

News FROM HOME



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

We Are All Transformed



Photo by Margie Winters

Students Sianny Herbert and Destiny Riddick help to beautify the St. Elizabeth's community as part of their summer service experience at Project HOME.

Listening to a resident's story of life on the streets and overcoming addiction. Playing with a child from North Philly at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs summer camp. Assisting with the shower program at the Stephen Klein Wellness Center. Hosting a bingo game for residents at 1515 Fairmount and Kate's Place.

These were just some of the experiences of a special group of area high school students who dedicated two weeks of their summer to Project HOME by

participating in our Service Learning Program. Launched a little over a year ago, Project HOME's Service Learning Program encourages school communities to embrace our mission by partnering with us to create opportunities for education on homelessness and poverty through an ongoing

commitment to relationships with our residents and participants.

Our Service Learning Program started as the vision of Joan McConnon, co-founder and Associate Executive Director/CFO of Project HOME. Recalling the transformative impact of her own experiences volunteering as a high school and college student, Joan was convinced that such a program stems directly from a key part of our mission, our commitment "to create a spirit of community among persons from all walks of life, all of whom have a role to play in making this a more just and compassionate society." Joan explains, "The program strives to build lasting relationships between members of the Project HOME community and members of our partner school communities. Through learning and service we are all transformed."

Colleen McDermott, a student at Bishop McDevitt High School, came to new understandings in volunteering with our street outreach teams while serving meals at St. Columba. "I will forever look at people who experience homelessness differently. They are not all

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Love Responds to Love



Photo by Michael Gainer

Suzanne and Brooke, along with Buddy, benefited from the respite and were able to move into their own apartment.

It might have appeared as an "out-of-sight-out-of-mind" strategy to hide the City's dark side during the Democratic National Convention. But in fact, when the City asked Project HOME to open a special, short-term "respite" for people who were homeless on the streets of Center City, it was part of a strategic initiative designed to promote real solutions.

For three weeks, starting before and continuing after the Convention (and during the worst of the summer heat wave), almost thirty guests made a temporary home in the basement of our 1515 Fairmount Avenue residence. Their presence was part of intensified outreach to persons experiencing chronic homelessness, providing both a place to stay and access to housing and services so they could take concrete steps toward truly changing their lives (see page 4 for more details on the "100-Day Street Homelessness Challenge"). City officials, including Mayor Jim Kenney, were clear in their public statements: We were not "hiding" our homeless problem but doubling our efforts to bring people home.

"It was a God-given opportunity for a lot of people," said Carmen Green from Project HOME's Outreach Coordination Center, a core

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Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

It's hard to believe it's been just over a year since the remarkable visit of Pope Francis to Philadelphia. The experience was certainly one of spiritual uplift and hope for millions of people, but it also had special meaning for us at Project HOME. With the support of so many of you, we spearheaded the Mercy and Justice campaign, to give concrete expression to the Pope's global challenge that we reach out to those on the margins in compassion and justice. Thanks to you, we raised over \$1.4 million for the Francis Fund to address the concrete needs of those struggling in the Philadelphia region and Camden; and generated over 20,000 messages to Congress to end hunger and homelessness in our nation.

Those efforts culminated in the Pope's personal visit to the Knotted Grotto, the public art installation in which over 150,000 people had written their "knots" – their struggles, prayers, and hopes. In blessing the knots, Pope Francis affirmed that this public sharing of our struggles and yearnings are a taproot of real power for transformation.

The concrete artifacts of that remarkable moment live on. The original wooden structure of the Knotted Grotto now has a permanent home in the "Garden of Peace" courtyard outside our Francis House of Peace residence. Also on display there is one of the woven stoles of knots, handcrafted using knots made by persons in prisons, shelters, and recovery houses, a duplicate of the same one given to Pope Francis when we greeted him. And the 150,000 cloth knots that were attached to the Grotto

will be included in the insulation of our next residence, currently under construction at 2415 N. Broad Street.

More importantly, other tangible fruit was borne of the papal visit. The groups supported by the Francis Fund have been able to expand urgently needed services. Dawn's Place, a refuge for women escaping trafficking, doubled its residential space. Mother of Mercy House in Kensington has renovated a new property to provide services to some of the city's poorest people. Cathedral Kitchen in Camden has made progress toward proving expanded workforce development and job training programs.

We see the sprouting of seeds of mercy and justice in our community. We are grateful for renewed energy and commitment from our local leaders including the 100-Day Challenge (see page 4) and the respite we were able to host (see front page). More schools are seeking opportunities for education and service experiences. More civic leaders are acknowledging the need for community investment and seeking ways to be part of the solution. At Project HOME, we are encouraged by new partners in our planned development of additional residences in the coming years.

The work of mercy and justice is ongoing. It is our work. When we are gifted by experiences of hope – such as Pope Francis's visit last year – our task is to turn that hope into reality. We have come far together on the journey home – and we continue on.

A. Mary Scullion



Photo by Jeremy Cowart

Sister Mary Scullion, Co-founder and Executive Director of Project HOME, with Pope Francis at the Knotted Grotto.

We Are All Transformed (continued from page 1)

the same. They have complicated stories and something that brought them here.”

“I have become more aware of my duty as a human being,” reflected Erin McLaverty from Little Flower High School, “to support, love and care for everyone regardless of whether they have a home or not. I noticed that I was much more compassionate than I had thought.”

“The vast majority of students who come to Project HOME find in themselves compassionate hearts and willing spirits to reach out and serve others.”

“Service experiences invite students to enter worlds that they might not normally enter,” says Margie Winters, who coordinates the Service Learning Program. “Through education and encounters with persons experiencing homelessness and poverty, students break through the barriers of stereotype and stigma and recognize the commonalities in our stories.”

In addition to the summer program, during last academic year fifteen different area schools engaged with Project HOME in the Service Learning Program, by providing education programs at

their schools or by coming to our sites for education, reflection, and volunteering. Margie Winters estimates that about 1,800 students were impacted by the program.

And she believes those numbers translate into real power in the world: “We truly believe that the vast majority of students who come to Project HOME find in themselves compassionate hearts and willing spirits to reach out and serve others and be young men and women who make a difference in our world.”

Project HOME's Service Learning Program is creating opportunities and planting seeds of hope – seeds that we believe will grow and sprout into a new generation of citizens and leaders who are committed to ending homelessness and poverty in our community and beyond.

If your school wants to create a service learning partnership with Project HOME, contact Margie Winters at margiewinters@projecthome.org.

This summer's Service Learning Program was funded in part by the Maguire Foundation, whose Maguire Scholars program provides financial assistance to talented students from low-income communities so they can succeed in college.

Love Responds to Love (continued from page 1)

staff person at the respite. The folks who came in, she said, had deep struggles, high barriers, and many negative experiences with shelters and programs. The respite provided time for relationships and trust-building, with a stress on truly listening to each resident articulate what she or he wanted and needed.

Resistance to services turned into motivation. Almost every one of the residents – a diverse group ranging from age 25 to almost 80 – were able to take the next steps to treatment and recovery, safe havens, and permanent housing.

Suzanne and Brooke were among the respite guests – along with their dog, Buddy, a rescue that they acquired during their time on the streets. Their efforts to get out of homelessness were frustrated by the shelters' prohibitions against pets, as well as limited spaces available for couples – and they were not about to be separated. With the Convention looming and temperatures soaring, Sister Mary Scullion personally approached them, along with our amazing volunteer Mike Kinslow, with an invitation to the newly opening respite – and they gladly accepted.

“Everyone was grateful, and when gratitude is present, good things can happen.”

for the same purpose, getting back on their feet. Everyone was grateful, and when gratitude is present, good things can happen.”

“The respite really opened doors for a lot of people who weren't getting the services they needed,” said Suzanne.

Several formerly homeless residents of Project HOME offered their time and energy and played a vital role. Michael Oliveri, who has lived at 1515 Fairmount for three years, jumped at the chance to help. He was down in the basement with the respite guests almost every day, all day, mainly just socializing, checking in, befriending folks and supporting them in many small ways. He was “astounded by the miracles that were happening there.” On the edge of tears, he speaks of one woman from the streets who was down on her luck, partly paralyzed by a recent stroke. When she was eventually placed at our Women of Change safe haven, she told him, just before leaving, “Michael, if any more good things happen to me, I think I am going to burst.”

“I watched so many people come in broken, without any hope,” he says. “When they came in to a setting that was clean, air-conditioned, with comfortable beds, shower, television, and three excellent meals a day, it was beyond their wildest expectations.”

“We saw the vision statement on the building many times,” Brooke said, referring to Project HOME's motto, “None of us are home until all of us are home.” “Now being here, we really understand it.”

Outreach staff will continue to work with many of the respite guests until all of them are fully established in housing. And we will take the lessons we learned during those three remarkable weeks forward as we continue to make homelessness a thing of the past.

Kanika Stewart from the Outreach staff affirmed the amazing impact of the respite – due in part, she said, to the added “rapid re-housing” resources that the City made available, and also to the family atmosphere. “I would love to see this kind of respite during the winter, which allows us to be more personable, more hands-on, and more effective.”

Michael Oliveri knows what ultimately made the respite a success: When you treat people with dignity and respect, they respond. “Love speaks to love all the time – that's the secret.”



Photo by Jonathan Kolbe

Stand Firm

By Vernon Jordan III

Vernon Jordan III is a graduate of Project HOME's College Access Program. He has gone on to graduate from Muhlenberg College and is currently pursuing a Masters in Screenwriting at Brooklyn College. He has had his films screened at film festivals. He was the featured speaker at this year's graduation ceremony for the 2016 CAP program. Here is an edited version of his remarks.

I started film at Dobbins High School my freshman year. When I began taking classes here at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs – classes on music, film, and learning how to fix computers – it was an exercise in getting my hands dirty. My undergrad experience, where I self-designed a major called Black Voice & Cultural Studies, continued that process. It situated me in and of the world. I better understood how the world functions, how we got to this moment, and my place in it all. I dug deeper into myself, critically studying the parts that I did not like, the parts that needed healing or to be gone completely, and in the end of my undergrad moment, I was able to see myself more clearly, and thus see the world more clearly.

My sophomore year a professor asked me if I identified as a feminist. I said, sure, I think so. But every moment thereafter I had to question my urge to speak over a woman when she was talking; I had to question the virtual right-of-passage into boyhood that tells young men to turn around when she walks by so you can get a good look; I had to question why in every movie trailer the skinny white girl floats out of her robe, naked. I had to question, and I had to let go. It starts with you, your body, first and foremost.

That's my piece of advice: stand true in your body. I stand true in my Blackness, my Queerness, my educated-as-heck-ness, my artistry. Places like Honickman, like Muhlenberg College, pushed me, challenged me – and elevated who I said I was, who I demanded I was.

I have sat in your seats, I have survived a parent with alcohol addiction, I wove through the foster care system, I have fallen in and made a profound love, I have felt stupid, and have been stupid, I have shrunk myself in the face of others, I have compared myself to others on the same path, I have suffered the loss of a grandmother this year, I am harboring some serious separation anxiety from my friends, depression. I have done so much – I know where you are. I know the world wants to tear you down, but you are a tree, baby. So Stand. Firm. Strong. And Rooted. You are here and alive, so live. Breathe.

You can see some of Vernon's work at <https://vimeo.com/vernonjordaniiii>. You can follow him on Twitter: @AfroJediii.

HOME Happenings

◆ **Earlier this summer** the City of Philadelphia embarked on a “100-Day Street Homelessness Challenge.” Project HOME is one of many community groups participating in this special initiative. Building on the City’s success in achieving a “virtual end” to veterans’ homelessness, the Challenge is focusing on specific subpopulations of those living on the street – chronic, newly homeless, and youth/young adult. Teams are formed around each of these subpopulations, with the mandate of implementing bold new approaches that can enhance current efforts. For more information on the Challenge, go to www.phillysharedstreets.org/know-homelessness.

◆ **We have been thrilled** at the success of our Stephen Klein Wellness Center (SKWC), almost two years old, in providing high-quality holistic healthcare as a key component in revitalizing one of Philadelphia’s most economically struggling neighborhoods. We are excited at the Center’s latest offering: an on-site pharmacy,

which began serving patients this summer. Supported by a grant from the AmerisourceBergen Foundation and over-the-counter donations from Good Neighbor Pharmacy, the pharmacy is a vital component of comprehensive health services for our community.

Photo by Jeanelle Lawson



Our 2016 Project HOME Holiday Cards



It’s almost that time – so consider purchasing some of our Holiday Cards featuring beautiful original art created by Project HOME artists. These 4”x 6” cards come with a variety of holiday-themed messages (religious and non-religious) and come in a pack of 10 cards. 100% of the sales supports our Social Enterprise program.

Starting November 1, you can order cards from our online store www.projecthome.org/store or at the HOME Spun Boutique, 1523 Fairmount Avenue. Also, check out the other great HOME Made products for the holidays – including the most popular “Sister Mary’s Sinfully Delicious Cranberry Sauce.”

◆ **As we celebrate** the success of the SKWC, we mark the passing of our long-time friend and advocate, Alice Guarino. A trained nurse, Alice was instrumental in the development of the Wellness Center. Alice was committed to making sure that everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, had access to quality health care, and her legacy lives on in each adult and child that finds healing there.

◆ **Seven artists from** Project HOME joined the elite company of Rembrandt, Monet, and Picasso by having their work on display at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A special exhibit was organized through the program “Bridges: Accessible Programs Builds Partnerships” and is on display through November. Meanwhile, our Arts Program has been enriched by a continuing partnership with the Barnes Foundation, with education programs, tours, and emerging plans for an exhibit there. We are grateful for these collaborations with two of Philadelphia’s foremost arts institutions.

◆ **Speaking of our artists**, “Artists for All Seasons” is a collection of artwork created by Project HOME residents and



Art Program participants, which powerfully displays the role of art and creativity in their personal journeys. This special event, supported by Jay and Bonnie Eisner, is hosted by Drexel University and the Young Leaders

Committee of Project HOME. The exhibition runs from October 26 through November 9. An opening reception will be held at Drexel’s URBN Center, 3501 Market Street, on Wednesday, October 26, 6:00 to 8:00 pm. For more information contact Stephanie Lin at slin@projecthome.org.

◆ **Join our Executive Director** Sister Mary Scullion when she addresses the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church Community Forum on Tuesday, October 25 at 7:30 pm. She will talk on “Ending Homelessness in Philadelphia: Be Part of the Solution.” For more information, see www.projecthome.org/BrynMawrTalk



Photo by Michael Gainer

For the twenty-second straight year, Project HOME staff collaborated with members of the North Philadelphia St. Elizabeth’s neighborhood to put on Annual Day, a celebration of community, family, and friends. As always, hundreds of neighbors came out for great food and festivities, including a rousing performance by our award-winning North Philly Footstompers Drill Team.

I Am Project HOME

PAUL DUNNAVILLE

Music has always been a core part of Paul Dunnville's life. So has a deep passion to help people, especially youth. So when he was called about an opening at Project HOME's Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL) as a part-time music instructor, he couldn't say no.

For years, Paul had been splitting his time between his music production company and different nonprofit stints working with troubled youth or persons with behavioral health issues. The opportunity to work with Project HOME's young people allowed his gifts to flourish.

With a child on the way, he needed full-time work, and his colleagues at the HLCCTL saw his strong work ethic and commitment to the Project HOME mission. He was offered full-time work, adding on responsibilities as a job coach in the Adult Learning and Workforce Development Program. "The timing was perfect," Paul says.

Paul currently splits his responsibility between working to provide adults with employment opportunities through Adult Learning and Workforce Development and providing enrichment to youth and adults through the Music Production class. He takes special pride in his role with Inner Power, a record label created by some of the talented students at the HLCCTL that became a vehicle for tremendous musical creativity.

Giovanda Richardson, manager of the Teen Program at the HLCCTL, sees Paul as more than just an instructor – he's a life coach. "Paul constantly pushes his students to reach their personal and artistic best." His colleague



Photo by Sarah Mueller

Erich Smith says, "Paul's energy and dedication has led to life-changing employment and careers for many."

Paul loves the relationships he forms in his work, particularly with the young people. "It's great to see them develop, especially when you know where they've come from. You see them start in very raw, tough places and grow in so many ways." Many of the young people, he notes, come from one-parent families and are in need of mentors and father figures. Working with these young people is humbling and meaningful to Paul as he raises his own two- and four-year-old children.

"I am passionate about helping people, giving people a hand," Paul says. "The Project HOME mission lines up with things I want to do personally in the community."

We are grateful that we can provide Paul with opportunities to express his passion and use his gifts.

Spirit of Generosity

GENE EPSTEIN



Just before Christmas in the late 1980's, Gene Epstein and his wife, Marlene, dressed up as Santa Claus and, together with their son and daughter, packed up a truck-full of boots, socks, mittens, and coats, went to Center City, and passed them out to individuals they met who were living on the streets. When they were finished, they had a few left over and asked someone if they knew of an organization that might need them. They were directed to Project HOME and the rest is history.

Seldom does a week go by that Gene doesn't reach out to Sister Mary Scullion or folks in Project HOME's Development Department with articles, ideas, and encouragement on how to raise more resources and engage more people in doing what he does every single day – helping people.

"He is a tireless leader with a huge heart," said Sister Mary. "I remember back in the early days when he reached out to us and learned that we were buying our Hope Haven residence. He wanted to help with the down-payment on the property, but he also wanted to educate others about homelessness and how they could help. He wrote to his neighbors and friends and asked them to get involved. Though he could have made a donation outright, he shared that it was important to him to make it a community effort."

"I want people to see that there's a community that cares about people and is willing to get together and help support Project HOME," shared Gene. He learned about helping others from a young age. "My mother and father helped people all the time. My father died when I was 11, and it was only after his death that we learned he had been quietly going around and helping support other families in the neighborhood. My grandparents owned a candy store and, despite being Jewish in a largely non-Jewish neighborhood, were the biggest donors to all the churches in the area."

Through the Gene and Marlene Epstein Humanitarian Fund, Gene and Marlene continue to inspire others to provide resources to end homelessness in Philadelphia and to countless other causes around the country and the world. From beginning a program to gather Muslim, Christian, and Jewish high school students in Israel to learn about each other's faiths and find common ground to working with Congress to pass legislation making it profitable for companies to hire unemployed workers, Gene puts his all into making a difference.

He continues the work to end homelessness that he began so long ago. He has provided matching gifts on several occasions to leverage donations to Project HOME's Giving Tuesday campaigns and for new donors making a first-time gift. He brings individuals on tours of Project HOME sites and works to share our vision and mission.

Every correspondence he sends ends with, "We should ask ourselves daily, 'What can we do to make someone's life better today?'" Gene not only asks the questions, he helps find solutions. Project HOME is deeply grateful for his passion, leadership, creativity, and commitment.



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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
- 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
- Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs
- Outreach Coordination Center
- Personal Recovery Services
- Stephen Klein Wellness Center
- 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

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



Photo by Harvey Finkle

"The world is not made of atoms. It is made of stories."

MURIEL RUKEYSER

Project HOME resident David Brown shares his personal journey from homelessness to self-sufficiency at a Project HOME-sponsored event, "Stories From the Margins," which was held at the Free Library Parkway Branch during the week of the Democratic National Convention.

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.

www.projecthome.org



Union Bug