as she shared and supported ours, "None of us are home until all of us are home."



1515 Fairmount Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19130

### Our Mission

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

### Our Residences

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

### Support Services & Programs

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

### Businesses

- HOME Spun Resale Boutique, 215-232-6322
- HOME Made Products, 215-232-7272, ext. 3023

### Administration

215-232-7272

### Homeless Outreach Hotline

215-232-1984

### Human Resources Hotline

215-232-7219 ext. 5200

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



Photo by Harvey Finkle

**"The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."**

MAYA ANGELOU

Jasmin opens the door to her new apartment at Ruth Williams House, Project HOME's newest residence which opened earlier this fall.

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



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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.