

News FROM HOME



NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME

A Home for All Vets

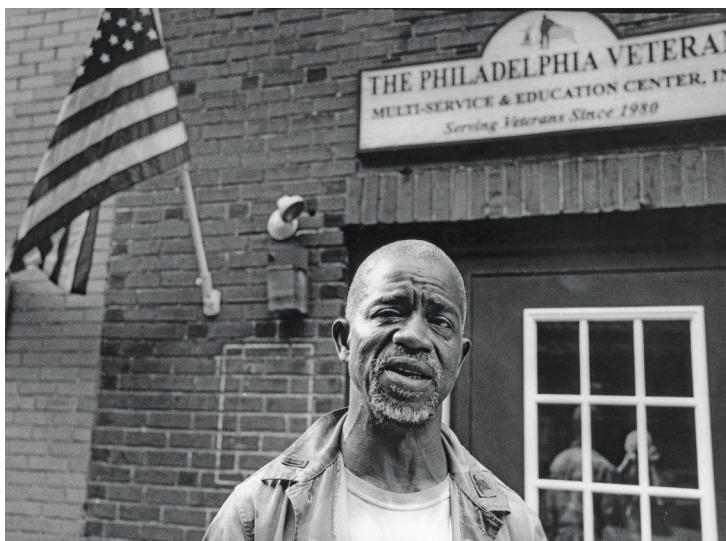


Photo by Harvey Finkle

Robert Jenkins is a veteran who was able to break the cycle of homelessness with support from Project HOME.

On December 19, in a burst of holiday good news, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro joined Mayor Michael Nutter at City Hall to announce that Philadelphia had “effectively ended” homelessness among military veterans. The news broke just a few hours before hundreds of people gathered near City Hall for the annual Homeless Memorial Day vigil.

For several decades now, veteran homelessness—that those who have served our country fall into

such inhumane and destitute circumstances—has been a particular blight on our nation. So this achievement is especially noteworthy—and brings hope as we continue our mission of ending all homelessness.

The catalyst for this success was the 2014 launch of the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness by the end of 2015, an initiative of the Obama administration.

Hundreds of cities and counties around the country accepted the challenge. Here in Philadelphia, advocates and providers developed a strategic collaborative called Philly Vets Home, bringing together nonprofit organizations and public entities including the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Philadelphia Housing Authority. Working together over many months, they identified and got to know almost every homeless veteran in Philadelphia by name, and connected them to permanent housing and appropriate services. 1,390 veterans in Philadelphia have been connected to permanent housing. (Nationally, veteran homelessness has decreased by 33 percent.)

The language of “ending veteran homelessness” may seem dramatic. There are still some vets on the streets. But the federal plan puts a definition and benchmarks on ending veteran homelessness, captured in the notion of “functional zero.” To reach functional zero, all veterans experiencing homelessness have to be identified; there must be immediate shelter, appropriate services, and bridges to permanent housing for every veteran who wants them; and the community has resources and systems in place for any veterans who become homeless

(continued on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

A Home for All Vets	1
Growing Stronger	1
Roots and Branches	2
Education is My Freedom	3
HOME Happenings	4
I Am Project HOME	5
Mission/Residences/Services & Programs/Businesses	6

Growing Stronger

When David Green moved into Project HOME’s Connelly House residence, it was a great refuge from life on the streets that had been his home for all too long. But he was struggling, without some of the basic skills and supports to enable him to maintain independent living. Before long, he had to move to the more supportive residence, Kairos House—and he also opted to participate in Personal Recovery Services (PRS), a new program at Project HOME.

David began working with PRS staff person Eunid Mann, and over time learned such skills as food shopping, laundry, house cleaning, and management of his medication. Last spring, David moved into his own apartment. Today, he is successfully and proudly living on his own.

Since our earliest days, we at Project HOME recognized that persons experiencing chronic homelessness needed housing—but not just housing. Given complex issues of physical and behavioral health as

well as deep internal wounds from sometimes years on the streets, support services were just as critical.

Two-and-a-half years ago, Project HOME’s approach to that support took a radical shift. *(continued on page 3)*



Photo by Michael Garner

Project HOME staff Eunid Mann with resident David Green, who was empowered by the PRS program to move into his own apartment.

Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

As I sat at last month's inauguration, listening to our newly elected leaders, Mayor James Kenney and Council President Darrell Clarke, discuss the gains in this region—but also its poverty—I felt hopeful. By some measures, Philadelphia is the most impoverished large city in the country. The beauty of this city is that we do not always see it that way.

Our elected leaders grasp the need for affordable housing not only for those most vulnerable but also for the working-class citizens, and they have a plan to invest in it. As Council President Clarke stated: "Here in Philadelphia, with our proud working-class communities, the conversation begins and ends with affordability. For those of us who got knocked down during the recession, whether by job loss or lost savings, getting back to where we were has been tough. Young people are delaying homeownership, and some former homeowners are now renters. Market-rate housing is booming, yet most of it is priced-out of the reach of average working Philadelphians." Clarke wants to buck "a trend that is making other major cities less affordable, less inclusive, and less desirable places to live."

The spirit at the inauguration was one of investing in our assets. Philadelphia's diverse neighborhoods are one of its primary assets. I found myself appreciating that they were not speaking

of building a "world-class city" with massive expenditures for stadiums, tourist attractions, or four-star hotels, as important as these are. I resonate with investing in the affordable housing which is increasingly scarce in large cities this size. I can get behind policies of neighborhood development which keep housing diverse and make it possible for young and working-class families to buy homes. It was exciting to hear their plans for schools that will again serve as the heartbeat of our communities.

At Project HOME, we have learned that our human community empowers us to work together to make our future bright. In the struggling neighborhoods where we have formed partnerships, we have seen profound changes: Certainly, the transformation of physical assets played an important role in the development of our neighborhoods, but equally important is the transformative power of relationships and partnerships.

We need the vital public and private resources and effective public policies to enable a community to grow, change, and thrive. But just as critical is tapping into the vibrant human capital and social fabric. These kinds of investments in our citizens and our neighborhoods will birth a future brimming with hope for all Philadelphians.

A. Mary Scullion



Photo by Dave Hering

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

A Home for All Vets (continued from page 1)

in the future. In effect, the notion of ending homelessness means, by federal definition, that episodes of veteran homelessness are "rare, brief, and non-recurring."

We recognize that there are still some veterans homeless in Philadelphia. In fact, the various veterans services providers know most of them, outreach teams are still in the process of working with them to help them make healthy decisions to

accept services, and those services are ready for them. In addition, federal officials have determined that Philadelphia has adequate resources and a functioning system to respond to future instances of veteran homelessness.

"We have effectively ended homelessness for veterans, and we have ways to prevent their extended homelessness in the future."

"It's been two-and-a-half years of hard work," said Jeanne Ciocca, Project HOME's Coordinator of PASSVF (Philadelphia Alliance for Supportive Services to Veteran Families), who was part of the leadership team for Philly Vets Home. "It was truly an amazing experience to work with partners and providers from both the public and private sectors – with the end result that we have effectively ended homelessness for veterans, and we have the means in place to prevent extended homelessness for veterans in the future."

Philadelphia is not alone. Across the nation, 20 municipalities – and the entire state of Virginia – have met the federal goal of "functional zero" for veteran's homelessness. The federal government

currently plans to build on this success and apply similar strategies and resources to other subpopulations, including family and youth – and eventually achieve the ultimate goal where all homelessness in America is "rare, brief, and non-recurring."

In a recent editorial, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden wrote, "Ending veterans' homelessness isn't just our moral obligation, it is a realistic, achievable goal, if we summon the will and devote resources equal to the task." At Project HOME, we have for many years been inviting our supporters to join us in daring to hope and believe that what was once thought impossible was, in fact, achievable.

We are gratified to have played a role in this remarkable achievement—and to the many public, private, and nonprofit organizations in Philadelphia and nationwide who demonstrated what can be achieved when we work together. To see how much can be accomplished when the federal government targets a specific group with critical commitment and resources creates hope for other groups who experience significant rates of homelessness. We are deeply inspired by the courage and strength of our veterans who are living examples of transformation.

We will continue our efforts to bring those few veterans still on the streets home – and, with your support and partnership, we will draw deeply from the wellsprings of hope to continue to turn the impossible into reality.

If you know of veterans who need support, contact our 24-hour Homeless Outreach Hotline at 215.232.1984 or the Veterans Multi-Service Center at 215.923.2600.

Growing Stronger

(continued from page 1)

Like most human services programs, we started with a case management model where specific staff connected to one site worked with a group of assigned residents. In 2013, we supplemented the residential casemanagers with the new PRS approach.

Personal Recovery Services is Project HOME's version of psychiatric rehabilitation services, a person-centered, evidence-based practice that has gained increasing credence in the professional behavioral health field and among policy makers. In this model, a mobile team of specially trained team members travel to all sites. Team members work one-on-one with eligible individuals who request their services. The PRS staff member works in relationship with a specific resident, who chooses his or her goals. A resident may want to work on life skills, decision-making, specific anxieties that he or she believes are compromising personal progress. Together, the PRS staff member and the resident develop a specific and individualized plan to achieve the stated goals. The emphasis is on personal growth, individual choice, empowerment, and developing strengths and hope that can translate into real success.

"It was hard for both participants and staff to shift to the new model," comments Jen O'Shea, Program Manager of Project HOME's PRS program. "Now people are seeing that some of that difference is very good. We are able to focus on skill building and intentional tasks, and tailor our work to individual independence in a way our incredible caseworkers may not have time to do."

"We emphasize personal growth, individual choice, empowerment, and developing strengths and hope which translates into real success."

In the traditional case management model, for example, a resident who had deep anxiety using public transit might be driven to an essential destination by a caseworker. Now, PRS staff work directly with the resident to find ways to cope and skills to overcome the anxiety, so that the resident eventually learns to use public transportation independently. The PRS team has helped residents in such areas as stress and symptom management, organization, socializing, basic living skills, and financial planning. The key to success is that each resident chooses his or her own goals, and that the PRS staff member works by building on the strengths each resident already has.

"Caseworkers at each residence have an essential role, which can include focusing on the day-to-day, and crisis management," observes Jen O'Shea. "When that is supplemented by PRS focusing on future, long-term goals, people have the opportunity to actually become more self-sufficient and independent. We are trying to work ourselves out of a job."

"My PRS worker treats me with a lot of respect," David Green says, "and I feel like I learned a lot of things to help me live responsibly in my apartment." Now he is ready for the next challenge. "I am also learning skills for a job," he says, with a glint of hope and enthusiasm in his eyes. He has been diligently working with PRS staff on work-readiness skills and will soon begin a janitorial training program – a step toward re-entering the workforce. "That is my next goal: to get a job."



Education Is My Freedom

Shermeir Porter, student government president at Gwynedd Mercy University, is a graduate of our College Access Program (CAP). Based out of our Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs, the CAP program works intensively with our young people to ensure that they go to college and beyond. Many of them are the first in their families to do so. In the past three summers,

Shermeir has participated in the Sheila and John Connors Summer Internship at the Stephen Klein Wellness Center. This academic year, she welcomed the 500 new students with their families to campus, sharing some of her wisdom.

Three years and four days ago, I was sitting where you are, wondering how my freshman year would go. My education here was not easy. I started off as a nursing major, but failed my first nursing class! Yet I didn't give up on my education – I just took a different path. I realized that my passion was for the lab and changed to medical laboratory science. Now I am excelling. My major in medical laboratory science has opened many doors for internships, summer research, and job offerings.

"Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom," wrote George Washington Carver. Being able to think on your own is freedom. Each day my goal is to learn something new, because education is my freedom out of poverty and into a different world.

I grew in leadership and I got involved, joining the dance team as well as a student association of science, where I met people who shared my academic interests. Getting involved doesn't necessarily mean joining a club. Rather, it's trying new things, learning a fresh skill, meeting new people who may or may not share your interests.

For the past three summers I have committed to work at the Stephen Klein Wellness Center, part of Project HOME. I have dedicated my time to the homeless and poverty-stricken community of Philadelphia, and found that I enjoy giving back and providing service to people in need. On one student service "alternative spring break" opportunity to Cincinnati, I discovered that I loved working in a soup kitchen. People are more than just hungry—they have a story and just want someone to listen to it. We may see a homeless person and run away or stereotype them. If we can get behind all that, we can see them for who they are: unique individuals who may be down on their knees, and simply need someone to help them up.

I went outside of my comfort zone to have new experiences. I want to be seen on this campus and beyond as a woman with a purpose. I do not expect you to walk the same path that I have, but I do challenge you to find your own. This is the beginning of *your* journey.

Mark Twain admonishes: "Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore, Dream, Discover."

Find your niche. Do something you're passionate about. Become a leader. Take risks and be open to new things. This is your time; make the best of it!

HOME Happenings

◆ **Project HOME's Hub of Hope**, a walk-in health service and engagement center located in the Suburban Station concourse, opened its doors in January. Now in its fifth year, the Hub provides a critically needed point of access for many persons experiencing



long-term street homelessness and offers an array of services, including case management, housing placement, and medical and behavioral health services. We are grateful for our invaluable partners who make the Hub a success, including the Student-Run Emergency Housing Unit of Philadelphia (SREHUP), Arch Street United Methodist Church, Public Health Management Corporation, Einstein Hospital, Jefferson Hospital, and the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Support this important effort by donating items on our “wish list”—see www.projecthome.org/hub.



Photo by Harvey Finkle

The Hub of Hope is a vital access point for many persons experiencing chronic homelessness.

◆ **On January 16**, neighbors and community members celebrated the first anniversary of Project HOME's Stephen Klein Wellness Center (SKWC). Thanks to committed staff members and dedicated partners, SKWC offers a range of holistic healthcare services (including a new, on-site dental clinic, added late last year) geared toward the needs of persons struggling with poverty and homelessness. With a year under our belt, we are already beginning to see a positive impact in the community, and we are hopeful of making more progress in bringing top-quality healthcare to many of our most vulnerable citizens. For more information on the Wellness Center, see www.projecthome.org/skwc.

◆ **In his January inauguration address** after taking the oath of office as Philadelphia's new Mayor, Jim Kenney said, “I promise to serve you, to be accountable to you and, most importantly, to work with you, so we can make every Philadelphia neighborhood the best that it can be.”

Throughout last year's mayoral election, Project HOME and partners in the Vote For Homes coalition developed a good working relationship with then-candidate Kenney, and we are hopeful that translates into an effective partnership as we work with his administration to address issues of homelessness and poverty in our city. You can read some of Kenney's statements from the May 7 Vote For Homes Candidates Forum at www.voteforhomes.org. To join our advocacy efforts to welcome Mayor Kenney and highlight issues of homelessness and poverty, visit www.projecthome.org/action or contact Jennine Miller at 215-232-7272 ext. 3042 or jenninemiller@projecthome.org.



Photo by Yasya Polyakova

Then-candidate Jim Kenney speaks at a May 7, 2015 Vote For Homes Candidates Forum.

◆ **2015 was a remarkable year** for us at Project HOME, as many of our staff and residents were heavily involved in the “Mercy and Justice Campaign,” a multifaceted effort to raise issues of hunger and homelessness in light of the September visit of Pope Francis to Philadelphia. You can read a full report on the Campaign and its accomplishments—including almost \$1.5 million raised for the Francis Fund, twenty thousand emails to Congress, and the amazing Knotted Grotto. Thousands of prayers and wishes left at the Grotto will be used as insulation in our next housing construction. To read the report and see photos from the campaign, go to www.projecthome.org/mercyandjustice.

◆ **One important event** related to the Pope's visit is the opening of the Francis House of Peace, our newest residential development. As we go to press, residents are moving into the beautiful new facility, a partnership with Chinatown Development Corporation located in Chinatown at 810 Arch Street. We are excited to welcome them home, and grateful for the many great partners who helped make this residence possible, including The Raynier Institute and Foundation, The Maguire Foundation, Janet and John Haas, and Leigh and John Middleton.

◆ **Project HOME's Social Enterprises** thank the customers, volunteers, and partners who helped us employ eight additional residents in new positions during the holiday season in sales and online retail jobs. Keep the momentum going by buying Valentine's gifts at projecthome.org/shop. Also, think of us when ordering favors for your next party, shower, Mother's Day, or graduation.



I Am Project HOME

HELEN BROWN



Photo by Harvey Finkle

“When I came to Philadelphia from Charleston, South Carolina, in my twenties, I hated it with a passion,” observes Helen Brown. Almost five decades later, it’s hard to imagine Philadelphia or Project HOME without her.

When Project HOME began to embark on community development work in the St. Elizabeth’s neighborhood in lower North Philadelphia, Helen Brown was a natural choice to join our staff as our community organizer. It was a version of work she had been doing for a long time. Since her earliest days there, she

wove herself into the fabric of the community. She worked the line in Kensington in an auto parts factory for twenty-two years, but found time to take part in block rhythms. “In those days, most blocks had captains who organized things. For a few hours each Saturday, everyone would clean the block, paint the curbs, clean the doors, scrub the stoops. Later, when heroin and then crack came into our community, they gathered people to talk about how to respond to the gangs and drugs. I got involved.”

Gradually, “Miss Helen,” as she is known all over the neighborhood, gravitated to working with the young people. One of her initial efforts with Project HOME was to start a drill team. “The kids were jumping double-dutch outside my door, and arguing about turns. I said: ‘We need to do something everyone can be part of!’ They challenged me: ‘Will you help us start a drill team?’ I didn’t know a thing about a drill team, but we started one!”

The North Philly Footstompers were born, and they would go on to win awards in cities around the country. “These are kids who would never have left the city; who wanted to buy souvenirs at 30th Street Station. I told them, ‘Wait, we aren’t even out of town yet!’”

In the early 1990s, when Sister Mary Scullion was interested in turning the old St. Elizabeth’s convent into what would become the St. Elizabeth’s Recovery Residence, she was told to consult Miss Helen and the block captains. They were not happy. “We said: you see what we already have here, and you want to bring in stuff? If you are going to live *here*, you can do it. If you aren’t, forget it.

“She said, ‘Sure, I’ll live here.’ So we said: ‘No problem!’”

Over years, the solid connection with Project HOME brought new possibilities. Whether it’s working with the young people, leading buses to Harrisburg to advocate for stricter gun laws, supporting families in crises, or organizing community celebrations, Miss Helen has been an integral part of every aspect of our work in the neighborhood. She is particularly proud of her role in bringing the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast



Photo by City of Philadelphia

Helen Brown, Project HOME’s Community Organizer, holds the Bible for City Council President Darrell L. Clarke at his January 3 inauguration.

Technology Labs and later the Stephen Klein Wellness Center to the neighborhood with full support, ensuring that community concerns and input were incorporated. Her feisty, nurturing spirit has captured the hearts of some at City Hall—this past January, City Council President Darrell Clarke invited her to hold the Bible as he was sworn in at his inaugural ceremony.

She is proud that so many neighborhood drug houses have been closed down by the community. Asked if she ever felt in danger for taking them on, she becomes sober. “Drug houses are no joke, but I am a God-fearing person and our destiny is what it will be. People have to stand on their own two

feet. You can give them the tools they need, but they must use the tools you offer them.”

In March, she celebrates 75 years of living, learning, and leadership. Her wisdom, her hard-headed honesty, her deep love of people, and her good humor have enriched Project HOME and enhanced a neighborhood that is clearly on the rebound. “I was taught to take people where they are. I have met the richest people and the poorest people, and I treat them all the same. Trust people. Keep your word. This is how you build community.”

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Lynne Honickman

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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. 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



NONE OF US ARE HOME UNTIL ALL OF US ARE HOME™

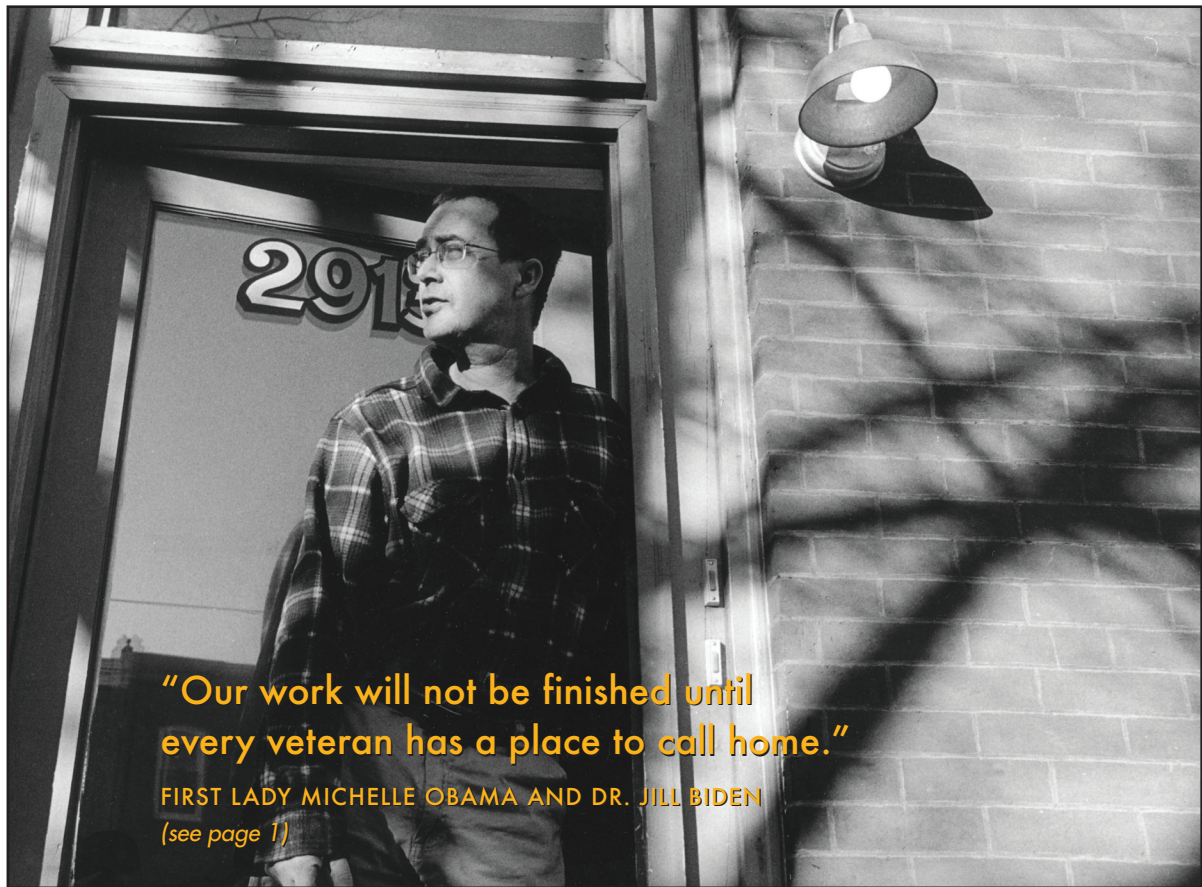


Photo by Harvey Finkle

"Our work will not be finished until every veteran has a place to call home."

FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA AND DR. JILL BIDEN
(see page 1)

Vincent Sangmeister, a formerly homeless veteran, is part of Project HOME's staff, helping other veterans access services.

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.