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I Am Project HOME

CHANTELL POWELL-BRINKLEY

Photo by Eddie Amador

Chantell Powell-Brinkley has a knack for making people feel like they matter, rooted in her conviction that there is always more to a person than the eye can see. As part of the Project HOME community for nearly 15 years, she's learned how to connect with others by listening to their stories while writing her own.

Chantell didn't think that she would wind up where she is today when she first started, but one of the important lessons she has learned along the way is that anything is possible. She started at Project HOME around 2002, working evening shifts as a part-time dispatcher for the Outreach Coordination Center. It wasn't the ideal position, given she was a college student and single mother at the time, but she figured it was worth the shot because she was willing to work hard to make her way up. She earned a full-time position in the office, and continued to engage people living on the street in an effort to connect them to services and housing.

Chantell continued to thrive and support the community. She eventually moved to Rowan Homes, our residence for families, serving as an Office Assistant. There, she says, she learned how to truly connect with people, "not just look at individuals as what we see, but look beyond that because everyone comes with a story." After Rowan, Chantell moved to Kate's Place as an Assistant Manager, where she affectionately remembers showing units to prospective tenants in a hard hat, given construction wasn't even complete on the building yet.

After the birth of her son, Chantell decided to take some time away from work to be a stay-at-home mom. Family is very important to her, which is a big reason why she enjoyed her work with the families at Rowan so much. "At the end of the day," Chantell shares, "if you have nothing else, you have your family to go to, and that's very important."

Shortly after her return, Chantell was offered a Director of Property Management position, which she was apprehensive to take. Her drive to succeed is sometimes overshadowed by a fear of failure or hesitation to leave her comfort zone. But her family and the Project HOME community pushed her to see that she was a great fit for the position. Chantell taught her daughter to strive and never settle, and her daughter pressed her to do the same. Although she loved her position as Property Manager, she is seeing new opportunities for growth as Director of Property Management for Francis House of Peace, JBJ Soul Homes, Kate's Place, and Connelly House.

Through her journey, looking not just at her own success, but at the accomplishments of those she's met since her days in Outreach, Chantell affirms that anything is possible. "As you can see with my growth: I started out as a dispatcher, and I never thought I would be in this role," she says. "If you are true to yourself, respect others, and believe in God that anything is possible, anything *is* possible."

Spirit of Generosity

SUPPORTING OUR TEENS

Photo by Jonathan Kolbe

What happens when a community comes together to support the education of its youth? It becomes a stronger community!

With the 2016-17 school year behind us, it is a great opportunity to highlight some very generous corporate sponsors who have supported Project HOME's Teen Program at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs. Their support is made possible through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.

The EITC program, sponsored through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), offers participating businesses a tax credit equal to 75 percent of their contribution to a nonprofit like Project HOME.

We have opted to partner with several corporations and put their financial support to work in our Teen Program, which provides meaningful opportunities for at-risk youth in our Lower North Philadelphia neighborhood. The Teen Program prepares our students for, and ensures they succeed in, post-secondary education. Through a multi-disciplinary approach, the Program addresses critical barriers and provides young adults with the tools they need to improve academically, develop workforce skills, graduate from high school, and pursue college degrees or certifications.

For any young person, doing well in school requires hard work combined with encouragement and support. Coming from economically challenged neighborhoods, underperforming schools, and often unstable family situations, post-high school education success may seem out of reach.

Thanks to our dedicated EITC corporate sponsors (all listed in the graphic), more than 100 students achieved great successes last year and are one step closer to becoming strong and vibrant leaders of tomorrow. As part of the Teen Program and our College Access Programs, 39 high school students are enrolled in the after school program; 44 young people are enrolled in college; 29 students have graduated with post-secondary degrees (2 having received master's degrees); and more than 70 high school and college students are employed this summer through the Connors Youth Employment Program.

THANK YOU TO OUR EITC PARTNERS

Origlio (Since 1933 Beverage) · Comcast · 10 · TSI · Comcast Technology · UHS · Kline & Specter · APEX Mortgage Corp. · Philadelphia Insurance Companies (A Member of the Tokio Marine Group) · AmerisourceBergen · SEI (New ways. New answers.) · BB&T · UPMC Health Plan · Elliott-Lewis

There is no question that, without the compassion and leadership of these business partners and many others, our work would not be possible! Many thanks to our education heroes!

Your business can help transform the lives of young people in Philadelphia through this program in 2017-18. Find out how by contacting Joseph Carlucci, Director of Institutional Giving, at 215-232-7272 or ***josephcarlucci@projecthome.org*** *for more information.*

PROJECT HOME
HOUSING | OPPORTUNITIES | MEDICAL | EDUCATION
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. 3023

Administration

215-232-7272

Homeless Outreach Hotline

215-232-1984

Human Resources Hotline

215-232-7219 ext. 5200

www.projecthome.org

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

Photo provided by Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health

Project HOME residents, along with Steve Korman and Paula Stilman of Jefferson, show their diplomas from the combined Certified Peer Specialist and Community Healthcare Worker training (see page 4 for details).

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.

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News FROM HOME

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

Photo by Jennine Miller

Almost a thousand people stood in line to apply for Project HOME's newest residence – a snapshot of the desperate need for affordable housing in our country.

The Long Wait

Wes Mitchell arrived at Fairmount Avenue at 6:00 am, ready to help. But he was not ready for what he saw. "I was stunned. The line was already around the block."

He knew it would be a big crowd, but he hadn't quite imagined this, Wes, a resident at Project HOME's Francis House of Peace, was going to work with those in line who were applying for our new residence. This day, June 1, was the opening day for people to submit applications.

As we announced in the last edition of *News from HOME*, we are opening our newest residence at 2415 N. Broad Street later this summer. The residence will provide 88 units of permanent, affordable supportive housing for persons who have experienced homelessness as well as low-income individuals. Twenty of these units will be for young adults ages 18-23, aged out of foster care, homeless, or at risk of homelessness. We knew, from previous experience, that applications would far exceed the number of available units.

Some people had started camping out on Fairmount Avenue two evenings before the day that applications would be received. Many took time off jobs or missed appointments to be there. By the time doors opened to receive applicants, the line was several blocks long, with hundreds of persons hoping for the chance for the long-desired decent roof over their heads. It was a snapshot of a part of America that we rarely want to acknowledge – elderly, young, women with children, persons with disabilities – victims of an economic system in which many people are disposable.

Several staff persons and residents were helping to keep the line orderly and assist people in making sure they had all the right materials. Our Advocacy Committee talked to people in the line, heard their stories (and, in many cases, frustration, and pain), and invited them to sign letters to Congress calling for more affordable housing.

Each person in the line had a story, but those stories carried some common threads: Women leaving situations

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www.projecthome.org

Feeding Our Souls

Photo by Steven Yen

Hyacinth King, a long-time resident leader in our community, passed away this spring.

The community room at 1515 Fairmount was packed. A remarkably diverse group – residents, staff, alumni, old friends, trustees, donors, volunteers – filled the room. We played music and shared readings. Emotions ran high, tears flowed – and so did stories.

We had gathered to remember Hyacinth King, a long-time resident and leader in the Project HOME community. We have memorialized many members of our community over the years, but this loss hit hard.

A product of a good family and good schools (including Temple University), Hyacinth had persevered through many years on the streets with mental illness and addiction. Once stable in permanent housing, she became a strong leader at Project HOME, serving in countless roles such as advocate, outreach worker, and trustee. She shared her story and her passion for justice with thousands of people – from students to elected officials.

At the service, people also shared of her quiet kindness, her humor, and her endless willingness to help others in whatever ways she could. Many residents spoke of how Hyacinth was an invaluable guide, support, and encouragement for them when they first came in off the streets. A local ESL teacher, who frequently invited Hyacinth to share her story with international students, spoke of how her impact literally crossed the globe.

(continued on page 2)

Roots and Branches: Reflections from Sister Mary

Photo by Dave Hering

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

We often need stories of hope, and one such story is that of a business student at Georgetown University, Febin Bellamy. Febin struck up a relationship with the janitor in his dorm, Oneil Batchelor, an immigrant from Jamaica. While recognizing the social distance between them, they discovered powerful bonds of their shared humanity. Bellamy, also from an immigrant family, found himself drawn to the lives and stories of the low-wage service workers around him.

That personal connection across class lines led to the creation by Bellamy and other Georgetown students of an organization they named *Unsung Heroes*. They share stories on social media of many of the campus workers, and in several cases have raised funds to enable them to pursue their own dreams of greater economic opportunity.

The power of this story is that it both gives voice to the very real economic divides that are endemic in American society, and also bears witness to what Pope Francis calls "a revolution of tenderness."

Our society most often measures the value of a person by his or her productivity alone and discards the unproductive along the way. We live in a society so mesmerized by its view of success that it considers real only that which can be touched, weighed, and measured, a culture in which human and spiritual values have almost vanished from its consciousness.

Whether it is our brothers and sisters living on the streets in this city of such great power, or the tens of millions of persons around the globe who have become refugees because of both political and economic violence. Today there is such devastating human suffering and dehumanization.

The beginning of this "revolution of tenderness" must be rooted in personal relationships as it seeks to weave new webs of human community and inclusion. It calls us to learn to listen, as Febin did, to those who may otherwise be invisible to our blinded society. We witness this "revolution of tenderness" every day at Project HOME through the stories and lives of Hyacinth King (see "Feeding Our Souls" on page 1), Wes Mitchell (see "The Long Wait" on page 1), and so many others.

We need to come together to share our personal passion, tenderness, and practical wisdom that can help us break the paralysis of ideological polarization and the stranglehold of concentrated economic power.

And we won't rest until we listen for and hear the voices of all, until we are moved to action to address the inequities in our society. We need to change a political system that is controlled by moneyed interests. We need to unite with those struggling and find new paths to economic inclusivity. With faith and a strong, more diverse community, we can move our nation a little more towards the vision of genuine opportunity for all – a real and concrete revolution of tenderness.

S. Mary Scullion

Feeding Our Souls (continued from page 1)

As these testimonies filled the room, it became clear that the quote from the Prophet Muhammad which we had selected to use for the service was beautifully fitting: "If I had but two loaves of bread, I would sell one and buy hyacinths, for they would feed my soul." Hyacinth had fed many souls.

> *"It is amazing that this woman, who might have continued to languish anonymously on the streets, could instead have such a powerful impact on so many people."*

It is amazing to consider that this woman, who might have continued to languish anonymously on the streets in the clutches of untreated mental illness and addiction, could instead have such a powerful and transformative impact on so many people. She was embraced by a community that created space where her gifts could be unleashed. And she in turn became an invaluable member of that same community, embracing others and accompanying them on the way home. The miracle that was happening in that room, with all the pain and loss, was itself the fruit of an unyielding vision of human dignity. It could only happen after years of advocating for and developing the critical supports – housing, health care, employment, education – that we all need.

Even now, there are other Hyacinths out there, homeless on the streets or in other situations of extreme deprivation, their untapped gifts buried beneath extreme poverty, illness and social stigma. We must ask: Will there be persons to show them basic kindness and affirm their dignity? Will there be a community that embraces them and believes in them? Will the services and social supports be there so they can get back to a place of stability – so that their gifts will flourish and they can offer those gifts to our world?

We are the answer to those questions. And if we can provide a positive answer, we will all be better for it – as Hyacinth and so many like her continue to show us.

Photo by Harvey Finkle

Hyacinth King helping with a voter registration drive.

The Long Wait (continued from page 1)

of domestic abuse. Many people with disabilities, some who had faced discrimination and even abuse in current housing situations. And people who had already been on waiting lists for other housing for many years.

Most of the applicants were simply trapped in the harsh squeeze of fixed or low incomes in the face of rising rents. Several people remarked on all the housing going up – but, as one woman put it, "It's not for us!" In fact, the higher-income housing development is inflating rents for many already struggling with poverty. "Nobody can afford the rising rents," said a man named George. "No one's income is going up. I work two jobs and have kids, and we can't afford it.

Photo by Rachel Elnagoud

Some of the hundreds of persons in need of housing on June 1. You can hear their stories and many others on our webpage at http://bit.ly/2415ApplicationDay

Many folks were in recovery and desperately needed a sure place of their own to continue to turn their lives around. "I have eight months clean," said Jamie, "and I'm looking for a job and don't have a stable place. Without housing, it's hard to do anything else. But I'm not trying to be part of the problem anymore – I'm trying to be part of the solution."

A woman named Sophia had lived in her own home for 20 years, but due to a serious illness she had to move in with her elderly mother and leave her job. "God gave me a second chance, and it's time to take my life back." Dominique spoke quite bluntly of his need for affordable housing: "I'm sick and blind and have no family. It would help me. There are a lot of folks like me."

Even many of those in line were moved by the magnitude of the crowd and of the need. "You see all this vacant housing, but also all these homeless people," said Carol. "It's very sad – people who don't have enough money to pay rent and also pay for food."

To add to the pain of the day, the Trump budget had recently been unveiled, with a proposal to slash $6 billion from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (The new residence includes critically needed HUD subsidies.) Just two days earlier, HUD Secretary Ben Carson said that poverty was largely "a state of mind."

As the lines get longer, the resources get slimmer, federal public policy gets stingier, and attitudes of public officials get colder.

As he talked with the applicants, Wes Mitchell remembered a similar day two years when he was up at 4:00 in the morning to be ready to apply for Project HOME's

> *"I'm not trying to be part of the problem anymore – I'm trying to be part of the solution."*

Francis House of Peace."It gave me a jolt of gratitude that I was able to get in. But the need seems to have exploded since then." It breaks his heart, he says, to know that hundreds of the people in line won't have the same luck.

More than a thousand persons applied for affordable housing at 2415 N. Broad Street. We will welcome 88 new persons into our community. More than 900 others will have to fill out other applications, wait in more lines, stir up slim hopes again. We at Project HOME are doing the best we can, with more housing projects planned over the next few years. But as a nation we can and must do better.

Project HOME is deeply grateful for the generosity of 2415 N. Broad Street's lead donors: John and Leigh Middleton, Morris and Ruth Williams, and Gene and Marlene Epstein.

Take action NOW: Send an email to your Senators, Representatives, and the President that housing, health care, employment, and education matter to ALL Americans. You can include examples from your community in your message to your elected officials. Go to **www.projecthome.org/action.**

Information That Matters to You

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And don't miss the great stuff on the Project HOME Blog

www.projecthome.org/blog

A Light For So Many

By Kat Delancey

Hyacinth King's passing is very personal for me (see "Feeding Our Souls," page 1). My history with Project HOME stretches over 20 years, and I know what it means to come from a place that hurts and is very dark. When I think of Hy, I am reminded of her being my light when I could not light myself. I am sure Hy was a light for so many as well.

In memory of Hy, when my light starts to become dim, I will think of her brightness no matter where I am at in life. And I will try to be light to those still in their dark places.

Kat Delancey is a member of the Project HOME community who has worked for several years at our Hub of Hope and also volunteers at our Stephen Klein Wellness Center.

HOME Happenings

◆ **Project HOME's Employment Services** program is thrilled to announce 22 graduates from the new Certified Peer Specialist and Community Healthcare Workers certification training (see photo on page 6). This unique and innovative program is offered through a partnership among Project HOME, the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania, and Thomas Jefferson University. It enables graduates, who are primarily persons with their own histories of recovery from homelessness and behavioral health issues, to obtain both CPS and CHW certificates, highly competitive and respected certifications that help peers secure employment utilizing their life experience. Previously, CPS training was only offered through the Department of Behavioral Health which could not meet the demand. We are very grateful to Thomas Jefferson University and Steve Korman who funded this training..

Photo by Pete Checchia

On April 28, residents of Project HOME collaborated with artists from the Curtis Institute for a special concert event. Two Curtis artists, T.J. Cole and Rimbo Wong, worked with residents from Kate's Place for over a year to collaboratively create and compose music. This wonderful evening included performances of many of those pieces. Above, Antoinette Richardson reads an original poem with musical accompaniment by Curtis artists.

◆ **One of the most dynamic parts of our mission** in recent years has been our programs with teens – bolstering their education, tapping into their gifts, empowering them to pursue college. This coming academic year will see some important changes in our Teen Program: Building on our successful summer teen employment program, we will offer new work opportunities throughout the academic year geared toward literacy and life skills. Based on our teens' input, we will also expand some of our after-school elective offerings (adding to such programs as photography, video, cuisine, and others). And we will be broadening our College Access Program to include post-secondary vocational certificates so that our high schoolers can take advantage of a range of education paths to success.We are excited by the many success stories from our young people – who show that we can effectively prevent poverty and future homelessness through education and employment.

◆ **Nearly 500 people gathered** at the beautiful Masonic Temple on May 31 to participate in our annual Bring Philly HOME event, hosted by Project HOME's Young Leaders committee chaired by Caitlin Ferry and Kate Hagedorn. This special evening provided great opportunities for people to network and get to know each other. Guided by the evening's emcee, ABC Action News co-anchor **Brian Taff**, participants responded to the challenge to help us develop more permanent supportive housing and to help meet the needs of those men and women still on our streets. Francis House of Peace resident Nicole Still shared her powerful story of courage and transformation. We exceeded our goal of raising $120,000, which moves us further toward truly ending chronic street homelessness in Philadelphia. Thanks to everyone who made the event such a great success!

Photo by Kerry McIntyre

Photo by Kevin Pierce

On June 24, Project HOME held a Summer Kick Off festival in our lower north central Philadelphia neighborhood to highlight the many programs available to residents. Hundreds of neighbors participated in health screenings, an urban farm, a community art project, as well as enjoying music and plenty of snacks.

◆ **A Project HOME initiative** was named one of six national programs to be awarded grants from the Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF), a grantee of the Social Innovation Fund's Pay for Success program. The Philadelphia Partnership Supportive Housing Demonstration project is a collaborative initiative of Project HOME, Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Services (DBHIDS) through Community Behavioral Health, and CSH. The project will create supportive housing for approximately 150 chronically homeless persons recovering from substance use disorders and/or mental illness, with the aim of providing stable housing and supports for them to continue in recovery and improve their lives. Pay for Success is an innovative approach to addressing persistent social problems by targeting resources toward programs that provide measurable results to the people and communities who need them most.