



Written with and for individuals experiencing homelessness to break down the walls.

ISSUE 9 • SPRING 2015

## Homelessness: Everyone in Life is Only One Step Away

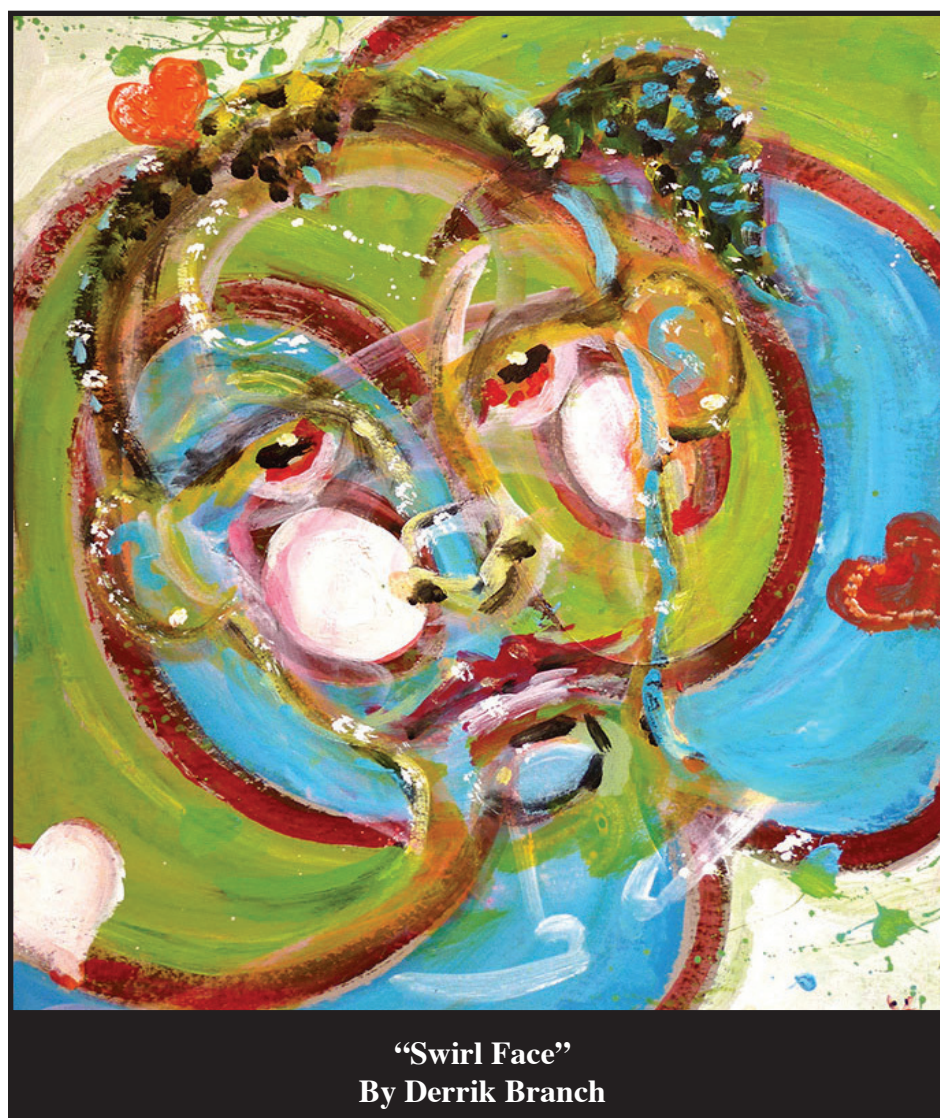
By Lisa McMillon

I worked at a nursing home for 12 years, the longest that I have ever kept a job. I thought I was going to retire with that job. I had a great 401k plan, four weeks paid vacation and all the bells and whistles that come with job longevity. My boss started bringing in family members who were recent college graduates and asked the staff to help train them in various departments.

At first, everyone went with the program. However, slowly but steadily they started laying off employees and the family members starting getting various positions. I thought I should be safe. I had been with the company for 12 years; staying overnight in winter emergencies and filling in when they did not have adequate staff coverage. And then it happened. I was feeling very leery, butterflies in my stomach, when the boss informed me that they didn't have adequate funding. They would be laying off some employees, and I was one of them. I was in shock and total astonishment.

*"How could this happen to me?"*

I later found out that the dietary aide that I was training, so that I could take vacation, would be filling my position. I was making \$15.00



**"Swirl Face"**  
By Derrik Branch

an hour and they paid her \$9.75. I applied for unemployment, but this took some time to process. My bills were accumulating and I started falling behind on my rent, PSE&G bill

and other living expenses. I started going to local food banks. My pride was consuming me.

*"How could this happen to me?"*

I gave my landlord my last four

unemployment checks, and explained to him that I was waiting for an extension. A week later, I got a court-ordered eviction notice.

*"How could this happen to me?"*

I went to court and got a 30-day hardship stay as I had been living there for 11 years. I was praying that my unemployment would come through. But after 30 days, I was evicted from my apartment. My unemployment check came through after I was evicted, so that money was consumed while staying with various relatives and at hotels.

But as soon as you don't have any money, people make you feel unwelcome. I had to split up my family, stay at various places because of my monetary situation and spend most of my money so that my child could stay in a stable environment. It was heart-wrenching.

*"I was homeless!"*

I got a job at a friendly restaurant and was getting paid partial unemployment. I went from 100 to zero real quick. I hated leaving my son at night, hated splitting up, but I had to do what I had to scratch a meager living. I would go without eating properly sometimes just so that he could eat. In between working, I

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### SNAP and WIC



**Pages 4 & 11**  
Check out the two policy features about food stamp programs.

### Resource Guide



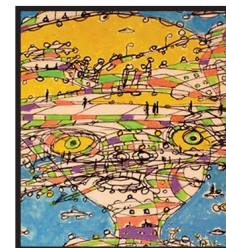
**Pages 6 & 7**  
Information on shelters, human and health services, and food pantries.

### "Not All Bad Here."



**Page 8**  
Dive into a personal story written by Essence B. Scott.

### "Pleading with my Ancestors"



**Page 12**  
Rose Browne at TASK tributes a prose poem to her ancestors.



# ‘The FunkTASKtiks’ Give Voice to the Homeless

*“As long as I’m in the Trenton area, I plan to stay with ‘The FunkTASKtiks.’”*  
— Preston Demarco

By Kris Alvarez

For 51-year-old bass player Derrick Branch, writing original music has become a fundamental medium for self-expression. Preston Demarco, 62, picked up his first pair of drumsticks at around 10 years old and has since been extremely enamored with all things music. Singing has provided Carol Johnson, 72, with the opportunity to communicate with others in a powerful and unique way.

As members of “The FunkTASKtiks,” a band that formed as a result of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen’s (TASK) “SHARE Project,” Branch, Demarco and Johnson are amongst many other members of the program that come together to express their musical talents and passions not only for the Mercer County community to see, but for themselves to enjoy.

“One of the missions of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen is to provide self-sufficiency and to improve the quality of life for our patrons,” said TASK Development and Community

Relations Coordinator J Steinhauer. “And in 2009, we developed the ‘SHARE Project’ to act as an outlet for creative expression.”

Initially, the “SHARE Project” focused on helping participants interested in spoken word, poetry, art, short story writing and script writing to generate their own original works. Members would then present their ideas to others in the group for feedback and share their finished products with the local community.

In 2010, however, the program expanded its resources for members after receiving donations of music equipment, including electric/acoustic drums, bass guitars, keyboards, electric/acoustic guitars and other rhythmic instruments. What started as a program with less than 10 members grew over time through word of mouth and currently benefits 40 to 50 individuals, 25 to 30 of which are regular participants.

“Before ‘The FunkTASKtiks, I was mainly doing spoken word. I



“Music”

By Brook Lachelle Beatty

would get street beats from somebody. I didn’t have a band and I wasn’t that comfortable playing and singing in front of other people,” said Branch. “But I wanted my music to be just as strong as my lyrics. So, I got with other people to get them to help me play my music.” Branch is also the bassist and vocalist for another urban / indie band from Trenton known as the “Underground Rats.”

Under an open-door policy, all participants are given free range to practice and write songs from any and all genres of music, regardless of their musical skills. Though the initiative was birthed by TASK, members of “The FunkTASKtiks” dictate the direction in which the band portion of the program is headed.

“The program kind of adapts to the artists,” Steinhauer said.

Practices, which are held every Monday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the TASK multipurpose room, are divvied up into two halves; a one-hour free-jam session

and a one-hour “open mic” session, where members can bounce song ideas off one another. The group ranges from original pieces to covers of popular songs.

“It’s not really scripted music,” said Demarco, who is also enrolled in a program offered by Hamilton-based employment placement company, Opportunities For All, Inc. “They don’t knock you off the stage if you drop a drumstick or anything either.”

Though the band serves as a productive means of expression for all, musicians like Demarco, find his participation in the group to be an escape from his day-to-day routine.

“After a long time behind bars, I met J at the soup kitchen and I wandered into the music room,” Demarco said. “I’m not walking the streets right now. I’m not sitting in the crowded mission ... It grates on my nerves everyday that I have to stay in, but this takes me away from



“Bald-Headed Band”

By Elaine Jones

*Continued on Page 8*



# “It is as simple as one wish.”

By Emery Gewirtz

A day at the movies, new clothes for school or your own laptop. These are simple things a lot of us take for granted. When you were growing up did you ever think of where your dollhouse came from or what it took to have that new videogame? A lot of the time, children in foster care do not have these simple pleasures.

According to the website of the National Foster Care Coalition, every year around 254,000 children enter foster care. The foundation One Simple Wish works hard to support children who are becoming a part of the system. One Simple Wish does not want these children to get lost in the shuffle; instead they work to help them be seen as individuals.

Danielle Gletow, who is a foster mother herself, founded the organization in 2008. She, along with many volunteers and donors, has helped over 35,000 children to date. In 2013, CNN named Gletow amongst their “Top 10 Heroes.”

Gletow’s goal is to have kids be kids. Sometimes even the most basic wishes are the most meaningful to a child. Gletow sees children as full of endless possibilities. They can all be extraordinary if they are given the tools to explore, grow and find out who they are.

One Simple Wish is a village of people who care about children. There are multitudes of people who volunteer time, donate money and of course, grant wishes. Anyone can be a fairy godmother to these children by granting a wish.

The beautiful thing about this organization is that it shows people can care deeply about others they will never know. If you just ask for help, a lot of people will answer the call.

Sarah Dale, the Community Relations Manager, said, “It is an incredible journey. People care about the little things that bring normalcy to their lives.”

From a personal standpoint, Dale said, “I have kids and I can’t

imagine my kids walking through even a portion of what these kids walk through.” This is why she has worked hard with One Simple Wish to grant nearly 99 percent of all wishes.

“Some people can’t be foster parents, but I can give my time to support them and draw attention to who they are as people and not who they are as a statistic,” Dale attested.

One Simple Wish also goes beyond helping children in foster care; they make sure the children are cared for after they leave. According to the website of One Simple Wish, more than 20,000 children age out of foster care each year with little to no support. At age 18, these children have no family, no siblings, no relatives and no mentors to turn to.

This foundation is needed because these are the children in critical need for real attention. According to the organization’s website, “Children who age out of foster care are several times more likely to end up homeless, addicted to drugs or incarcerated.” Furthermore, the website states, it is estimated that more than 250,000 prisoners in the United States were once foster children. The average child in foster care remains in the system for more than two years, living away from their family, friends and familiar environments.

Over 8,500 wishes have been granted since the organization opened its doors.

“It takes a lot of effort and takes a lot of people coming together,” said Dale. “But it gets done.”

So sometimes, perhaps, it is as simple as one wish. 🏠

## One Simple Wish

1977 North Olden Ave, #292  
Trenton, N.J. 08618

Phone: (609) 883-8484  
Email: [info@onesimplewish.org](mailto:info@onesimplewish.org)  
Website: [www.onesimplewish.org](http://www.onesimplewish.org)



“Bird House Series 4”

By Kathy Bird

## Wisdom and Knowledge

By Derrick “D9” Branch

Poetry

Knowledge is to wisdom

like water is to cup.

The more of one you have,  
the quicker the other one is filled up.

Wisdom is like knowledge,  
but knowledge must come first.

The better quality of knowledge,  
the more your wisdom is worth.

Some think they have wisdom much before their time,  
but wisdom only comes with the maturity of the mind.

Some say that I am wise, and that I know a lot,  
but I know only of my experiences and most of what I was taught.

In order to get wisdom of a solid, useful kind,  
you must live long enough and do good with that time.

Wisdom is to knowledge like father is to son.

You must first have the latter, before the other one can come.

# Taking a closer look: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

## *Which would you choose?*

By Katie LaBarbera

Imagine it is the middle of winter, it is 12 degrees Fahrenheit outside on this particular day, and including the wind-chill, it feels like -5 degrees Fahrenheit. Many people hibernate in their homes with the heat on full blast, wrapped in a blanket sipping hot chocolate in the warmth. Now imagine a delicious, extravagant home-cooked meal. There is juicy steak, savory mashed potatoes, salad and a colorful assortment of steamed vegetables. But you can only have one: heating or food. Imagine choosing between having heat in your home and having food. Which would you choose?

According to the N.J. Federation of Food Banks hunger survey “49% of emergency food clients in N.J. report having to make the decision between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel.”

Making the decision between paying for food and paying for utilities is not the only struggle people face. The difficult decisions people are also forced to make include paying for food or paying their rent or mortgage, as well as deciding between food or medical care.

Putting food on the table should not mean sacrificing other necessities.

People use the money provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for other reasons besides purchasing food. Granted that there may be some loopholes within SNAP, the program has positive aspects that work toward the overall goal of ending hunger.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally paid program that provides food purchasing aid for low to no income individuals and families living in the United States. This program is one of

the largest in domestic hunger safety. So large, that about 48 million people utilize the program.

The program aims to help eligible people in assisting them to make nutritional and informed decisions about food. SNAP recognizes that New Jersey is one of the largest populations of SNAP recipients in the country, with numbers nearly doubling nationwide in times before a recession.

According to the website, [www.povertyprogram.com](http://www.povertyprogram.com), half of all American children will receive SNAP benefits before age 20, proving how much of an impact this program has on people.

On the other hand, as stated previously, many people do not have the means to provide both food and heat in their homes for their families. According to the 2012 USDA Analysis of FNS’ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Fraud Prevention and Detection Efforts, many recipients take advantage of the SNAP program by trading their benefits for cash or such things that are banned by SNAP, like cigarettes and liquor.

Moreover, such fraudulent accounts may occur due to the fact that SNAP denies recipients hot foods. Go back to that cold winter night; a hot bowl of soup or a warm meal would certainly make a huge difference in someone’s life. Because there are no hot meals being served, it is arguable that the food SNAP does offer does not meet optimal nutritional standards.

In addition, SNAP has recently been under scrutiny for changing their requirements for eligibility. This change is so drastic that about a third

## *SNAP: Then and Now*

By Michael Mytrowitz & Zack Mulhern

The history of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can be traced back to 1933 when the Agricultural Adjustment Act was signed, which gave support to farmers who fell on hard times during the Great Depression.

Over the decades, laws and regulations evolved, eventually leading to the creation of SNAP to help combat the Recession of 2008.

Today, SNAP is the largest food assistance program in the nation, assisting 14 percent of the country that are in need of food and better nutrition.

According to Rucha Gadre, the Director Mercer Street Friends’ Food Bank, their SNAP facility alone helps 10 to 15 households per month in Mercer County.

The government ensures the stamps are not used for foods that do not promote good health or considered luxury goods.

In order to get into SNAP there are certain requirements that need to be met. Gross income, family size, assets such

as vehicles, housing and legal status, are looked at when someone applies.

Even though SNAP was made to help people who are in need of assistance the program has been criticized. There have been many cases of fraud and exploitation of the act. People sell the food stamps and in many cases that money is used on illegal or destructive substances.

The SNAP program is not perfect as there are multiple regulations and requirements that can be very detrimental to those in need. For example, according to the Congressional Research Service July 2014 report, the SNAP-eligible gross monthly income is \$1,245 or less per person. For a household of four, the SNAP-eligible gross monthly income is \$2,552.

While these numbers seem very reasonable, the gross monthly income is the amount before any deductions are taken out such as taxes.

Say a single person working a very low paying job earns \$1,300 of gross income monthly. Once taxes, social security and other deductibles are taken out, the actual dollar amount that the person is left with is only going to be around \$1,000.

Think about trying to be an adult and feed yourself and provide yourself with basic needs and all you have is \$1,000 per month. Not the easiest thing to do.

However, in certain permitting areas, some eligible candidates (elderly, homeless or disabled patrons) can actually go to a restaurant and

get a free or discounted meal. This can be very valuable for people who are not always capable of cooking their own meal.

Gadre detailed another flaw in the program that just appeared recently.

“What happened after October 2014 is that

the utilities allowance was taken away from a lot of families,” said Gadre. “So the utility bill was not necessarily in their names. When you have an added expense which is not being accounted for and are getting less benefits, it is becoming harder for families to get by from paycheck to paycheck.”

Gadre agrees that the citizens are not completely satisfied with what SNAP has to offer.

Many people across the country rely on SNAP every single day. The program has evolved and continues to adapt to new regulations and social aspects. However, there are some things the program can do to improve and push the program to even greater heights.

***“About 48 million people utilize the program. Half of all American children will receive SNAP benefits before age 20.”***

***“Today, SNAP is the largest food assistance program in the nation, assisting 14 percent of the country.”***

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**"Pacific Pink"**  
By Sandra Livingston

### ***"One Step Away"*** ***Continued from Page 1***

would apply for jobs every morning for nine months. I searched for housing and a decent job. I finally found an apartment, put the deposit down, but that was delayed because an elderly man's house caught fire and he had to live in the apartment temporarily. Another setback.

My mother called me one day. She was always encouraging me to pray. I was becoming desolate.

*"When is the Lord going to answer my prayers?"*

Slowly, the miracles started happening. I got a job offer. I immediately accepted the position. I was ecstatic when the woman informed me that I

could start in two weeks. I started the job, and loved it. I got off to a rough start, very rough, but I endured.

I was talking to one of my supervisors one day and she asked me, "Are you okay? You look very stressed."

I replied, "I'm OK." She then asked me if she could pray for me, and I said, "Yes." She prayed, and I started to cry. She was adamant, "What's wrong, Lisa?"

"I'm homeless," I said. "I'm grateful for my job, but I need an apartment so me and my child can live together."

She said, "Why didn't you tell someone about your situation?"

She started to help me mentally and materially. Then I got a second

job. She told me to keep the faith — it's coming. I was working both jobs and checked with the apartment complex daily. The landlord called me about three months later and said, "Lisa, I have good news and bad news. The older gentleman will be relocating to the Senior Center, but the apartment hasn't been painted."

I told her, "I just need my own place. I'll take it, they can paint it later." She said she would have to get a lock for the apartment. The first night, she said she didn't have time to get it. She called me the second night and said the same thing. I hung up the phone on her. She called me back and said to look out the window. I looked up and she was dangling some keys. I

left the chicken in the fryer. I was crying and happy at the same time.

It was over.

I had a decent job and an apartment. I lived in that apartment for a whole month without cable or television. Just a couch and a bed. I was just happy to have a place to call home again.

As for the job, I'm still working there and it has gotten better with time. I have an extended family and friends, and I'm doing what I love: cooking. Come see me! The food is fantastic, and you can get anything from soup to nuts for free. You can even get deodorant and soap! I invite you to come dine with me at the Trenton Are Soup Kitchen. 🍴

## **Bulletin Board**

### **HomeFront Family Campus**

For the last 12 years, HomeFront has provided short-term emergency housing for over 1,800 families at their Family Preservation Center. This summer, HomeFront will be taking its efforts to new heights.

The new HomeFront Family Campus will be housed on an 8.5-acre decommissioned Naval base in Ewing, NJ. Featuring a 42,000-square-foot building with 38 dorm suites along with two ancillary buildings, the venue will serve as a one-stop social service center for its visitors. The space will allow HomeFront to expand the reach of its current programs such as ArtSpace and WorkFirst as well as create new opportunities for its clients such as: 24-hour childcare, a beauty parlor, teaching kitchen, outdoor gardens, and satellite offices for Womanspace, Family Guidance and a Wellness Clinic. By establishing this spectrum of support services, HomeFront is seeking to help families overcome the obstacles that often times prevent them for achieving self-sufficiency. 🍴

— Raj Manimaran

### **The Rescue Mission of Trenton Celebrates 100 Years**

Since it first opened its doors in 1915, the Rescue Mission of Trenton has been offering support services to men, women, and families in the Mercer Country area who are in need of shelter, food, and clothing; happily embracing the "homeless, the hungry, the transient and the addicted" of Trenton and surrounding towns. In addition to its emergency services, the Mission offers an adult education program, and outpatient and residential services, among many others.

Back in October, the Mission held a "clean out" sale in preparation for its 100th anniversary. More events are projected to be held throughout the year, including a celebration in mid-April. According to the Mission's website, the theme of the celebration will be "Rebuilding Lives — Making Miracles Happen."

The Mission and all those involved with its many projects continue to be an integral part of the Trenton community. After 100 years of dedication to reshaping a struggling city, we wish them nothing short of 100 more! 🍴

— Engy Shaaban

# Where You Can Turn for Help!

All days and times are subject to change without notice. Created April 2015 and will update for each issue.

## Trenton and Mercer County Homeless Shelters

### Amani House

518-520 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, 25 bed facility.  
Transitional housing (24 single adult males between the ages of 18-65). Call for appointment. Tel. (609)-393-3168 ext. 13.

### Anchor House Inc.

482 Center Street, Trenton, NJ  
24-hour program for runaway, homeless and at-risk youth ages 10-17 in Mercer County.  
Anchor House Shelter, school Outreach Program, (609) 396-8329  
Anchorage Transitional Living Program, (609) 989-1625  
Anchor Link Street Outreach Program, (609) 218-5630  
Anchor Line, (609) 218-5630  
(609) 396-8329, www.anchorhousenj.org

### Community Innovations

Administration Office – 509 Perry Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 826-9480. Trenton Family Preservation House (17 Families & Single Women). Chester House 1 – 24-Single Men – ages 18 and up. Chester House-11 – 15 Single Men - ages 18 and up. Mercer County Board of Social Services Referrals

### YWCA's Dunham Hall

Main Office: 140 East Hanover Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 396-8291  
Dunham Hall Residence is 127 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ  
Dunham Hall is a 90-bed SRO (single room occupancy ) women residence that provides permanent housing to low-income and homeless. (609) 396-2413

### Escher Street SRO & Transitional

50 Escher Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 392-4599  
Single Occupancy Rooms for single men and women (Project Specific Section 8); Transitional Housing for single men (26 beds) and women (8 beds). SRO accepts transitional housing clients and walk-ins. Referred by MCBOS or Department of Corrections.

### HomeFront

Administrative Offices  
1880 Princeton Ave, Lawrenceville, NJ  
Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Housing are available. Call for appointment. (609) 989-9417

### Triad House (LifeTies)

1301 W. State Street, Trenton, NJ, 08618 (609) 394-6747  
Providing 24/7 shelter for homeless LGBTQ youth ages 14 to 18.

### Rescue Mission of Trenton

98 Carroll St, Trenton NJ, (609) 695-1436  
Emergency Shelter: Overnight shelter, meals and clothing for single adult men and women.  
Soup Kitchen: Every Sunday and 1st Saturday in 5-Saturday month  
Addictions Treatment: Outpatient, Intensive Outpatient Program, Long-Term Residential, Halfway House  
Housing: Transitional Housing; Rooming and Boarding House; Permanent Supportive Housing  
Other Services: Adult education, job training, thrift store, courtesy store and Day Center services for homeless patrons

### Womanspace

Mercer County, NJ (609) 394-9000; 1-800-572-SAFE (7233)  
Emergency services designed to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault immediately following the initial crisis. 24-hour hotlines and Spanish-speaking staff available. Short-term emergency housing in a confidential location for victims of domestic violence.

### UPI - Trenton Treatment Center-22-Bed Transtional Housing Program

56 escher Street, Trenton, NJ, 08609 (609) 392-2822 and Fax: (609) 392-3215  
Providing transitional housing service for single homeless males of Mercer County. Accepting transitional housing referrals from Mercer County Board of Social Services.

## Human Services

### A Better Way

1040 Pennsylvania Ave., Trenton, NJ (609) 392-1224  
Specializes in mentoring, re-entry (has program) & gang reduction.

### Catholic Charities

**Mercer Emergency & Community Services**  
132 N. Warren St, Trenton, NJ 08618. Outpatient (609) 394-8847.  
Provides support related to housing, food, mental health,.

### Crisis Ministry of Mercer County, Inc.

123 East Hanover Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 396-9355  
714-15 S. Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ  
61 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ (609) 921-2135  
Financial Services for Low Income People in Mercer County. Food Pantry; Emergency Financial Assistance. Call or walk-ins.

### Greater Goods Thrift Store

114 Rogers Avenue Hightstown, NJ 08520 (609) 448-2702  
Monday & Tuesday 10am - 3pm, Wednesday - Saturday 10am – 7pm.

### City of Trenton – Health & Human Services

(609) 815-2160  
Emergency assistance for back rent, first month rent for the homeless and/or at-risk homeless and as well as assistance for Senior Citizens.

### Helping Arms

50 Escher Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 396-7515  
Provides counseling, employment placement services, housing and other social services to low income people, and operates a prison re-entry initiative in Trenton. Referrals from Dept. of Corrections.

### HomeFront

Administrative Offices  
1880 Princeton Ave, Lawrenceville, NJ  
Homeless prevention (rent/security); permanent service-enriched affordable housing; food pantry; FreeStore; Furnish the Future. Mon-Fri 9am-5pm. Except Tuesday 12-8pm (609) 989-9417.

### Opportunities For All

1701 S. Broad Street, Hamilton, NJ (609) 394-7000  
Training and employment opportunities to a diverse group of job seekers. We specialize in working with applicants with disabilities.

### Family Guidance Center

946 Englewood Avenue, Trenton, NJ (609) 924-1320 or (1-800) 813-0555. Credit Counseling, Financial, Financial Assistance

### Community Health Law Project

225 East State Street, Suit 5, Trenton NJ (609) 392-5553.  
Discusses legal questions with those with disabilities. Will make appointments.

### VA Hamilton Outpatient Clinic

3635 Quakerbridge Road, Hamilton, NJ (609) 570-6600  
General Medicine for veterans.

### RISE Main Office

116 North Main Street Hightstown, NJ 08520 (609) 443-4464  
The Rise main office is open: Monday-Friday 9am - 4pm  
(Closed for lunch from 1pm - 2pm daily)

### Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS)

200 Woolverton St., Trenton, NJ (609) 989-4320.  
Complaint Line: (609) 989-4400. Social Services: (609) 989-4451. Assist individuals with General Assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income and other services.  
M-F, 8:30am- 4:30 pm, T 8:30am-8:30pm. Can call or walk-in.

### County Clerk's Office

209 S. Broad Street, PO Box 8068, Trenton, NJ (609) 989-6998  
ID's- Voter registration forms, Mercer County photo ID, passport.  
Mon-Fri. 8am-4pm; Wed. until 6:45pm. Walk-ins accepted.

### County Connection

Rte 33 and Paxson Avenue, Hamilton Township, NJ  
County ID card and passport services. Mon, Wed, Fri. 10am – 6pm. Tuesday & Thursday, 10 am – 8 pm. Saturday, 10 am – 3 pm.  
Walk-ins accepted.

### One-Stop Career Center

(NJ Dept. of Labor), 26 Yard Avenue, Trenton, NJ (877) 989-AJOB, (609) 989-6523. One Stop Center - offers workforce readiness services and career resources. Referrals from MCBOS, unemployment. Walk-ins accepted. (Monday-Friday), 8:30am- 5pm, Tuesdays, 8:30 am- 8:30pm.

### Legal Services

Central Jersey Legal Services, Inc., 198 West State Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 695-6249. Will discuss legal issues with individuals, landlord/tenant or issues and will make appointments. Call for appointment (9am-4:30pm).

### Salvation Army - Homeless Drop-In Center

575 East State Street, Trenton. Hours 8am – 3pm, 5 days a week

### Office on Aging

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ 08650  
Information for Seniors (877) 222-3737, (609) 989-6661

### County of Mercer - Department of Human Services

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ (609) 468-8296 and Fax: (609) 989-6032

### Child Care Connection

1001 Spruce St, Suite 201, Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-7770. Resource and Referral agency assists families in their search for quality child care and provides access to child care subsidy funds. Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri. 9am-5pm. Thurs. 9am-6pm

### Social Security

635 South Clinton Avenue, 2nd Floor, Trenton, NJ (609) 989-2254; 1-800-772-1213. Assists clients with social security card replacement, Disability info, questions and assistance in applying for SSI and SSDI. Call or walk-in.

### Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

72 1/2 Escher Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 695-5456  
Soup Kitchen, Food, Food Pantry; Adult Education; Computer Classes; Job Search Assistance. Monday to Friday Lunch from 10:30am to 12:50pm; Monday to Thursday Dinner from 3:30pm to 5pm

### Ujima Urban Women's Center

1001 Pennington Road, Ewing, NJ (609) 882– 2098  
P-roviding compassion, advocacy, and training to urban women residing in Trenton and surrounding areas. Call for Appointment.

### United Progress Inc. (UPI)

162 West State Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 392-2161 (Main Office). Provides substance abuse treatment, HIV/AIDS counseling, employment and job development counseling, emergency food, utility, housing services and homeless prevention. (609) 392-2161

### Veteran Services

20 Washington Place, 3rd Floor, Newark, NJ (973) 645-1441 or at the Mercer County Department of Veterans Affairs. Assists veterans with information on services available to them, assist with forms, makes appointments. The health benefit number is (877) 222-VETS. LoHomeless Veteran in need of help? Call (1-877) 4AID VET (1-877-424-3838). Call for appointment.

### VA Homeless Intervention Program

Hotline is intended to assist homeless Veterans and their families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community.  
(1-877) 4AID VET (877-424-3838)(National)

### US Veterans Center

934 Parkway Avenue, Ewing, NJ (609) 882-5744  
NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs : Mercer Veterans Affairs 2280 Hamilton Ave., Hamilton NJ. (609) 989-6120. Companion program to Federal Department of Veterans Affairs. Homeless intervention.

### Womanspace

Mercer County, NJ (609) 394-9000; 1-800-572-SAFE (7233)  
Emergency services designed to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault immediately following the initial crisis. 24-hour hotlines and Spanish-speaking staff available. Short-term emergency housing in a confidential location for victims of domestic violence.

### Community Justice Center

(609)218-5120. Encouraging the empowerment, resiliency and rights of those struggling with disabilities by providing the essential ingredients of legal education, outreach, advocacy and representation. Will discuss legal questions with veterans and disabled and will make appointments.

### Division of Disability Services

1-8880-2850-3036  
An information and referral line that helps with all disabilities.

**\*Dial 211 for Community Resources.**





# Health Services

## Capital Health System at Fuld

750 Brunswick Avenue, Trenton, NJ. (609) 394-6000.  
Clinics, Medicaid, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care.

## Capital Health System at Mercer

446 Bellevue Avenue, Trenton, NJ. (609) 394-4000  
Clinics, Medicaid, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care.

## Capital Health System Crisis Center

750 Brunswick Avenue, Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-6722  
Mental Health Crisis Assistance. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare

## Carrier Clinic

Rte 601, Belle Mead, NJ. 1-800-933-3579 Access Center (24/7).  
Specializing in psychiatric and substance abuse treatment. Accepts Medicaid (mental issues only) and Medicare.

## Family Guidance Center - Outpatient Care

946 Englewood Avenue, Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-4357

## Brighter Day Behavioral Health Services

2783 Brunswick Pike, Suite 302, Lawrenceville, NJ. Call for appointment. (609) 771-3777. Program for the mentally ill and chemically addicted. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

## Mount Carmel Guild

73 North Clinton Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08609, (609) 392-5159. Limited Utility and Prescription assistance. Home Health Nursing Services: visits for medication management, vital sign checks, pre-filling syringes, administer injections for economically disadvantaged, medically frail elderly. Free and do not accept third party payments.

## Henry J. Austin Health Center

317 Chambers Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 278-5900. Adult Medicine and the above services. The satellite centers are open Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Appointments are encouraged.

## Greater Trenton Behavioral HealthCare-Other Programs

See [www.gtbhc.org](http://www.gtbhc.org) for information on services and locations.

## Princeton House Behavioral Health

741 Mount Lucas Road, Princeton, NJ. (1-800) 242-2550; (609)- 497-3347 Intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

## Rescue Mission of Trenton

96 Carroll St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-3533. Residential and Outpatient Treatment for addictions and co-occurring disorders.

## Robert Wood Johnson Hospital at Hamilton

One Hamilton Health Place, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 586-7900  
Clinics, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

## St. Francis Medical Center

601 Hamilton Avenue, Trenton, NJ. (609) 599-5000  
Clinics, Medicaid, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

## Trenton Division of Health

218 N. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-3242  
Health Promotions and Clinical Services; Health Incentive Program for Women (HIP4W).

## Trenton Treatment Center (Part of United Progress, Inc.)

56 Escher Street, Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-2822  
Trenton Treatment Center offers residential (for men only) and outpatient programs for those addicted to drug and alcohol. Accepts referrals from MCBOS, client walk-ins, and referrals from other service provider agencies, and uninsured Mercer County residents.

## University Medical Center at Princeton

253 Witherspoon St, Princeton, NJ. (609) 497-4000  
Clinics, General Acute Medical Care. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

## Oxford House-Half

(301) 587-2916, Toll Free: (800) 689-6411  
Way houses to transition from rehab to independent living for individuals experiencing drug and alcohol addiction.

## Henry J. Austin Health Center (3 locations)

321 North Warren Street (Main) Trenton, NJ - (609) 278-5900  
Offers fast track, pediatrics, adult medicine, OB/GYN care, social services, podiatry, eye care, behavioral health care, dental services, HIV and Hepatitis C testing and treatment. Have ID. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare. Monday through Friday 8am-5pm and Sat 9-1.

## Trenton Adult Rehabilitation Center

Salvation Army: (609) 599-9801

## Henry J. Austin Health Center

112 Ewing Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 278-5900. Adult Medicine and the above services and dental care. Open Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Appointments are encouraged.

## New Horizons Treatment Service, Inc.

132 Perry St., Trenton, NJ. Appointment: (609) 394-8988.  
Provides an array of medical, clinical and special services, i.e. substance Abuse treatment, detoxification, methadone maintenance, methadone detoxification. Mon-Fri 6am-8pm. Accepts Medicaid, WorkFirst NJ, and self-pay.

## Planned Parenthood

Trenton Center - 437 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ. (609) 599-4881  
Hamilton Center - 2279 State Hwy 33, Hamilton, NJ. 689-4964  
2000 Pennington Road, Eickhoff Hall, Ewing, NJ (609) 771-2110  
Services: Abortion Services, Birth Control Services, Emergency Contraception, General Health Care, HIV Testing, LGBT Services, and more.

## Catholic Charities, Behavioral Health Services

10 Southard St Trenton. (609) 396-4557.  
Integrated behavioral health and physical health services.

## Greater Trenton Behavioral Health Care Homeless Outreach

31 Lexington Avenue, Ewing, NJ 609-583-1901. Linkage to mental health services, medical services, entitlements and housing. Call for appointment.

**Note that most Health Services accept Medicare and Medicaid.**

# Food

## Jerusalem Baptist Church

150 N. Clinton Avenue, Trenton, NJ (609) 394-9816 . 3rd Saturday of a five Saturday month and 1st Saturday of a four Saturday month. 11:30am-1pm. Call for details on other services.

## Rescue Mission of Trenton

98 Carroll St., Trenton, NJ. 1st Saturday of a 5-Saturday month and every Sunday. 11am-12pm.

## Sacred Heart Church

343 S. Broad Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 393-2801. Soup Kitchen, 4th Sunday Lunch from 12:30pm to 2:00pm. Food pantry, 3rd Tuesday of the month. 2pm-6pm.

## St. Mary's Cathedral (Loaves and Fishes Food & Soup Kitchen)

151 N. Warren St. (Perry and Warren), Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-8447. Last two Saturdays of the month. Lunch is 11am to 2pm

## Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

72 1/2 Escher Street, Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-5456. Monday to Friday Lunch from 11am-1pm; Monday to Thursday Dinner from 4pm-5:30pm. Call for other services.

## First United Methodist Church of Hightstown

187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ. Thurs Dinner, 4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

## Divine Mary Parish, St. Stanislaus Church

60 Randall Avenue, Trenton, NJ. Thursdays Dinner, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

## West Trenton Soup Kitchen

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. 801 W. State Street, Trenton, NJ. Thursdays Dinner, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

## Soup Kitchen South

First Baptist Church, 128-140 Centre St., Trenton, NJ. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Dinner from 5pm to 6:30pm.

## West Trenton Soup Kitchen at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral

801 W. State St., Trenton, NJ. Thursday from 5pm to 6:30pm

## Bethel Seventh Day Adventist

207 Hillcrest Ave., Trenton, NJ (609) 393-2224. Open third Sunday of the month 8am-12pm.

## Mount Carmel Guild

73 North Clinton Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08609, (609) 392-3402. Operates a food pantry Mon-Fri. 9:30am – 11:30am and 1:30am – 3:30pm

## Free Community Dinner, Wed. 5-6:30pm,

Princeton United Methodist Church, Nassau & Vandeventer, Princeton, (609) 924-2613

## Pantries

### Bromley Neighborhood Civic Center

1801 East State St., Hamilton, NJ (609) 587-8100. Open Tuesdays from 9am-1pm and Thursdays from 2-4pm.

### Catholic Charities

132 N. Warren St., Trenton, NJ (609) 394-8847. Open Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 9am-12:30pm.

### Community Action Service Center/RISE

225 Franklin St., Hightstown, NJ (609) 443-4464. Open Monday through Wednesday from 9am-12pm.

### Concerned Citizens of Ewing Inc.

320 Hollowbrook Dr., Ewing, NJ (609) 882-0856. Open Monday through Friday from 9:30am-1:30pm.

### Greater Donnelly Initiative

27 Fell Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 802-3287. Open second Monday of the month from 4-6pm and fourth Monday of the month from 12-2pm.

### Greater Word for the World Ministries

29 West Front St., Trenton, NJ (609) 394-9094. Open Saturdays (not first Saturday of the month) from 9-11:30am.

### East Trenton Center - Food Pantry

601 N. Clinton Ave. Trenton, NJ (609) 393-8009. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday - Summer 10-1 Winter 11-1. Produce distribution Friday.

### Hamilton Township's J. O. Wilson Neighborhood Center

169 Wilfred Avenue, Hamilton, NJ (609) 393-6480. Open Mondays from 10am-12noon, Wednesdays 1pm-3pm.

### The Crisis Ministry of Mercer County, Inc.

400 Hamilton Ave. (corner of Chestnut Ave.), Trenton, NJ (609)392-0922. Open Mon-Fri 9am – 12pm, last three weeks of each month

### The Crisis Ministry of Mercer County, Inc.

123 East Hanover St., Trenton, NJ. Open Monday – Friday 9:30 am – 12pm.  
714 S. Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ. Open Monday – Friday 9:30 am – 12pm.  
61 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ (609)921-2135. Open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 1:30 pm – 4pm and Tuesday 1:30 pm – 7pm.  
(609)396-9355

Food pantry and emergency rent and utilities assistance for low income people in Mercer County. Individuals can call and walk-ins accepted.

## The Haitian Center

530 South Olden Ave., Hamilton, NJ (609) 588-8808. Open Monday through Thursday from 8:30am-3:30pm.

## Hamilton Township's Bromley Neighborhood Civic Center

1801 E. State Street, Hamilton, NJ (609) 587-8100. Open Tuesdays from 9:30-11:30am and Thursdays from 3-4pm.

## HomeFront

1880 Princeton Ave, Lawrenceville, NJ (609) 989-9417. Open Tuesdays 12pm-8pm, Mondays and Thursdays 9am-5pm.

## Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

189 S. Broad Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 396-2411. Food Pantry. Last Thursday of month. 8am first come first serve.

## Princeton Deliverance Center

301 Southard Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 392-9161. Wednesday (not 1st of month) 12:30am-1:30pm, Friday 9am-12pm.

## Primera Iglesia Pentecostal (Alpha and Omega Inc.)

347 Second St., Trenton, NJ (609) 571-9135. 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. 5:30pm-7:30pm

## Rise Food Pantry

225 Franklin Street Hightstown, NJ 08520 (609) 443-4464. The Rise Food Pantry is open: Monday-Wednesday 9am - 12pm

## Sacred Heart Church

343 S. Broad Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 393-2801. Food Pantry. 3rd Tuesday of the month. 2pm-6pm

## Salvation Army - Homeless Drop-In Center

575 East State Street, Trenton. Hours 8am – 3pm, 7 days a week  
Limited food. Please call for an appointment. (609) 599-9373

## Samaritan Baptist Church

531 Dr. ML King Blvd, Trenton, NJ (609) 393-0016. Food Pantry. Saturday 9am-11:30am

## Trinity Cathedral Food Pantry

801 W State Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 392-3805. Food Pantry. Every other Saturday 9am-11am

## Turning Point United Methodist Church

15 S. Broad Street, Trenton, NJ. Dinner served and Food Pantry. 3rd Sunday 1pm-3pm.

## United Progress, Inc.

162 West State Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 392-2161. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-12pm.

## Jewish Family & Children's Services food Pantry

707 Alexander Rd., Suite 102, Princeton, NJ 08540 — (609) 987-8100

**\*Dial 211 for Community Resources.**

all that for a few hours.”

“The FunkTASKtiks” have performed nearly 50 gigs a year since the band was brought together.

Typically, the band is featured at community-wide events within Mercer County such as church events, art shows, fairs and more. On March 8th, they supported members of the “A-TEAM Artists of Trenton,” a group of aspiring local illustrators from TASK whom the band collaborate with religiously, at the opening reception to their art show hosted in the West Windsor Art Center, located in Princeton.

“The FunkTASKtiks” have regularly been asked to revisit previously played locations and perform after receiving positive reactions from their audiences.

Not only have “The FunkTASKtiks” promoted their brand through their many live performances, but the band will also be putting out a 10 to 13-track album sometime this summer. The record, which has already been recorded at Riverview Studios in Bordentown, is currently in the process of being mastered and contains an eclectic mix of original songs by the band ranging from jazz to experimental rock.

“My experiences with the band have been very positive and inspirational,” Branch said. “It keeps me going ... keeps me stable and keeps me focused.”

Given the rapid success that precedes “The FunkTASKtiks,” and the die-hard dedication of its members, there are no bounds for what the future has in store for the group.

“As long as I’m in the Trenton area, I plan to stay with ‘The FunkTASKtiks,’” Demarco said with a smile across his face. 🏠

#### **Trenton Area Soup Kitchen**

Phone: (609) 695-5456  
72 Escher Street  
Trenton, N.J. 08609

## **A Personal Narrative: “Not All Bad Here.”**

*By Essence B. Scott*

The experience with homelessness I remember most clearly was when my family lived in the Trails End Motel when I was eight and a half, almost nine, years old.

Imagine: You are in the middle of nowhere, on the side of the highway. A few minutes up was a diner. Nothing in the way of grocery stores or laundromats. New Jersey Transit didn’t serve this area of New Jersey we were in, so getting into Trenton, where we were from, was difficult. The only way we could get to Trenton was by taking a cab, and that was pricey: \$60 for four people.

When we were homeless, people were kind, which made the experience less painful.

My room mother from my elementary school came to the motel my family was staying in and gave us toys. Things had gone wrong with the money my mom had saved up that Christmas. It was our first Christmas in a place not quite a home, and we weren’t

expecting to have anything. This mother and her daughter, who was one of my friends, came at night and bought us all these toys. I will never forget that. I think that’s the kindest thing anyone has ever done for my family.

My school nurse gave us gift certificates, which we used at the diner up the street.

We ate at that diner every time we got a certificate and we would order breakfast: pancakes mostly, but anything was a break from the canned goods we ate daily. The diner was small, but everyone there was really nice.

While homelessness is clearly nothing that should be celebrated, I remember my mom had made the experience a little less hard on my siblings and me.

We couldn’t do much because we were in the middle of nowhere. But the memories I do have are of my mom working hard at being a cleaning lady, of visiting one woman who also lived in the motel, of

playing with the occasional child who lived there, the people on the outside who would help us.

I was never abused or neglected, and living in a motel is not something I am eager to experience again, but I remember my mom who was always trying to make it a little better for us.

Getting our own apartment after that was like stepping into an air-conditioned room in the middle of August.

We could have meals like meatloaf or meatballs. We could have ice cream. We could have cereal and soda and whatever else we wanted because we finally had a refrigerator. We had our own beds. We had cable — lots of channels, most I’d never heard of. Soap Network? HBO Family? An East and a West channel, meaning I could watch the same show twice?

All of this was so strange, so surreal. But I loved it. Finally, a bed to myself! More space! What could be better than that? 🏠



**“Seaside High”**

**By Sharon Jackson**



# Enabling Voices: Joy, Hopes and Dreams

## *Discovering What it Means to be a Homeless Child*

By Jared Wolf

The plight of the homeless and the impoverished in the Mercer County area is an issue that extends far beyond the streets of Trenton. Towns throughout the area are pushing to combat high rates of poverty by stressing the importance of education and by implementing after-school enrichment programs where students can learn the importance of being involved in their community.

Plagued by hunger and other struggles for basic needs, many children living in poverty find themselves stripped of a conventional childhood. When food is scarce and money is tight, prioritizing education, athletics, the arts and other secondary interests becomes difficult.

For families in severe economic hardship, providing a nurturing environment for their children during after-school hours can be both challenging and demanding. Affording a place where students can do homework, explore new interests and learn and develop skills that will give them advantages in the real world is crucial for their development.

Many parents of these children, underprivileged and frequently uneducated, work two or three jobs in order to provide as much as they can for their family. Accordingly, many children are left home with little to no supervision.

To address this concern, HomeFront, a non-profit organization that addresses homelessness in the Mercer County area, established the *Joy, Hopes, and Dreams* after-school enrichment program over 20 years ago. Each child participating in the program — pre-teens, teens and young adults — comes from a struggling family.

“The best part about my job is



“Green, Red, Gold Abstract”

By Diane Clark

the kids ... all the wonderful, fabulous, lovable characters,” said Program Director Chris Marchetti. “We don’t want to erase the social skills they’ve already developed and acquired, but rather we want to add on to their arsenal to make them even better people.”

The program teaches students about community service and the importance of giving back. The students develop good habits and learn how to get along better with others.

After-school program provides impoverished children with a well-structured environment where they can learn to become active

members in their community.

From tutoring and basketball to art classes and field trips, HomeFront’s after school enrichment program ensures that its students are using their time outside of school wisely.

For many of the students in *Joy, Hopes and Dreams*, college is a distant goal. By helping them reach their potential and realize their ability, the program has turned dreams into realities.

The list of success stories goes on and on. From students working in the healthcare field hand-in-hand with Ivy League graduates

to students pursuing degrees in architecture, the *Joy, Hopes, and Dreams* program is constantly empowering children and giving them a voice they never thought could be heard.

“Ultimately, helping the kids is the goal,” said Marchetti. “We want them to become self-sufficient, to be independent, to help their families thrive.”

Through activities like the Discovery Club — where students learn about self-discovery and try to help one another find their interests — students are able to feel more confident about themselves as they pursue their own goals and aspirations. As a result, many students go on to chase after their passions, while making their ambitions realizable.

Positivity, activity and connectivity are all key elements to the *Joy, Hopes, and Dreams* mission. It stresses the importance of staying positive, staying active and staying a part of both a family and a community. It stresses the importance of lasting relationships, and how creating a safe and strong network of people can be rewarding.

But most of all, *Joy, Hopes, and Dreams* enables voices, letting children find their own voice by allowing them to be heard. 🏠

### **HomeFront** ***Joy, Hopes and Dreams***

1880 Princeton Ave.  
Lawrenceville, N.J. 08648

Phone: (609) 989-9417

Website:  
<http://www.homefrontnj.org>

Email:  
[homefront@homefrontnj.org](mailto:homefront@homefrontnj.org)



# Homelessness in Trenton Schools

By Aphrael Boltas

History teacher at Trenton Central High School, William Pyper, recalled a student he had during his first year of teaching AP courses in the Trenton School District who was homeless.

Pyper said that she was a gifted student and had received a full scholarship to attend Carnegie Mellon. She nearly missed her opportunity when she needed to send in a deposit to the school to hold her place. However, Pyper said he was not going to let her pass up the chance, and offered her the money to pay the deposit. She attended the University that fall and even paid Pyper back with a refund from scholarship money. He said that she was one of the only students that he didn't cut any slack who was in that situation and only because "she didn't need it."

Homelessness is an increasing issue for students in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Education, in the 2012-2013 school year, over 1.2 million students were identified as homeless. In Trenton, homelessness is a tricky subject. Several teachers at Trenton Central High School spoke to me about their encounters with students who they knew or suspected to be homeless, how they responded to the students, and how they adapted their teaching style to better suit the students' needs.

History teacher, Matthew Russell felt that the more pressing problem was poverty; that students would have a home, but there was not always food or other basic necessities.

Additionally, often times in Trenton, as well as other areas, students are less often homeless than they are staying with extended family or friends. This can bring a different set of problems and can overshadow schoolwork.

Another recurring theme was that teachers felt a desire to help. Several teachers mentioned giving students money for food, or bringing in coats for them when the weather was cold. Nearly all of the teachers said they adjust their teaching style in that they become much more lenient when dealing with students who are experiencing homelessness. They understand if students are tired in class or if their work isn't always in on time. They try to recognize that schoolwork is not the number one priority when you are worried about where you are going to sleep or eat after school.

Literature teacher, Kathy Mulcahey, said that she would never communicate with the student about experiencing homelessness directly, but if she felt that a student was struggling, she would "understand if they were sleeping in the earlier classes and make sure that they had something to eat."

Most of the teachers I interviewed said that they hadn't had too many of these students, about four or five suspected over their teaching career. One teacher said he heard that there are about a half a dozen a year out of about 2,000 students at the high school level in the district. Whenever they had a feeling that they had a student in this situation, they did their best to offer help.

Through my different interviews it became clear that homelessness is certainly a serious issue that can cause a range of struggles for students and interfere with their learning. Poverty is prevalent in the Trenton School District. The sentiment among each teacher I interviewed appeared to be, regardless of shelter: if a student is worried about where they will be getting their next meal, they're not focused on their academics. 🏠

***"If a student is worried about where they will be getting their next meal, they're not focused on their academics."***



**"Getting Ready To Fly"**  
By Charles Smith

## The Qualities of Being a Good Parent

Essay Topic

By Michelle Miller

When I became a parent to my daughter "Nicole," it was very hard for me trying to raise her by myself.

However, I did not give up on my number one child.

I worked very hard to take care of her and it paid off very well.

Nicole is doing wonderfully. She is in the United States Army and has been there for sixteen years.

I am very proud of her.

When I was raising Nicole I taught her everything she had to know.

One of the important things, when she was young, was making sure for her to know how to spell her name, tell her address and emergency number 9-1-1.

I think that every parent should teach their children how to share love.

With love you will always have a good heart and meet people who will share their love with you.

Sometimes I meet people in the world who do not show me love like I show love to them, but that doesn't stop my love from my heart. It stays in my heart forever.

Caring is something very special to me. I like caring for many people; it makes me feel good to see people with a big smile on their face.

Caring is very important in being a good parent.

When you teach your children how to care, they grow up to become very special, caring people.



# Taking a closer look: Women, Infants and Children Program

By Lily Kalczewski

Since its original introduction in 1972, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program has come a long way. Its mission is to help pregnant or nursing women, infants and children up to five-years-old who are at nutritional risk.

There are currently over 10,000 WIC locations across the nation. There are, however, three that can be found here, in Mercer County — the Trenton WIC office, the Children's Home Society of New Jersey and the Children's Home Society of New Jersey's Mercer County WIC Program.

Eligibility is determined by family size, household income and proof of residency. Individuals need to also be able to provide evidence of nutrition or medical health-related risks.

Also, as the agency coordinator of Children's Home Society of NJ's Mercer County WIC Program, Jennifer Nagy said, "The Mercer County WIC Program will make every effort to help eligible families receive WIC services." Not many people are turned down, and for those who do not meet one of the eligibility requirements, WIC offers referrals to other programs that can help.

WIC does a lot of things right. The program provides guidance, assistance, and ensures healthy children as well as confident parents. It helps educate mothers, provides them with health care as well as food benefits and gives them the tools to raise their children to be happy and healthy.

The program not only teaches mothers how to shop, cook and eat nutritiously, but it also offers breastfeeding support through telephone hotlines, peer counselors and mommy groups.

There are many local organizations that cooperate with WIC to help provide these food and health



**"Woman with Flowers"**  
By Dolores Frails

care benefits. The Mercer County Board of Social Services offers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Mercer Street Friends has a food bank and the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) serves free meals to those who need it. A local company to the east coast that has chosen to be a part of WIC is ShopRite.

The company has chosen to cooperate with the program because as Customer Service Manager of Zallie's ShopRite in Clementon, N.J., Deby Dougherty said, "I believe we provide a service to our community by accepting WIC checks in our stores. Most participants are having financial difficulties and being able to use their benefits at ShopRite gives them

one less challenge."

Dougherty also pointed out the convenience this collaboration creates for participants because now they are able to purchase their WIC items in the same grocery store where they do their weekly shopping.

Although WIC has made great strides over the years, there are still challenges to overcome. As a Front End Supervisor, Dougherty said, "The biggest challenge I see is the participants are unsure of what they should be purchasing, so training the participants would be the one thing I think WIC could do better."

ShopRite carries an array of WIC-approved items, as is their responsibility. And although this

is the case, the company does not have to carry every version of certain food categories, which can be frustrating for patrons.

Nonetheless, ShopRite makes sure that the approved items they are carrying are in stock. If something they are carrying, like formula, is out of stock, ShopRite will get it in as soon as possible. Otherwise they will contact the WIC state office and work out a solution.

As for Nagy, she said, "I would like to see an even greater focus on breastfeeding education and support services through WIC as increased breastfeeding translates into healthier moms and babies."

Nagy also acknowledges that the program currently provides a food package containing fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low fat milk and enhanced food packages to women who are breastfeeding. Nagy hopes, however, that more whole fresh food items will be added to these packages.

With the world becoming more technologically advanced, Nagy had one more suggestion for WIC to help make it an even better program.

"I would also like to see technology enhancements, such as an online application or pre-screening process and mobile apps to make shopping easier for WIC participants," Nagy said.

Overall, WIC is a wonderful program that supports mothers and families who are enduring hard times. Its goal is to see children with full bellies, smiling faces and families who can breathe a little bit easier.

For Nagy, she enjoys working for a public health program that helps to nourish families.

"To me, empowering pregnant women and families with young children with the knowledge and

*Continued on Page 12*



## ***“Which would you choose?”***

### ***Continued from Page 4***

of families will be affected, and no longer qualify for their food purchasing assistance services.

According to Hank Kalet, a writer for N.J. Spotlight, “The change in eligibility ... is the result of the cancelation of a utility allowance for about 159,000 New Jersey Families.” That is a huge number of families that are left without a way to put food on the table.

No child should wonder when their next meal will be and no parent should have to worry when they will be able to put food on the table for their loved ones. Being forced to make the decision between paying for warmth in one’s own home and food should no longer be a reality.

The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program is aimed at helping people not only get food, but also to have access to quality information about food. Despite recent complications with eligibility, SNAP is making progress to end hunger across the nation. 🏠

## ***“WIC”***

### ***Continued from Page 11***

understanding of the value of breastfeeding, healthy foods and regular health care has been the most valuable aspect of working for the WIC program,” Nagy said. 🏠

#### **Trenton Division of Health**

222 E State St  
Trenton, N.J. 08608

Phone: (609) 989-3636  
Must call for a WIC appointment.

#### **The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey**

635 S. Clinton Ave  
Trenton, N.J. 08611

Phone: (609) 695-6274  
Must call for a WIC appointment.

#### **Mercer County WIC Program**

416 Bellevue Avenue  
Trenton, N.J. 08618

Phone: (609) 498-7755  
Must call for a WIC appointment.



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#### **Mission Statement**

The Wall is dedicated to giving a voice to and empowering individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as raising public awareness of the various issues facing the homeless population.

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**TCNJ**  
THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY  
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Engagement



**MERCER ALLIANCE  
TO END HOMELESSNESS**

## **Pleading with my Ancestors**

*Prose*

*By Rose Browne*

And as my pain run deep I find it hard to sleep so I twist and turn trying not to peek.

I feel like I’m being hunted by my ancestors. It feels like someone somewhere is trying to give me a message. As my ears rang out like a church bell, I try to listen and respond.

I try to the answer to the issue, a call.

But only when I tried everything seems so unresponsive, making it seems like I’m talking to myself. I feel strongly that they was trying to give me a message. Maybe I wasn’t paying attention. So I twist turn, and I twist and turn. Wondering whether or not I should get up and face my fear. Or should I stay in this dream, or is it a nightmare?

The ones that I claimed I never had were I gets up out of my sleep crawling on my knees in agony.

With bloody hands and feet,  
pleading with my ancestors.