

MOVING FORWARD WITH THE PROPERTY AT 61 N. FRANKLIN STREET



We are pleased to report that we were granted the variances we sought for our proposed use of our property at 61 North Franklin Street. Thank you for all of your support over the past several months as we planned for our zoning hearing and made presentations in the community to clarify our plans for the building and seek the support of the community. We are especially grateful to those of you who wrote letters on our behalf and attended meetings and hearings. The presence of your support at our final hearing was overwhelming and heartwarming and truly helped to remind us of why we do the work we do in this community.

Now the work truly begins to rehabilitate the building to suit our office and educational space needs. In the coming months, you will begin to see official building plans, a timeline for the work needed and a detail of the finances we will need to see this next project through to completion. We will be coordinating all of this while continuing all of our current programs and work at the Cluster Outreach Center, right next door.

Thank you for your continued support and assistance to us as we provide resources, services and hope to members in our community. The expansion of our space will help us more effectively make connections with the community we serve, with the ultimate goal of improving the lives and stability of those who find a need for our services.

EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE

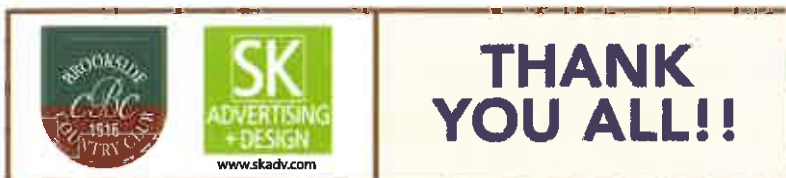
The entire staff and Board of Directors of PCRC give a huge thank you to all individuals, worship centers and businesses that supported our 2016 Signature Page. We have raised over \$15,000.00 because of your generosity.

Two additional supporters **Brockside Country Club** and **SK Advertising** logos are featured here as supporters of the Signature Page fundraiser. Their support came in past the deadline for the event.

OUR MISSION

Through interfaith cooperation, the **POTTSTOWN CLUSTER OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES** provides tangible services, support and spiritual guidance to address the basic needs of persons within and beyond the Greater Pottstown area. We coordinate our programs and referrals to help clients improve their overall stability.

Pottstown Cluster
OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
Nourishing Lives. Strengthening Families



A SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION WITH A LOCAL LANDLORD AND OUR HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER

Congratulations to Bob Larkin for receiving a **Champion for Change Award** at the **Your Way Home Montgomery County 2016 Annual Summit**. Bob has worked with our Housing Resource Center staff since 2014 and has helped house sixteen individuals working with our Housing Resource Center. Bob is a kind-hearted individual who recognizes that there is a need for collaborative support for many of Montgomery County's residents. He is present in the lives of those who reside in his rental units and seeks to do his best to serve them as tenants and customers. He is knowledgeable about current trends in housing as well as the economic and resource challenges of families who come through the YWH program and he cares a great deal for those who otherwise may not have a place to call home. He is a true partner to ending homelessness in Montgomery County. The following is a story about one of the individuals he has supported:

John (name has been changed) comes to the PCRC every month for food and was assisted with housing by Ryan and Wendy through the HRC in 2014. In his adult life, John has

not lived in his own place for longer than 6 months at a time. He is coming up on 2 years living in one of Bob Larkin's units. John is a kind and friendly individual who has struggled most of his life with substance abuse and this abuse prevents him from having a long term living situation. With the assistance of a difficult conversation with the HRC team, John was able to make the choice to sign off on a Representative Payee who would make sure his rent got paid and that John had the monthly funds he needed for food and other necessities. It was explained to him that he had a choice to make, and he made the right choice. Though John still struggles, Bob understands this struggle and has allowed John a place to stay even when things get a bit rocky. Recently, while in recovery, John wrote some of the following in a letter to his Landlord Bob...

"I thought that I should take the time to say thank you! For giving me the support on my road to wellness and I have a lot of gratitude towards you... And I'd like to let you know that I'm grateful to have you for a landlord. See you when I come home Bob, and God Bless."



YOUR WAY HOME
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

ONE HURT, ONE HOPE

A personal reflection from
PCRC Chaplain Stephanie Noble

As I wake up at 7:30 am and look outside my third floor apartment window I see lots of people standing outside the building across the street. I would also ask myself what is going on that day after day people are standing in line waiting for this place to open. As I would then continue to get ready for the day and head across the street I could find the Pottstown Cluster or as the locals call it "The Clusters". I walked in and began my first day as a volunteer working in the warehouse unloading cars and other deliveries and sorting the donations for the store and stocking the shelves. As I

got to know more people and talked to the staff I was connected with the head chaplain and had a chat.

After much prayer and discussion, I had filled all the paper work out and began a new ministry at the Pottstown Cluster as a chaplain. When I began, I was excited and yet nervous even though I have done things like this before; these are people who are hungry, homeless, jobless and had so much hurt. As I continue to pray about it, I would ask God to show who to pray with and the words to say to encourage the people that he loves and cares about and has created in me a heart and a burden for the very same people who are homeless, jobless and hungry.

As the people or the "clients" would

come in and fill in the waiting area at 9 am on Wednesday mornings I would notice how fast the seats would fill up and notice several mothers with their young ones, couples talking, and others just observing the scene around them. I would begin to approach a few people asking how they are doing and letting them know who I was, a chaplain here at the Cluster. I would then ask to pray with them, however I found that sometimes that was not enough.

Clients would continue to come in and fill in the empty seats, including the ones by the door. They were by themselves or waiting for someone. These are the ones that God wanted me to meet. I would go

(continued on page 4)

JOIN US AT PCRC'S 5TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER AND CONCERT

Save the Date!

5th Annual Fundraising Dinner & Concert Event
to Benefit the Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities



THE PHANTOM
of the
OPERA

WICKED

SOUTH PACIFIC

Open Your Heart

"Some Enchanted Evening"

A fundraising dinner & concert event featuring
your favorite musical theater classics

Camelot

Les Misérables

Join Maggie Riker, Dave Huffer, Myra Forrest, and musical guests



Saturday September 24th 5:00 – 10:00 PM
Sunnybrook Ballroom, Pottstown

For information, call (610) 970.5995
visit www.pottstowncluster.org

PCRC's Volunteer Annual Fundraising Dinner Committee, led by Maggie Riker, Director of Marketing at Cody Systems Inc., has been very busy in planning and preparing for our signature "**Open Your Heart**" fundraiser which is being held on Saturday, September 24, 2016 at Sunnybrook Ballroom. We also wish to thank our returning event sponsors: Cody Systems and Video Ray.

This year's concert theme is **Some Enchanted Evening** and will feature top

musical hits that we all know and love from Broadway productions performed by an incredibly talented group of professional singers hailing from our local community. You will be delightfully wowed by their vocal skills in addition to enjoying a full evening of wine and hors d'oeuvres social hour, buffet dinner, cash bar and a program that highlights the all-important work of PCRC. In addition, there will be a live and silent auction of some amazing excursions and mystery baskets!

PCRC's programs exist because of the generosity of the Greater Pottstown Community. The money raised from this Annual Fundraising Dinner and Concert allows PCRC each year to serve nearly 20,000 individuals in our area who struggle to have their basic needs met for food clothing and shelter.

We hope you can join us for a time of community celebration of PCRC's work nourishing lives and strengthening families.

ONE HURT, ONE HOPE (continued on page 2)

over and sit next to them and ask them how they were doing after I introduced myself. They would begin to share with me their many hurts in their life or the things that are going on. I would go on asking if I could pray with them and find out if they needed a church. It is through this very moment comes a smile of hope on their faces.

One day, after praying with an older woman, she told me, "I knew there was a reason I came here today; it was to see you". One hurt can be touched by a simple prayer; will equal a smile of hope to one person. As I continue to minister and meet with the people and see them as God sees them, my heart is broken for the very same reasons their hearts are broken. One hurt healed by a prayer equals one hope for one person.

**"THANK
YOU"**

.....
WE NEED YOUR HELP MORE THAN EVER,
TO VOLUNTEER PLEASE CONTACT US AT
610.970.5995

THE VANGUARD GROUP ANNUAL "ALL CANS ON DECK" FOOD DRIVE



Vanguard exceeded its goal of 500 tons of food for area pantries such as ours and raised a record 540 tons of food!

PCRC is very fortunate to benefit each year from The Vanguard Group's Annual "All Cans on Deck" Food Drive. On July 6th, thanks to L&J Transportation, 16 pallets of food were delivered to the Cluster Outreach Center. Vanguard volunteers, led by Becky Muhlenburg, unloaded and sorted the food over a two-day period. Vanguard's generosity does not end with 16 pallets of food. At the end of July, Vanguard plans to deliver another truckload of food for our pantry.

Becky shared with us that this year, Vanguard exceeded its goal of 500 tons of food for area pantries such as ours and raised a record 540 tons of food!

PCRC relies on this yearly contribution that will provide food security to the families living in the Greater Pottstown area. We serve over 400 families per month through our programs to help clients improve their overall stability.

PCRC and our community appreciate the support and teamwork of everyone involved in this successful project.

UP3 EXPANDING IN THE COMMUNITY

Amy Rossman, Community Engagement and Education



UP3 workshop series empowers members in the community to share their journey and know their story matters.



The Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities is moving forward with the eighth **UP3 (Understanding Poverty to Plan and Persevere)** workshop series beginning in September. The workshop series empowers members in the community to share their journey, have their voices heard, and know their story matters. In addition to community participants who are struggling with feeling isolated in their walk, we are seeking allies in the community to come alongside UP3 participants. In September our hope is to introduce a group of both participants and allies committed to the 16 workshop series to better understand one another's journeys while building relationships of trust. The workshops will begin the

week of Labor Day with graduation scheduled for the first week of December. We are seeking a location and workshops will be held in the evenings with dinner provided.

Additionally, another opportunity to support our UP3 graduates would be during our bi-weekly potluck dinners at Zion UCC Church, Pottstown. Biweekly UP3 graduates, their families, and community members come together for a potluck dinner with a short program to also offer an opportunity for fellowship between neighbors in the community. For a schedule of the potluck dinners and if you or someone you know would like to join our efforts in bridging the gap in our community, **please contact me, at 610-970-5995 or arossman@pottstowncluster.org** for further information. We are always interested in speaking in local churches, houses of worship, and community groups to facilitate a conversation of understanding and respect among our neighbors. Thank you for your support and look forward to speaking with you!



HELPING WITH BASIC NEEDS –

A day in the life of the Caseworker

Joshua M Reedy, Caseworker

A client came into my office distraught because she has been trying to get a new ID so that she would be able to cash her Social Security Check. From her story, she and her friend had been to just about every office in Montgomery and Berks County as different offices sent them elsewhere to get what was required for her to get her ID. Upon coming into my office, I discovered that what she needed was her birth certificate

and informed her that we could simply order that on-line. She seemed unsure as many other agencies had told her they were unable to help her. Her friend was willing to pay the cost of the birth certificate and within ten minutes I was able to print an order confirmation. She began to weep tears of joy as it has been several months that she has been trying to get someone to help her with this. She will now be able to take her birth certificate, which should arrive in the next few weeks, get her ID which will in turn allow her to cash her Social Security check and continue with normal life.

POTTSTOWN CLUSTER OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
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POTTSTOWN, PA 19464

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For more information visit: www.pottstowncluster.org

NEWSLETTER

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING A POSITIVE
ATTITUDE, ACTION AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR MISSION



Pottstown Cluster
OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
Nourishing Lives. Strengthening Families.

FALL 2016