



Written with and for individuals experiencing homelessness to break down the walls. **ISSUE 8 • FALL 2014**

## Resilience Personified: The Empowerment of Art and an Artist

By Raj Manimaran

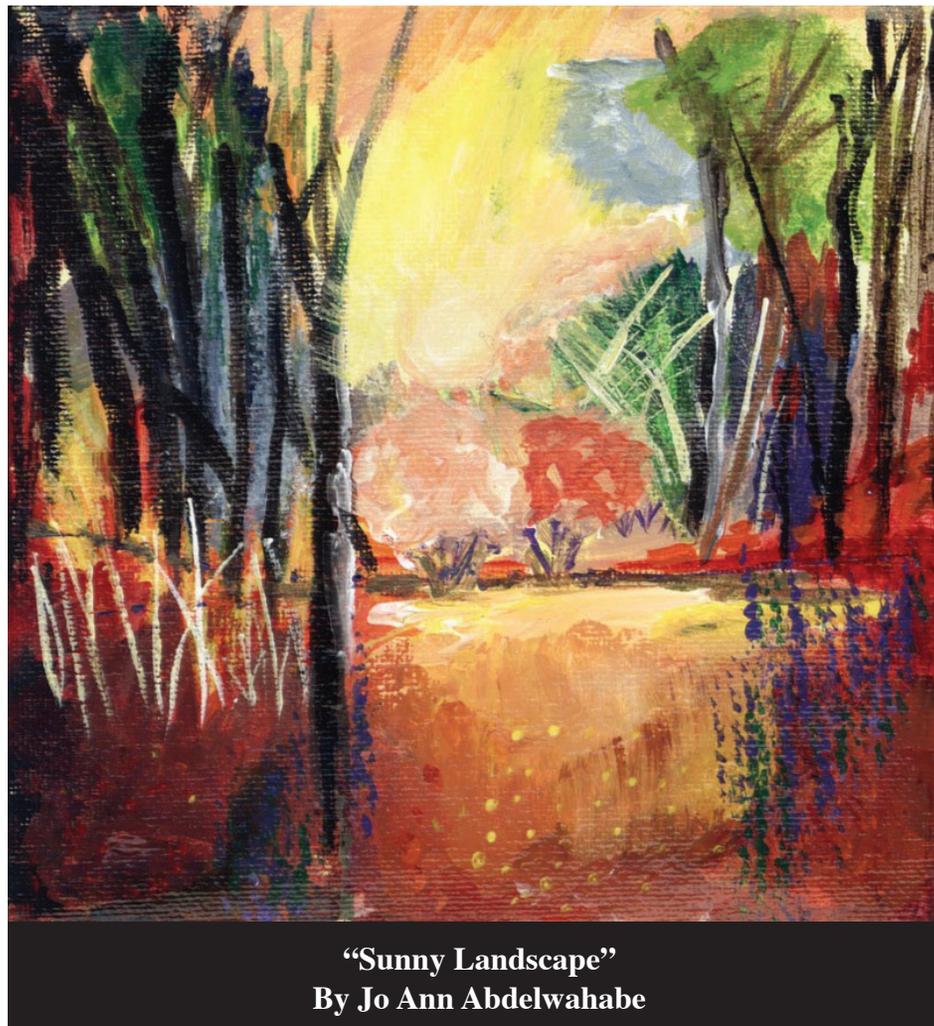
“It was a Friday morning, I will never forget that day, when my daughter called,” reminisced Jo Ann Abdelwahabe. “She said that the house was on fire.”

Upon arriving at the scene, Abdelwahabe was unable to process what was happening as she witnessed firefighters swarming what was left of her home. It was then when she was asked, “Do you need to go to a shelter?”

She could not even begin to consider the option. Abdelwahabe, a Trenton resident, had led a very normal life up to this point. She even volunteered to tutor students in math at her daughter’s school, and was taking care of her ailing mother on the day of that life-altering call.

After losing her home, she attempted to stay with her parents, continuing to care for her mother. But once her mother’s condition took a turn for the worse, Abdelwahabe was forced to seek assistance. It was under these dire circumstance that led Abdelwahabe to HomeFront.

A local homelessness prevention agency serving families and individuals in Mercer County, HomeFront provides many services and programs, as well as an emergency shelter, to keep those faced with situations, similar to Abdelwahabe’s, from having to resort to a life on the streets.



“Sunny Landscape”  
By Jo Ann Abdelwahabe

Abdelwahabe stayed in the shelter for three months, and although this could have been the lowest point in a string of unfortunate situations, she had no idea that it was actually the beginning of many uplifting moments to come.

“One of the ladies at the shelter invited to me to go to an art class, but I told her that I wasn’t an artist,” said Abdelwahabe. Despite her reluctance, Abdelwahabe was persuaded to just attend one

class at ArtSpace — HomeFront’s art program — to see what it was like. It was here that she discovered her new talent.

“I found out that I loved to paint,” Abdelwahabe said.

It was ArtSpace’s mission in action. The therapeutic art program encourages its clients to express their stories through creative outlets; stories that may otherwise be kept hidden from others. It also instills a sense of confidence and self-esteem

that many struggle to attain given their circumstances. “Jo Ann was a natural from day one,” Executive Director of ArtSpace, Ruthann Traylor, said. “It’s like she’s been painting for years.”

In addition to operating a venue for paintings, Traylor also works tirelessly to get her client’s work into exhibitions to be sold. Abdelwahabe can still remember her first exhibition.

“It was an art show so I got as dressed up as I could,” recalled Abdelwahabe. “I had a purse and a nice dress, and I felt like a movie star.” It was then when she was told that her first painting had been bought.

“I couldn’t believe that someone wanted to pay me for my art,” Abdelwahabe said.

After having moved into an apartment of her own and sold several more paintings, Abdelwahabe has still not gotten used to people’s

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# Cherry Tree Club: Small Footprints Taking Big Steps

By Jared Wolf

Imagine yourself three or four years old, possessing a mind with boundless direction-unfettered by time. The world was your playground, seemingly infinite and everlastingly innocent. Many of us imagine a time free of worry, filled with exploration and devoted to endless possibilities. Our minds were like sponges, absorbing every dollop of information that fell within inches of our realm of potentiality.

Now again imagine yourself at four years old. But now you are often without food. You feel a ping in your stomach from meal to meal, experiencing hunger daily. You have moved numerous times in your brief existence, slept in many different beds, from motel to motel to homeless shelter; you have no place to call home. You have often been mistreated and you feel ever so small in a big, scary world. And with your parents struggling more than ever, there is a feeling for you that there is no way out.

These are the kinds of struggles no child should ever have to endure. However, this is the reality that many children at Cherry Tree Club face every day.

The Cherry Tree Club is a government-licensed preschool program for homeless and at-risk children between the ages of three and five in Mercer County, New Jersey, located in Princeton Junction.

According to their website, the Cherry Tree Club's goal is "to provide a loving and nurturing environment that allows the children to thrive and grow emotionally, socially and academically."

This nonprofit organization, in partnership with The Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and Home-Front, gives destitute children an opportunity to have a normal preschool experience. The organization ensures that every child in its program is cared for and receives the resources every child deserves.



**"Crazy in Love"**  
By Frankie Mack

Throughout the year, families are signing up for their children to become a part of the program.

Many of these underprivileged children struggle with insecurity and low self-esteem. Now, in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the Cherry Tree Club gives its students an opportunity to feel important, included and safe.

"It is the same goal for every student," said Lead Teacher Shaneica Barnes. "We want them to start kindergarten on the same academic level as any other child."

However, Barnes adds that this goal is more difficult than it may seem. Many of the children come into the program with delayed development due to their domestic situations.

Nine out of the 30 Cherry Tree Club students have little speech to no speech at all. Some of the children have witnessed brutality or been subject to mistreatment, and all have experienced hunger. The preschool has a large number of volunteers, giving the children the individual attention they so desperately need.

Most of the children in the program change residences often. And so, along with being fed breakfast, snacks and a hot lunch, the children receive special care and affection from the staff to combat self-deprecation and self-doubt.

From play therapy to pre-literacy development to violin lessons for the older students, the Cherry Tree Club

works diligently to ensure each child feels a sense of accomplishment.

Barnes said that two twin boys came into the program from the inner city a few years ago. Their father was fresh out of jail. Barnes shared, "They did not know how to behave like children. By the time they finished in our program, they were enthusiastic to learn, and were behaving like well-mannered children. That is what this program is all about."

Funded largely by private donations, the Cherry Tree Club has created a service that is making a grand impact on many children's lives.

Director Wendy Schutzer stated, "It is not easy to support the cost of the program." While the program receives McKinney grants from the state government, it remains both "frustrating" and "a challenge" to keep the program fully funded.

Schutzer is currently working with the state to try and get the families to receive childcare subsidies.

For six hours, five days a week, these children can escape from the incommensurabilities of a small motel room or homeless shelter and receive the positive feedback, socialization and even a little bit extra. Something as simple as a place to run around freely and safely outdoors can be really special to a child who comes from an impoverished neighborhood.

One student, Brandon, said, "My favorite part of Cherry Tree Club is play time outside!"

The organization does a fantastic job preparing the children with a lively curriculum for entering the public school system, but unfortunately, this is only the first step to a long staircase of challenges that lie ahead. 🏠

**Cherry Tree Club**

E-mail: [info2@cherrytreeclub.org](mailto:info2@cherrytreeclub.org)

Phone: (609) 799-1753

# From Sharing Stories to Saving Lives. Welcome to the A-TEAM.

*“Art: something that is created with imagination and skill and that is beautiful or that expresses important ideas or feelings.”*  
— Online Merriam-Webster Dictionary

By Raj Manimaran

“Before letters and numbers, [art] was the original language,” said Roger Senski, a patron of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. “And today, it is more than that — it is like a priceless currency.”

Art defines one of the most diverse fields of study and expression. This field has been synonymous with the course of history and transformation of culture. And, more and more frequently, art is becoming a vehicle for change in urban areas such as Trenton, N.J.

Nowhere is that more evident than the walls of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) that are adorned with the work of the A-TEAM.

Sprouting from an art class offered by TASK in the late 1990’s, the A-TEAM became an independent entity in order to share and sell its work in the community. While the A-TEAM is still hosted and supported by the soup kitchen, as a collective, the artists have continued to make their own unique impact within Trenton.

“Drawing kept me off the street and out of trouble and now I teach others how to do it too,” said one of the founders of the A-TEAM, Herman “Shorty” Rose.

Along with working with the A-TEAM at TASK, Rose also attends the monthly classes that the group facilitates at the ARC Mercer, an organization that helps people in need achieve their fullest potential through various instilled programs.

“It is not a contest. Everyone helps each other and everyone works together,” said Rose. “When young guys come in, I tell them, ‘Everyone can draw, just give it a shot and see what happens.’”

Senski, one of the team’s newer

members, emphasized the significance artistry carries.

“It is important for the city,” Senski said. “Some people had college, I had art. Anyone who can paint, gives them a chance to be ahead of the economy.”

With over 11,000 households in the city earning less than \$25,000 annually, reported by the U.S. Census’ 2008 American Community Survey, being ahead of the economy is a luxury that many in Trenton could benefit from.

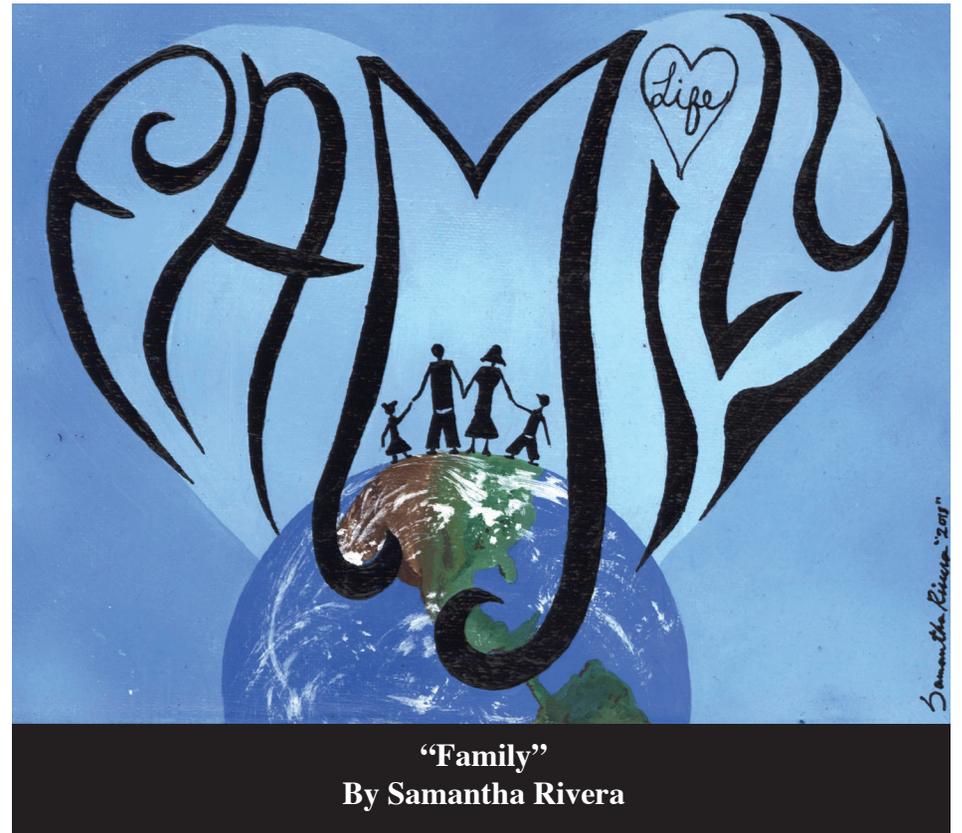
With over 50 members participating in 20 events a year, the A-TEAM continues to make its mark in Trenton and it has garnered the praise from the highest powers in the country.

After a striking portrait of President Barack Obama was completed by the A-TEAM’s Walter Roberts Jr., the group decided to get the Commander-in-Chief’s thoughts on the piece and sent it to the White House. Roberts Jr. received a letter of commendation from the president for his impressive work. A letter that has been immortalized in one of Rose’s signature frames for visitors to admire.

“Whenever we get out, people ask, ‘Is the A-TEAM coming?’” said Rose. “They are happy. They bring their friends, and I say, ‘If you love what you do, keep doing it.’”

**A-TEAM website:**  
<http://www.ateamartists.com/>

**Trenton Area Soup Kitchen**  
Phone: 609-695-5456  
72 Escher Street,  
Trenton, N.J. 08609



**“Family”**  
By Samantha Rivera

## I am the Lighthouse

By Karen Smith

Poetry

I am the celebration of the universe.

I am the opportunity to reflect upon all that is,

All that was,

All there ever could be.

I am what happened when the universe evolved to know itself.

I am the endless existential dialogue.

I am the most important dream you’ll ever have.

I am the heart.

I am the home.

I am the hope.

I will astonish myself with my capacity.

Creativity brings change.

I am the American Dream.

# Elijah's Promise: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

By Engy Shaaban

Among the many non-profit organizations fighting homelessness, poverty and food insecurity in New Jersey is Elijah's Promise, an organization nestled in New Brunswick. It was first established in 1989 when three local churches (St. John's Episcopal, Emanuel Lutheran and Christ Episcopal of New Brunswick) joined together to start a small soup kitchen.

Today, however, the organization's efforts extend far beyond a single soup kitchen. After two decades in operation, this once small soup kitchen serves about 100,000 meals every year and the organization's other services serve just as much.

In 1997 Elijah's Promise began a culinary arts training program called Promise Culinary School. Here, students are exposed to a professional culinary curriculum that prepares them for and places them in jobs in the foodservice industry.

Jim Zullo, Executive Director of Elijah's Promise, estimates that the school graduates approximately 50 students every year and that 95% of these graduates go on to find jobs in the food industry. And although tuition is required, the school offers financial assistance, and the tuition oftentimes is covered in full if you are unemployed, a veteran, a displaced worker or have a disability.

"Seeing individuals who have endured so much hardship and been faced with the most difficult of circumstances find a new vigor in the food industry is extremely satisfying," Zullo said.

Elijah's Promise has also collaborated with Who Is My Neighbor? Incorporated to create A Better World Café — a restaurant that makes healthy eating affordable.

The Café, located in the Quilt  
pg 4 • The Wall

Room of the Reformed Church in Highland Park, follows a model introduced by the One World Everybody Eats foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Salt Lake City, Utah that allows patrons to "pay what they can" at any of its community kitchens and restaurants.

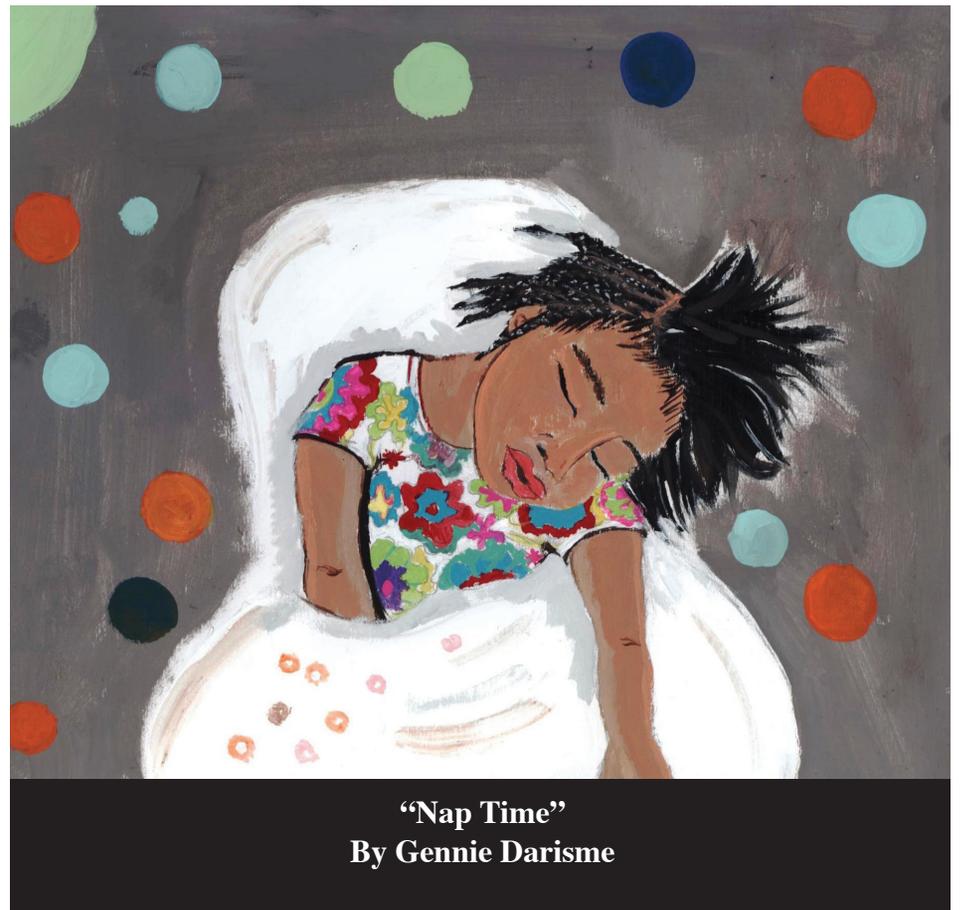
At A Better World Café, diners who cannot afford the full price of their food can volunteer an hour of time in exchange for their meal. They can also dine on the complimentary dish of the day if they can neither pay nor volunteer.

In speaking of the environment that both the soup kitchen and the café promotes, Zullo said, "The great thing about our soup kitchen and our café is that we provide our visitors with a very dignified dining experience. If you walk in, it feels like you're in a restaurant and the foods that we serve are not only delicious but also nutritious."

The organization, whose work is committed to fostering sustainability in both the lives of those it serves and the community, is involved in numerous green efforts across the state. At their Better World Market and community garden, funds are raised to support meals at the soup kitchen and provide job training and employment opportunities for students at the Promise Culinary School. Efforts like these not only encourage a connection between people and their food but also support the plight of individuals looking to launch a culinary career.

"For many impoverished individuals, the food that they have access to most of the time is very unhealthy and so in exposing them to fresh, healthy alternatives and showing them the affordability of

*Continued on Pg 8*



"Nap Time"  
By Gennie Darisme

## Pleasures of Weather

Poetry

By James O. Covington, Jr.

Fallen petals and leaves

Blow away in the breeze

Watching the sunrise, is just a tease

Soft air penetrates through my skin

The sensation blows away in the wind

People in love, holding hands

Bonded together like grains of sand

Winter comes and snow starts to fall

Snow turning into ice, forms a wall

Waiting for the sun to melt it away

The warmth and love nourishes me all through the day

Watching the stars, on a cool winter night

The sun lights up the moon, and it shines so bright

Mother Nature is my treasure

Changing seasons, changes the weather

Living life with it, is such a pleasure

# Thrift Project Brings Together Community for a Great Cause

*“It brings together the campus community with the Trenton community and is a really fun way to fundraise for an amazing mission.”*  
— Katie Kahn

By Melody Hwang

It was noon at the Brower Student Center at The College of the New Jersey. Students pushed through to grab lunch before they headed off to their next class.

In the midst of the swarm of backpacks, a group of students stood behind a table covered with colorful clothes and shoes. A pair of combat boots sat in an open, vintage trunk propped on the table. A rolling clothing rack displayed treasures like a Macklemore-esque fur coat, a long dress and a red and white striped shirt perfect for a Waldo costume.

Aside from the crazy finds, dresses, tops and familiar staples of a college girl’s wardrobe were on display. As students weaved by, holding salads and pizzas, some paused and bought whatever caught their eye.

While not all of the customers were aware of the impact of their purchase, the truth is the few dollars they spent on a new shirt contributed to eliminate clothing waste and

benefitted their homeless neighbors in Trenton.

This is the Thrift Project, the College’s very own “Pop Up Shoppe.”

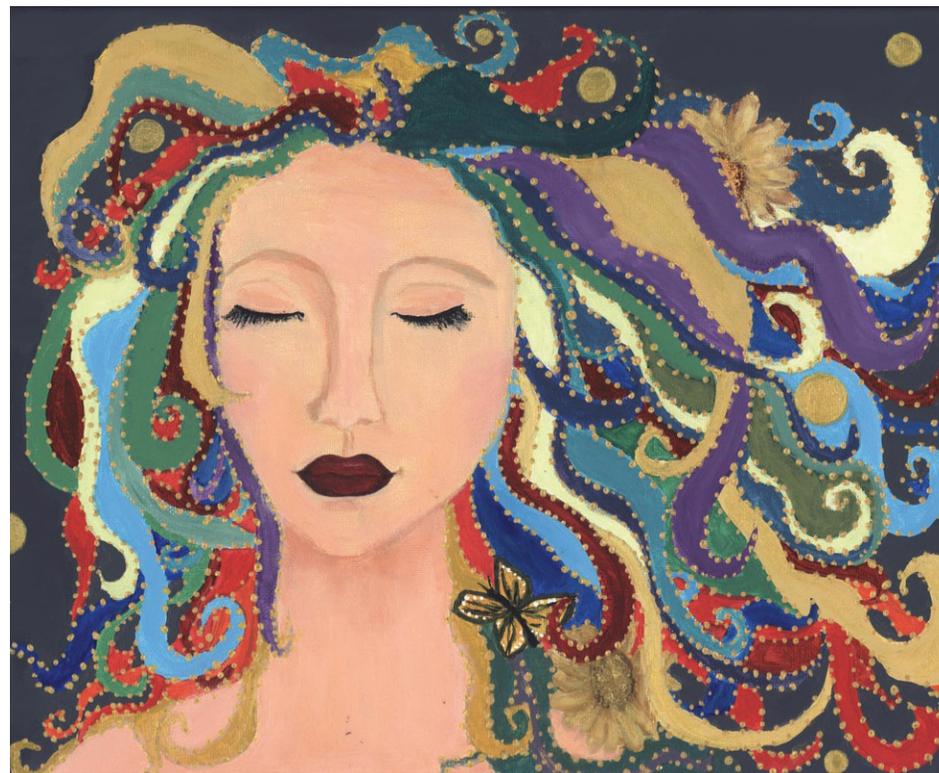
The Thrift Project was started by Tiffany Teng, a Bonner Scholar at The College of New Jersey, last year. Katie Kahn, a Bonner Scholar and the current project leader, began helping Teng out from the start of the project.

Kahn described how she saw the project as innovative and creative.

“It brings together the campus community with the Trenton community and is a really fun way to fundraise for an amazing mission,” Kahn said.

How the project works fully supports this collaboration between college students and their neighbors. Next to Ewing, where the College is located, lies Trenton, a city with a substantial homeless population. In Trenton, organizations like the Rescue Mission reach out to those hit hard by tough times.

According to Rescue Mission’s



“Colorful Woman”  
By KC

website, “The Rescue Mission of Trenton is the agency in the City of Trenton that serves the truly needy men and women who have no place to turn for shelter, food, and clothing. The Mission provides a safe, clean, warm, refuge for the homeless, the hungry, the transient and the addicted.”

Just miles away, many students at the College wish to get new clothes, but many lack the time to shop, the money to splurge and the transportation to get to local shopping centers.

At the same time, jammed into the miniscule closets of dorm rooms, piles of unworn clothes accumulate dust. Seeing the potential of benefiting both parties, the Thrift Project sells good condition, second hand clothing to fellow students with the proceeds benefitting Rescue Mission. Clothes discarded at the bottom of the closet are given to new owners and proceeds feed the hungry.

Ultimately, the Thrift Project believes, to quote music sensation, Macklemore, “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.” And this belief has been proven true by the success of the Thrift Project. A Pop Up Shoppe appears on campus once a semester, with hundreds of dollars made in a few hours.

Looking ahead, the Thrift Project hopes to find a permanent place. While the Pop Up Shoppe is a novel idea, spontaneous and anticipated, a permanent location in downtown Trenton will allow students to visit the city they are supporting.

Kahn and other Bonner Scholars hope to continue to educate their fellow students about the needs of neighboring communities in a fun and engaging manner. As the process to secure a permanent location continues, the Pop Up Shoppe will continue to brighten up wardrobes, donate money for a warm meal and eliminate waste. ♡



“Parking Garage”  
By Ron Carter

# Where You Can Turn for Help!

All days and times are subject to change without notice. Created December 2014 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

### 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 Transitional 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, Suite 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 MCBOSS, 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.**



*“Elijah’s Promise”  
Continued from Pg 4*

it all is one of our highest priorities,” Zullo said.

From wholesome meals to culinary arts job training, the efforts of Elijah’s Promise to fight hunger and food insecurity in a way unlike its many counterparts is especially notable. The organization provides an innovative approach to breaking the cycle of poverty in struggling urban communities.

“Being able to provide a vitality of services and a sense of security to the most needy in our community is great,” said Zullo. “But knowing that getting nutritious meals from us gives these same individuals the availability to apply their money to other important things is something that I find very rewarding.”

**Main Office**

Phone: 732-545-9002

Hours: Monday-Friday from  
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Community Soup Kitchen**

18 Neilson St., New Brunswick N.J.

Phone: 732-545-9002

**Clothesline**

90 Jersey Ave, New Brunswick N.J.

Hours: Monday, Wednesday and  
Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**A Better World Café**

19 S. 2nd Ave, Highland Park N.J.

**Administrative Office  
Promise Culinary School  
Promise Catering**

211 Livingston Avenue, New  
Brunswick N.J.

Phone: 732-545-9002

## Building a Network: Food Waste and Recovery

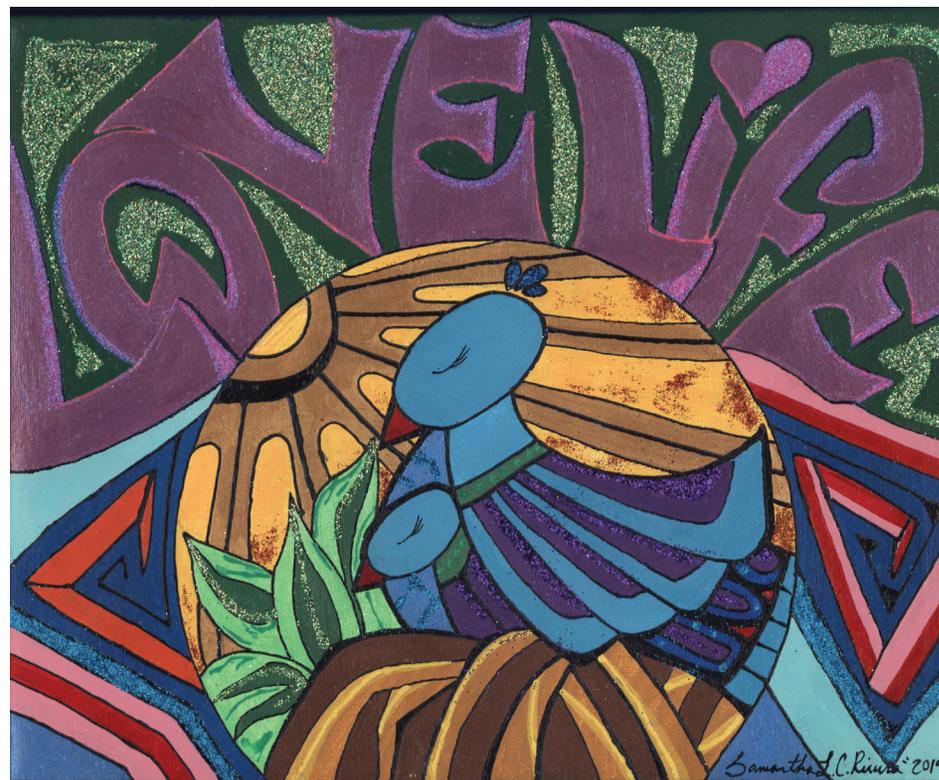
By Steven P. Rodriguez

The problems facing those currently experiencing homelessness are wide and varied. Among these complex and multi-layered social and political issues, the widespread problem of food waste has been gaining particular attention in recent years. According to a recent USDA report published in 2014, 31 percent of available food in the U.S. (or 133 billion pounds / 430 billion pounds) is wasted or discarded of each year.

For the homeless community, food waste represents a very serious threat and presents particular challenges to nonprofits trying to end hunger. Interestingly, the vast amount of food wasted each year is not only the result of poor planning and negligence, but also stems from legislation that makes it increasingly difficult to give leftover food to the homeless.

A report published by the National Coalition to End Homelessness (NCH) in 2014 titled “Share No More: The Criminalization of Efforts to Feed People in Need,” touches on the structural problem, highlighting three main ways in which legislative action has led to food waste. The first has to do with cities placing strong restrictions on the use of public property, forcing groups to buy a permit to distribute food to the needy in places like public parks. The second legislative barrier consists of the stringent food safety regulations that groups must follow if they wish to distribute food. The final and most significant barrier has been the “Not in my back yard” (NIMBY) mentality, which is often used to prevent groups that help those experiencing homelessness from entering communities.

Groups like the NCH are now spearheading a movement to enact legislative reform in the area of food sharing legislation, eventually hoping to make it easier to provide food to those in need.



**“Love Life”  
By Samantha Rivera**

On a grassroots level, groups like the Food Recovery Network (FRN), are also making significant progress in alleviating food waste and improving distribution.

Started in 2011 by three students at the University of Maryland College, FRN aims to fight food waste and hunger by organizing college students to donate leftover food on campuses to local soup kitchens and other nonprofits. Since its creation in 2011, FRN has expanded to 95 colleges across 26 states, Puerto Rico and Washington D.C.

Most recently, students at The College of New Jersey have started organizing a chapter of FRN in hopes of helping to solve the food waste issue in Mercer County. Student leader Gavin Parker first became interested in starting FRN at the College after it was assigned as the final project of his Social Justice First Seminar Program (FSP) taught by philosophy professor Dr. Morton Winston.

Parker and his classmates have been working with Sodexo, the food

provider for the College, to work out practical issues, such as how food will be transported and how food safety training will be administered. The Trenton Area Soup Kitchen is currently onboard as a community partner for FRN at the College.

Explaining the origins of the idea to bring FRN to the College, Winston explained that he was “looking for a project for the class...that would enable them to tackle a real social justice issue and do something to address it.”

Although the issue of food waste still looms large, the combined legislative and grassroots efforts will likely help to reduce the staggering figure of 133 billion pounds of food that is wasted each year nationally. For the homeless community, few issues are more important than ensuring that food is distributed in the most efficient and resourceful way possible. Along with important social and economic reforms, the elimination of food waste will be critical in solving the related issues of poverty and hunger.

# Mercer County's 2014 Point-In-Time Count Summary

By Engy Shaaban

As 2014 comes to an end, it is important that we revisit the year's most demanding issues in the political, economic and social arenas. More importantly, we must evaluate the resolutions that were put forth to address many of these problems and recognize those which continue to beg for resolutions.

Unfortunately, homelessness remains a significant problem of the latter status. In looking forward, we must first understand the extent of the issue, its implications and the context in which we are working.

Mercer County's annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of the Homeless, coordinated annually by Mercer Alliance, can help us in doing this.

The count, which was carried out on the night of Tuesday, January 28, 2014, provides countywide estimates of the number of homeless households in our communities and information about where these individuals find shelter and the different factors that contribute to their homelessness.

While Mercer County shows the shortest length of homelessness in the state, it continues to struggle through

the afflictions of homelessness.

## ***Comprehensive Summary of the Mercer County 2014 PIT***

On the night of the count, 500 households, (a total of 632 persons) were experiencing homelessness in Mercer County. This is a decrease of 36 persons (5.4%) but an increase of 55 households (12.4%) from 2013.

Of the 632 homeless individuals counted, 393 of them stayed in emergency shelters, 201 stayed in transitional housing and 38 were living unsheltered.

The totals for transitional housing and unsheltered both show a decrease from 2013.

## ***Family Makeup in Homeless Households***

Of the 500 homeless households counted in Mercer County in 2014, 71 (14.2%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult; 429 (85.8%) of these households were households without children under 18.

These households were composed of 431 adult individuals.



**"Flock Among the Flowers"**  
By Raven Feather

## ***Age Demographics***

On the night of the count, there were 68 (10.8%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 444 (70.2%) homeless adults over age 24, and 120 (19%) children under 18 years old. The majority of these children were between zero and five years of age (69 children; 57.5%). Of the total homeless individuals counted, 145 (22.9%) were between the ages of 45 and 54.

## ***Unsheltered Living***

Of these 429 adult-only households, 228 (53.1%) of them were staying in emergency shelters, 168 (39.2%) were in transitional housing and 33 (7.7%) were unsheltered. While the number of adult-only households in Mercer County has decreased by 48 over the past five years, the county has experienced a 16.9% increase (62 people) since 2013.

## ***Disabled Individuals, Veterans and Victims of Domestic Violence***

Of the total number of homeless

individuals in Mercer County on the night of the count, 52% of them reported having some type of disability. Among disabled adults, 51.5% reported mental health issues.

It is also important to note that more disabled homeless children reported a chronic health condition (58.5%) than any other disability.

On the night of the count, 57 homeless households (14.1% of all households) reported having been a victim of domestic violence.

A total of 38 homeless veterans were counted, which is one more than 2013. The largest majority of veterans, 73.7%, were found to be staying in an emergency shelter; four veterans were unsheltered (10.5%) and six were in transitional housing (15.8%).

## ***Chronic Homelessness***

The count identified a total of 64 persons in 63 households as chronically homeless. This is an increase of six persons (10.3%) from 2013.

***Continued on Pg 12***

## **Blank Thoughts**

By James Mongru

Poetry

Blank thoughts

Weary minds

How they all to combine

While I eat and my teeth grind

As my teeth grind it hurts to my nerves

At the same time I think of a woman curves so shapely

Design to art they barely don't fall apart

From a part of me that wants to play darts

As I throw it hitting the target as though it feels like hitting the heart

# Former “Trenton State College” Returns to Its Roots

By Raj Manimaran

If you have ever gotten the chance to travel through downtown Trenton, N.J., you might have noticed that the city’s transformation can be observed through its architecture.

With buildings dating as far back as the 18th century, one magnificent edifice holds particular significance to the present-day The College of New Jersey (TCNJ). Once known as the New Jersey State Normal School, it had temporarily established residence in Trenton’s original City Hall. Decades after migrating just outside of city limits, the historic site can still be viewed from the windows of TCNJ’s new satellite office, TrentonWorks.

Though the college moved out of the capital in the late 1920’s, it never severed ties with the city. Through TCNJ’s Center for Community Engaged Learning & Research (CELR), the school in fact continued to develop its service to the city by mandating first-year students to participate in service opportunities that primarily take place in Trenton. In addition, several upper-level courses participate in community engaged learning projects that also assist various nonprofits and public schools in the city.

In the spring of 2014, TrentonWorks was established in order to further develop this relationship.

The incubator space boasts a multimedia design lab, a storefront, as well as multiple workspaces. One of which has become home to Passage Theatre, a regional program that produces educational and socially conscious plays for the community. Additionally, the three-story building offers classes, guest lectures, movie screenings and workshops for students.

Madeline Urbish, the Policy and Public Relations Coordinator at the

CELR, spoke to the potential educational opportunities.

“Being downtown provides a direct connection to the cultural resources in the city,” said Urbish. “For example, a political science class could have a lecture here and visit the statehouse, or an arts course could have a discussion and tour one of the many different art galleries.”

In addition to providing a venue to learn and collaborate, TrentonWorks also operates as a channel to drive traffic back into the city. With a downtown area that hosts many government and office buildings, the city becomes deserted after work-hours.

**“Being downtown provides a direct connection to the cultural resources in the city.”**

From facilitating lectures in social media’s rise in the corporate world, to citizenship assistance sessions for inspired immigrants, to professional development workshops for motivated teachers, TrentonWorks provides opportunities for everyone in the community.

“It is a two-fold. In addition to hosting expanded programming opportunities for TCNJ students, we are also building activity to keep people downtown after work-hours,” said Urbish.

The Trenton Downtown Association (TDA), which is the lead partner with The College of New Jersey in the TrentonWorks initiative, is hopeful that these efforts will generate interest and, in turn, the much-needed progress for the downtown area.

As quoted by the *Times of Trenton*’s Jenna Pizzi, Christian Martin, the Executive Director of TDA said, “What better way to improve the atmosphere of downtown Trenton than to have an influx of engaged young people. As we try to define ourselves as a city I think education and medical are going to be a big part of the rebirth.”

## “Resilience Personified” Continued from Pg 1

admiration of her work, but she has begun to share her artistic prowess with others.

“She not only helps the other ladies with their paintings, but also teaches them to sew at our new space,” Traylor said referring to SewingSpace, a new venue that started with just a few sewing machines, but is now adorned with paintings, bags and patterns designed by clients.

“I really like working with the other women here,” Abdelwahabe said. “Sewing provides them with a way of realizing that they can get past these seemingly insurmountable obstacles.”

After effortlessly demonstrating the use of several machines and sharing some of her newer work, Abdelwahabe expresses her gratitude for Traylor, the volunteers, as well as HomeFront as a whole.

“The work we do here is more than just gratifying,” Abdelwahabe said. “It is empowering for us all.”

## Motel

By Agnes Abdelwahabe

Poetry

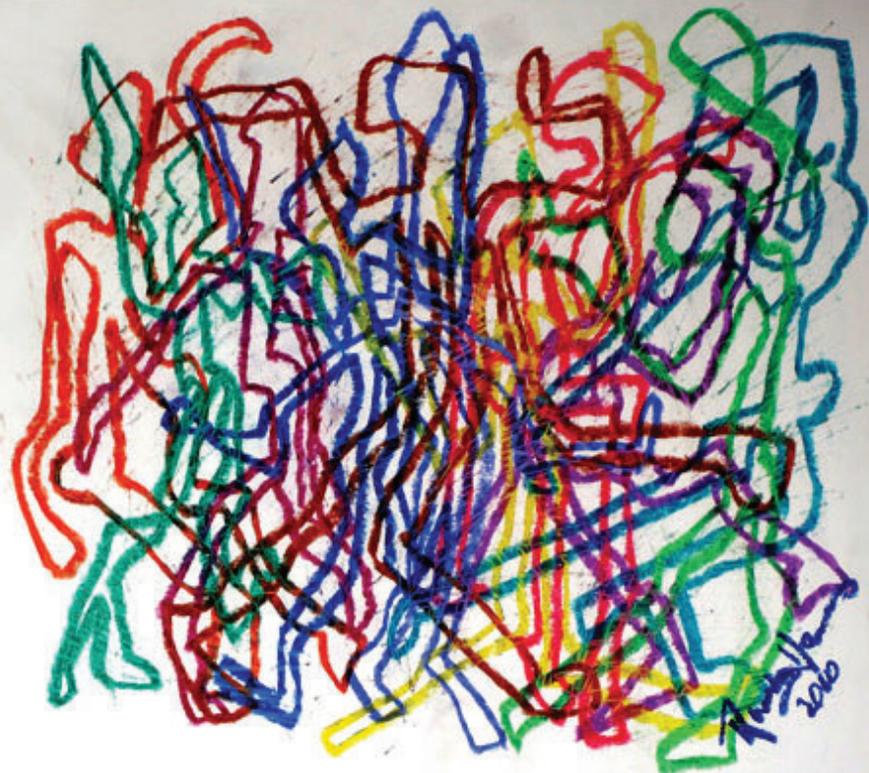
A motel is were I stayed a motel is where I prayed.

A motel is where I was and not just because  
it was the ending of the old and the beginning of the new.

All alone with my son but but yet I still had you.

Thank you God my lord thank you Jesus my savior.

As I struggle through life I’ll still thank you in my prayers.



“Native Dance”  
By Randy Harms

# Creating an Outlet of Expression through Poetry

By Shayna Innocenti

Patron. Volunteer. Student. Artist. Pervis Upshur closes his eyes, bunching his eyebrows in concentration, letting the words flow through him. Spoken word poetry comes effortlessly to him as he speaks his mind in rhyming stanzas for ten minutes.

Upshur, 39, has been coming to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen for the past year, producing poetry and artwork. “I put stuff in my own writing that way that I understand it. And that’s my way of speaking to people.”

Alongside his poetry, Upshur finds comfort by expressing himself through rap, explaining that he wants for his rap to someday inspire and help people through their own trials in life.

“Rapping helps me to get my words rhyming together, and that helps me with my poetry,” said Upshur.

A lot of his inspiration is drawn from scenery and landscapes. His paintings are mostly comprised of wildlife: birds, kangaroos, butterflies. He described two of his favorite paintings he did a few weeks ago, one a composite painting of a girl morphed with a lady bug and another of multi-colored fish swimming in a river.

“The people here tell me that art can be anything,” said Upshur. “Art doesn’t always have to be a drawing.”

Currently, Upshur is working on an abstract painting of colors. When he is done painting it he said that the people at TASK are going to help him frame it so that he can give it to his mother.

“A lot of other artists here inspire me too,” said Upshur. “My friend Derrick, he is an artist. He inspired me to draw too.” Upshur explained that he has known Derrick Branch for years. Branch, who is an artist with the A-TEAM and involved with the SHARE Performing Arts group at TASK, had first introduced Upshur to the art programs that TASK has to offer.

While Upshur greatly enjoys

formulating his creative works, the great joy for him is when he gets the chance to share it with people, and for it to possibly help people with their own troubles.

“I get stuff off my mind that I would be thinking about when I draw

or do poetry,” said Upshur. “And I think that if you are upset about something than be creative with it and share it with other people.”

Aside from poetry and artwork, Upshur said that his goal is to continue his education and eventually

become a counselor. Currently, Upshur is a student in the TASK Adult Education Program.

“I just want to be a counselor to help all types of people — all types of people that need it...that have their hand out,” said Upshur. “That is why I go here because I want to go to college to become a counselor.”

Having graduated from the Daylight/Twilight Alternative High School (a four-year alternative public high school that serves students, grades nine through 12, in Mercer County), Upshur expressed that he felt like he still needed to work on his schooling before pursuing his dream of becoming a counselor. He said that he primarily needs to work on his reading and basic math skills, and that TASK has provided him with great tutors that are dedicated to pushing him and helping him.

“I see a lot of progress in myself because I am trying, I am pushing it, and I am putting in a lot of work in here,” said Upshur. “Other people encourage me too. Just by looking at them, by people talking to me and telling me to go ahead and go for it, try it. Never, never be afraid to try something out just because you think you can’t do it.”

If there is any advice to offer, Upshur encourages people to express what is on their minds, and for people to get out in the world and put to paper what they envision for themselves or what they are feeling at a particular moment in their life.

“I gained a lot of experience and that experience makes me want to keep on going,” said Upshur. “I am glad to be here at the soup kitchen.”

## Brightness

By Pervis Upshur



It’s nice and bright.  
It’s nice and bright.  
It’s nice and bright outside.  
The sun is so bright.  
The sky is so bright.  
But at nighttime it’s dark.  
When the moon rises it gets a little bright.  
When the sky’s startin’ to brighten up it gets brighter.  
The birds are singing.  
You hear animals.  
You hear dogs barkin’ and howlin’ like wolves.  
You hear little critters runnin’ through the streets.  
You even hear people walkin’ on the streets  
with shopping carts pickin’ up cans.  
You even hear young kids at nighttime,  
young kids runnin’ through the streets.  
Where are the parents?  
The parents are at home asleep.  
Why do the parents let their kids out so late?  
The whole world is loud.  
People are loud on the weekends.  
People are loud on the weekdays.  
But why are people so loud?  
I walk around.  
I walk around the circles.  
It’s like I’m walkin’ around inside a big bubble.  
But I see everything is bright.  
But when I’m walkin’ around and I’m talking and I’m thinkin’  
people be amazed by my words.  
I speak to them, I help them.  
I tell them what I got.  
I tell them where I want to be at.  
I tell them where I supposed to be at.  
I know where I wanna go at.  
I know where I wanna be,  
but when I walk out that door  
I’m not actin’ bright about what I want to say,  
but I can see the bright in the sky.

**A-TEAM website:**

<http://www.ateamartists.com/>

**Trenton Area Soup Kitchen**

Phone: 609-695-5456

72 Escher Street,

Trenton, N.J. 08609

**“Point-In Time Count”**  
**Continued from Pg 9**

The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness increased from 8.4% to 10.1%.

**Causes of Homelessness**

On the night of the count, more homeless households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (131 households, 26.2%) than any other cause. Of the 369 households who did not attribute this to their homelessness, 19.8% of them attributed the reduction of job income or benefits; 11.8% of them cited eviction as a cause and 11.4% of them cited release from prison or jail as a cause.

**Length of Homelessness**

Of the homeless households counted, 149 (29.8%) of them reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted from eight days to one month; 351 of these households (70.2%) said they had been homeless for less than three months; 6.4% of them reported having been homeless for more than one year.

While this summary only looked at the count conducted in Mercer County, other counties throughout the state of New Jersey participated, and the results were compiled into a New Jersey Point-In-Time Count.

From this count, 13,900 homeless men, women and children were surveyed across the state. This number shows an increase of 1,898 persons (15.8%) compared to the 2013 count.

According to the statewide PIT Count, of the 13,900 homeless individuals in New Jersey, 931 persons were living unsheltered. This number has gone down 33.4% from the 1,399 persons counted in 2013. These 931 persons made up 6.7% of New Jersey’s total 2014 population of homeless individuals.

Our hope is that these statistics, among the many others available in the reports, provide community members and leaders with a perspective of New Jersey’s growing problem with homelessness and the gravity of the situation.

More importantly, we hope that this information serves as a reminder and an incentive to approach the problem with more vitality in Trenton and other cities across the state. 🏠

**Mercer County & New Jersey  
Point-In-Time Counts for 2014**

The official reports can be found online at the Monarch Housing Associates website:  
<http://www.monarchhousing.org/>.



**“Trenton Makes”**  
**By Mallory**



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**Mission Statement**

The Wall is dedicated to giving 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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