

# News FROM HOME



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

## A House of Peace



Photo by Harvey Finkle

Mark Jones is one of the people who have made a home in Project HOME's newest residence.

**W**hen Mark Jones was first shown what would be his new apartment at Francis House of Peace, he fell in love with it right away. "It was like heaven," he says.

A 59-year-old Philly native and veteran, Mark had been homeless on and off for more years than he can remember, struggling with addiction and going in and out of periods of recovery. As he gradually gained sobriety and stability, he spent three years on a waiting list for housing. Today, his new home provides him the

positive environment he needs as he maintains his recovery and continues to get his life together, to rebuild family relationships, and to make progress toward his goal of employment.

This beautiful new structure rising up nine stories in the heart of Chinatown has provided Mark with new hope – and it is a sign of hope for our entire city.

Francis House of Peace (named in Chinese *Ping An*, "House of Peace") at 810 Arch Street is Project HOME's newest residential development. Its doors officially opened earlier this spring, with 94 efficiency apartments. It was made possible through a partnership with Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, and the building was designed with a special eye toward reflecting the unique character of the neighborhood. Many of the residents have histories of homelessness; some have low incomes and need the affordable housing. Many are seniors from the Chinatown community. Twelve residents are young adults, participating in Project HOME's growing specialized program to support young adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

This residence is the fourth project of the Middleton Partnership, created with a transformational leadership gift from Leigh and John Middleton, that supports Project HOME's strategic plan to end and prevent chronic street homelessness in Philadelphia by leveraging the support of both public and private funders. Other key partners in the project include the

*(continued on page 3)*

## Cinematic Reflections

**I**t's a few minutes before six o'clock on a Friday evening. Folks are making their way into the community room at 1515 Fairmount Avenue. Some are residents of Project HOME. Some are staff members, as well as various friends and visitors. They greet each other and chat; some make their way to the snacks table for popcorn, pretzels, or soda.

It's Movie Night at 1515. For the next couple of hours, the room will be transformed into a temporary cinema. Tonight's feature is *42*, the stirring biopic of Jackie Robinson and his struggle to break baseball's color line. It will be broadcast via a Game Boy video player carefully set up and programmed by Project HOME resident Mike Kozisky. It's almost time to start, and guests are urged to find a seat. Dr. Deborah Luepnitz, a long-time friend and volunteer of Project HOME (who was profiled in the Fall 2015 edition of this newsletter), welcomes people. She also introduces a half dozen psychotherapists in the audience who



Photo by Rachel Lewis

Dr. Deborah Luepnitz and Michael Kozisky at a Movie Night earlier this year which featured a showing of *Patch Adams*.

work in the community — some who haven't missed a Movie Night yet.

A couple of hours later (including time for a pizza break), the lights are back on, and Dr. L (as she is

*(continued on page 2)*

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## Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

One of the great experiences in being part of the Project HOME community is hearing the stories of many of our residents. While each person's experience is unique, there are often common threads: the struggles with enormous obstacles such as poverty, disability, addiction, family breakdowns or other crises; but also the journey home.

At a recent gathering of many of our supporters – including elected officials, generous donors, persons who have experienced homelessness and social marginalization, and so many others – one of our residents shared his story. It was truly stirring, to hear how he weathered huge storms, moving from despair to hope. Coming into a new Project HOME residence, he became motivated to helping others who faced similar challenges. He concluded with these powerful words: “Now I feel strong and I feel that I can overcome anything that comes my way.”

Many of our residents, in recounting their journey, speak of a key turning point in their lives. That usually is a special person – a friend, a teacher, an outreach worker, a case worker, sometimes even a stranger. It is someone who truly believed in them, who encouraged them to believe in themselves, who showed them dignity and trust. It is someone who went the extra mile to provide support and opportunities.

Such stories remind us all of the importance of those “graced relationships” in our lives: the ones that offer us unexpected hope, that nurture in us seeds of empowerment, that make possible real transformation even in difficult and despairing circumstances. Sometimes we have been recipients of those relationships, and we have experienced the power and hope that come from them. But we are also capable of being transformative persons in the lives of others. We may not think we have much to offer, but the simple act of believing in another person, of affirming their dignity and potential, of seeing their beauty especially when society has denied it, is powerful. So much of the success in Project HOME starts with the simplest human acts of loving and affirming relationships which we offer each other.

When we hear the stories of our residents, we are given a great gift. We learn how we can all grow stronger through our graced relationships with one another. We continue to work to build a community of inclusion, hope, and belief in the infinite potential within each of us.

*A. Mary Scullion*



Photo by Dave Hering

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

## Cinematic Reflections (continued from page 1)

known by Project HOME folks) leads the crowd in a discussion on what they just saw. One resident remarks on how Robinson's story evokes the nonviolence of Dr. King. Another resident emotionally describes why he had to step out of the room during the scenes of the most explicit racist attacks on Robinson: “It reminds me of being 13 years old and people calling me a faggot while I walked down the street.” But he also notes how, like in

Robinson's story, we've come a long way: he's encouraged when he sees gay couples holding hands in public.

Movie Night is Mike Kozisky's special project, and since its inception a year ago, it has taken off. An

avid movie buff, Mike has been with Project HOME since 1997, currently living in our Connelly House residence.

For several years, Mike's life at Project HOME was fairly static, and while being in a safe living situation, he was not making much personal progress. Not long ago, he opted for the new Personal Recovery Services program (which was profiled in our last newsletter – [www.bit.ly/GrowingStronger](http://www.bit.ly/GrowingStronger)). He's grateful for the support that has allowed him to move forward in various fronts in his life, including letting out the creative juices that led to Movie Night.

The idea for Movie Night was hatched by Mike, along with fellow Connelly House resident Dionne Stallworth and Dr. L, both of whom shared his love of movies. Together they developed a plan for an initial gathering of residents and others to watch and discuss a movie. They chose *Row Your Boat*, a little-known film starring Project HOME supporter Jon Bon Jovi. Its topic –

homelessness. Mike, Dionne, and Dr. L thought it would be provocative to see how residents responded.

“It turned out great,” Mike remembers. As they had hoped, residents made connections to their stories and struggles. And so began a monthly gathering, which grew bigger with each screening. Over the past year, Movie Night attendees have watched and discussed such films as *Patch Adams*, *Where the Heart Is*, *The Help*, and others. Mike and his crew select films that they believe are inspirational and empowering. “Some of these films make me teary,” he says. As the event has grown, he also solicits ideas from other residents. Their choices are films that portray “something people can relate to, something that hits home.”

One goal of Movie Night, according to Mike, is to build community. “I want people to come together and get more involved, and also have ways to relate to each other.” He believes that people come for the discussion as much as for the films.

“It's great to see Mike flourishing,” says Rachel Lewis, a PRS staff person who has worked closely with Mike. “I have loved to see how he has turned a personal passion of his into something that offers growth to other residents.”

Mike, Dionne, Dr. L, and Rachel are preparing for the next edition of Movie Night – a showing of *Homeless to Harvard*. While enjoying popcorn and pizza, folks will watch the story of overcoming odds and achieving unimaginable success.

No doubt, a beautiful bit of community will be sparked, and perhaps some seeds of empathy, compassion, and enriched humanity will be watered.

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*“I want people to come together and get more involved, and also have ways to relate to each other.”*

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## A House of Peace (continued from page 1)

Raynier Institute and Foundation, the Maguire Foundation, Janet and John Haas, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, the Philadelphia Housing Authority, and FHLBank Atlanta. Lead investors

Nasir Fears lives in one of the units dedicated to our young adult program. At age 21, he's already seen his fair share of struggles and stormy relationships. After growing up in an intact family, he found himself on his own, in large part because of how he identified himself. After a period of anger and what he calls "craziness," he had a productive year with the Job Corps program, but he still desperately needed "somewhere to lay my head at night." One of this fellow program participants told him about Francis House of Peace and urged him to apply.

"This is a new experience," Nasir says of his new home. "I never really had my own place. It's fantastic to look around and say, 'This is really mine,' and to know nobody is going to yell at me to get out." He is planning a return to school and looking for work in the field of nursing. For now, he is appreciating the "positive energy" at

Francis House of Peace, as well as the resources and support from the Young Adult program. "I feel at

*"I never really had my own place. It's fantastic to look around and say, 'This is really mine.'"*

home, and I don't want to lose that sense," he says. "I feel this is going to be a time of real change in my life."

To help facilitate such real change, residents like Mark Jones and Nasir Fears have access to all Project HOME services, including integrated

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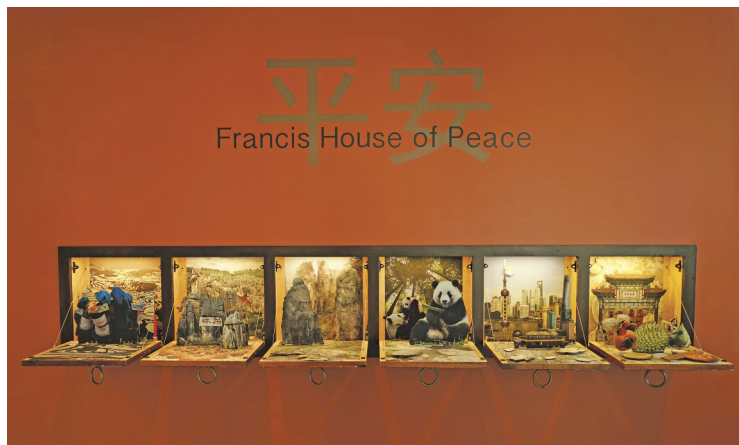
  
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And don't miss the great stuff on the Project HOME Blog  
[www.projecthome.org/blog](http://www.projecthome.org/blog)

Photo by Harvey Finkle



To honor the Chinese heritage that is part of Francis House of Peace (Ping An), this art installation in the lobby features five "apothecary drawers" which open onto various Chinese landscapes that represent home. For more information on the installation, go to [www.projecthome.org/apothecary](http://www.projecthome.org/apothecary).

include Capital One, National Association, and the National Equity Fund.

The name is inspired by last year's visit of Pope Francis to Philadelphia. His message of mercy, justice, and inclusion resonates deeply with the mission of Project HOME. His spirit of compassion is a constant inspiration as we continue our work to address homelessness and poverty. The Chinese name, *Ping An* ("House of Peace"), conveys a similar spirit. The design of the property includes a special peace garden, featuring the Knotted Grotto that was a major part of the Mercy and Justice campaign that welcomed Pope Francis. (See [www.projecthome.org/mercyandjustice](http://www.projecthome.org/mercyandjustice).)

Photo by Jay Gorodeizer

medical care and fitness classes, employment training, and educational and technological opportunities through our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs.

The partnership with Chinatown was a unique undertaking for us. Staff at Francis House wondered if the mixed, multicultural populations in the residence would create challenges. Program Manager Christina Fidanza feels those challenges are in fact new opportunities. "Our residents are eager to learn about each other," she says. "We are going to offer language courses to help facilitate basic communication, and we will have some cultural courses to allow for greater understanding and help residents avoid any unintended cultural offenses." The staff is also planning various activities, using arts, food and other cultural expressions, to celebrate the special community that is forming at 810 Arch Street.

Mark Jones appreciates that unique and diverse community. "People are respectful and caring," he says. "You can see the gleam in his eyes when he says, 'House of Peace — that's what it is here.'"

Then, recognizing where he's come from, he adds, "They need more places like this."

# Bring Philly HOME


**THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2016 – 6:30 to 9:00 pm**

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*Please join us for this special night and be part of the solution to end and prevent chronic street homelessness in Philadelphia.*

For additional information, please contact Stephanie Lin at 215.232.4786 x 3045 or [stephanielin@projecthome.org](mailto:stephanielin@projecthome.org)

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*Network and make new connections with professionals across the Philadelphia region as you enjoy a fun-filled evening with tasty drinks, delicious hors d'oeuvres, and an exciting silent auction.*

*To learn about becoming a sponsor or to purchase tickets, please visit: [www.projecthome.org/2016-young-leaders-event](http://www.projecthome.org/2016-young-leaders-event)*

All proceeds from the event fund Project HOME's mission to end and prevent chronic street homelessness in Philadelphia.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
6.2.16

# HOME Happenings

◆ **On March 8**, numerous friends of Project HOME, including state and city officials, donors and partners, staff, and residents, gathered to break ground on what will be our next residential development. The new construction at 2415 North Broad Street will provide 88 units of affordable housing, and will include retail on the ground level. It is strategically located at a major transit hub just north of Temple University's campus. The Broad Street residence is the latest project of the Middleton Partnership, a strategic public-private initiative to realize the bold goal of ending and preventing chronic street homelessness in Philadelphia.



Donors, partners, public officials, and staff break ground for our next development in North Philadelphia.

We are grateful for the visionary leadership of Leigh and John Middleton, as well as for our many other committed partners, including Ruth and Morris Williams, who are making this project possible. Read more about 2415 N. Broad Street and about the Middleton Partnership at [www.projecthome.org/2415](http://www.projecthome.org/2415).

◆ **We would like to** extend a big welcome to Liz Hersh, who joined the Administration of new Mayor Jim Kenney as the Director of Philadelphia's Office of Supportive Housing. Liz has been a long-time ally to Project HOME and has spent her career working on housing issues, including serving the past 14 years as executive director of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania (which included the successful campaign to create a Pennsylvania state Housing Trust Fund). We are excited that Liz will be part of a team that includes Eva Gladstein, the City's new Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, also a great friend to Project HOME over the decades. We look forward to working with Liz, Eva, and the entire Kenney Administration to end homelessness in our city and create greater opportunity for all our citizens to flourish.

◆ **In the past two months**, Project HOME has lost three dear long-time friends. **Riki Wagman**, who passed away on

January 27, was one of our earliest supporters. She served as a trustee and helped build important connections for Project HOME with many people in the greater Philadelphia area, which were instrumental in our growth. **Ali McCabe**, who passed away on February 14, was an early volunteer and faithful donor. She and her late husband Tom supported us in many ways in our formative years, including advocacy. **Anne Ewing** was a tireless advocate for social justice in Philadelphia, active on a range of issues, including education, racial justice, immigration – and a passion to end homelessness and poverty. We are grateful for the legacy of compassion and commitment of these strong and wonderful women.

◆ **This past March 10**, we celebrated another successful year for the PECO/Exelon Veterans Training and Employment Program. This vital partnership with Project HOME provides job skills training and paid internships to formerly homeless veterans, with the goal of supporting them in transitioning to meaningful paid work. Seven Project HOME residents and alumni participated in this year's program, and received their certificates at the graduation ceremony.

◆ **The opening of** Francis House of Peace means not only 94 new efficiency apartments, it also represents an expansion of our Homeless Young Adult Program. Many of the participants in this program identify as LGBTQ. LGBTQ youth comprise nearly 40 percent of youth who are experiencing homelessness – in many cases because they have been thrown out of their homes. Project HOME has partnered with two organizations, the Mazzoni Center and the Attic Youth Center, to provide specialized support to our young adult LGBTQ residents. The program also includes internships, in which residents work with mentors who support them in life skills, professional development and educational goals, leadership, and empowerment. We are grateful to these wonderful organizations for their invaluable partnership with us, and we are excited that many of these gifted young people will bring their developing leadership skills to the Project HOME community.



Liz Hersh, the new Director of Philadelphia's Office of Supportive Housing, met with the Vote For Homes Coalition on April 6 and strategized about solutions to end homelessness. They delivered over 1,000 signatures to Mayor Kenney urging him to make ending poverty and homelessness the center of his work.

Photo by Alex Abdella

# I Am Project HOME

TANYA CLANTON



Photo by Nick Pfoosi

Tanya Clanton spoke at Tufts University in Boston on February 2.

Tanya came to Project HOME about 15 years ago. She had completed a recovery program and was looking for affordable housing for herself and her three children.

“At Rowan Homes they offered a lot of the services I needed at the time: case management, playground, parenting classes. That was important to me.” Her youngest was three at the time. “It felt like we were home.”

In 2005, Tanya worked in Project HOME’s temporary shelter for people who had been displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Then she joined the staff of our Kate’s Place residence. For the past 10 years she has worked for the Philadelphia School District in various capacities.

“I go in a circle,” Tanya Clanton says with a laugh. She’s describing her path from her Project HOME apartment at Rowan Homes to her job as a special education classroom assistant and then to her second job as a counselor at the R.W. Brown Community Center’s afterschool program.

All are located not far from the area where Tanya grew up, the youngest of nine kids. “I was raised by a single mother,” she says. “Everyone is busy. You do a lot of thinking for yourself, make a lot of decisions on your own.”

At Hartranft School, Tanya works in the classroom with 6th, 7th, and 8th graders who have autism. She marvels at how they each learn at different levels and master skills in their own timeframe. “They each have their own unique way of doing things.”

“One of my kids asked me, ‘Why are you smiling all the time?’ It’s true. I said, ‘Because God gave me another day.’ It’s true. I wake up happy most mornings.” Tanya is quick with a smile even at the end of an extended work day.

“I see so many angry kids. It’s because it’s in their environment. You need to look to the parents. If they need it, you show them nurturing. Sometimes they bring the street with them, but I know the street,” she says with a wise smile.

Family is central to Tanya – and Project HOME has worked with Tanya to empower her family to reach its fullest potential. All three of her children participated in the College Access Program at our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs. Her oldest daughter Tanisha is one of the first to come through the CAP and graduate college; she currently works at Project HOME’s main office. “I’m so happy for her. She worked hard. We all worked hard.” Her two younger children are currently in college. She sees a bright future with a solid educational foundation for all of them.

After a long school and afterschool day, Tanya says she needs to pick up a couple of neighbors to take them grocery shopping. “They don’t have a car,” she explains. “They need help. People helped me when I needed it.

“It’s a circle I move in. It is by the grace of God I can do it.”

## Spirit of Generosity

SHEILA AND JOHN CONNORS

It was a good friend, Father Ed Hallinan, who insisted that Sheila and John Connors had to visit Project HOME. “He told us that there was a lot of good happening there,” John remembers.

It was the early 1990s, and Project HOME was still fairly small. “There were only a couple of residences back then,” John recalls. “We were overwhelmed by the dedication of Sister Mary, Joan, and the entire staff and by their ability to get things done.” He remembers their first tour of the St. Elizabeth’s Recovery Residence on a Saturday morning. They met several residents and noted how spotless the facility was. “Mary told us it was clean because Eddie waxes the floors and cleans the stove.” John was also impressed by the way the residents took ownership of the residence.

That initial visit was the beginning of a long and fruitful friendship and partnership. The Connors have been involved in many aspects of our programs and strategic growth. John has served on the board for a couple of terms and leads the Investment Committee. Sheila loves volunteering on special programs at Project HOME, starting years ago at our former 1515 Back Home Café and Our Daily Threads thrift shop. She currently serves on our Art Advisory Committee. “The arts program is growing so much, improving artists’ work and lives, and it’s so self-satisfying to be even a small part of it.” Last fall she worked at the Knotted Grotto during the visit of Pope Francis. Both John and Sheila found it wonderful to meet people from all areas of the world, each praying for a knot and adding their own. “Struggles are the same wherever you are.”



Photo by Jay Gorodetzer

John and Sheila Connors with Mickel Lewis, who participated in the Teen Internship program.

One of their singular contributions to Project HOME is the Teen Internship Program, for youth attending programs at our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs. John and Sheila were committed to supporting teens from North Central Philadelphia

by funding work experience from high school through college. Today, the program has grown from five teens to more than fifty a year – each gaining valuable experience to put on their resumes for when they graduate. Both John and Sheila get personally involved with teens, and see firsthand the personal successes in their program. Sheila has been especially impressed with their poise and self-confidence.

The Connors have watched our mission expand over the years, but have been impressed at how “Project HOME has kept its character and cheerfulness as it has grown.” It’s ten times the size and on track to end chronic street homelessness, but still, Sheila says, “Everything you give at Project HOME, you get ten times more back.”

*Project HOME is grateful for the leadership and support of John and Sheila, as well as to other employment partners, who provide internships for the Teen Program. If you would like to provide an internship for a teen or college student, please contact Brendan Sculley at [brendansculley@projecthome.org](mailto:brendansculley@projecthome.org).*



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
- 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. 3075
- HOME Page Café, 215-320-6191

**Administration**

215-232-7272

**Homeless Outreach Hotline**

215-232-1984

**Human Resources Hotline**

215-232-7219 ext. 5200

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



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Photo by Lauren Doherty

Several students from Project HOME's College Access Program participated in this year's annual spring break tour of various college campuses. Here, they pose with the Vulcan at California University of Pennsylvania – one of six campuses they visited around the state. From left to right: Victor Stewart, Tahyonna Atkins, Basim Rutledge, Fatouma Keita, Lateef Hiller, Lorraine Boyd. Front: Tiahni Kinard

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