



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

ISSUE 10 • FALL 2015

Reclaiming Time: “I’m hungry and have a thirst for life.”

By Raj Manimaran

The only way to describe the life of Hampton Jenks is *extraordinary*.

Stints at Jamesburg Juvenile Detention Center and Mountain View Youth Correctional Facility as a teenager, three years at Trenton State Prison and 10 years at Rahway State Prison; over 15 years in and out of incarceration, 30 years of struggling with drug addiction and lastly experiencing homelessness — when hearing only this portion of his biography, many would expect Jenks to have been another life lost to drugs and recidivism.

The dichotomy presents itself when you find out that he went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in Liberal Arts and a master’s degree in Human Service Delivery, and that he is now working on his second master’s degree and hoping to eventually earn a PhD.

Jenks grew up in Trenton, N.J., attending the Monument Elementary School and Junior High School No. 3. That is, until his first brush with the law came at age 14. After returning home, Jenks’ life seemed to be revolving around jobs, school and correctional facilities. At age 17, he worked at Acme Rubber in Trenton, passed a precollege exam



“Without A Limit”
By Demond Williams

and was accepted to Burlington County Community College. Unfortunately, soon after, Jenks was arrested and sentenced to three years at Trenton State Prison. Two years after his release, Jenks was sent to Rahway State Prison for an

additional 10-year sentence.

In 1990, Jenks was released from prison; he spent the next five years working a variety of jobs, even becoming a certified technician in HVAC and refrigeration. However, in 1995, he returned to jail for two years.

This would be Jenks’ last time inside a prison.

When asked what changed, Jenks responded, “My family stuck by me throughout my life. My father and three of my sisters passed away while I was in jail. They told me at the last minute and wouldn’t let me go to their funerals. I decided then, I would never go back to jail and miss someone else’s funeral.”

Jenks returned to school and came one class short of an associate’s degree before taking a job as an outreach worker at New Horizons Treatment Center in Trenton, N.J. For the next six years, he helped connect individuals to resources such as counseling and transitional services as they recovered from drug and alcohol addictions. Unfortunately, Jenks’ own drug addiction brought his life to impending crossroads.

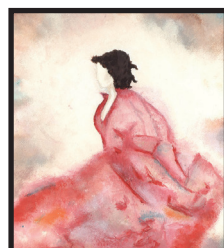
In 2007, he lost his car and apartment to a debilitating heroin addiction and became homeless.

Finding shelter in abandoned buildings or the woods was not the worst part for Jenks.

“I still couldn’t stay away from the drugs,” said Jenks. “I would

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“Hard Poems Left Alone.”



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Upshur explains his perception of everyday people and their modern lives.

Resource Guide



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Information on shelters, human and health services, and food pantries.

Point-in-Time Count 2015



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A summary of Mercer County’s survey on people experiencing homelessness.

“Billows and Rolls.”



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Norris’ poetry compares nature and the act of painting a masterpiece.

Preserving Families, Transforming Lives

By Jared Wolf

The plight of individuals experiencing homelessness in the Mercer County area remains a recurring issue that our community faces. This is especially problematic when these issues of poverty interfere with the well-being of children. As impoverished parents struggle to provide a nurturing environment to raise their families, their children face the challenge of experiencing a healthy childhood from which they can transition into a prosperous adulthood.

Despite the plethora of facilities, organizations, charities and government programs specifically designed to combat this issue, homelessness and poverty remain one of the greatest challenges to tackle in New Jersey.

In the past decade, homeless shelters and facilities have been reorganized, renovated and expanded in direct response to this inconvenient truth. One recently established facility in particular has made a tremendous impression on the Mercer County community in its short life span.

On Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2015, HomeFront celebrated the Grand Opening of its Family Campus and Preservation Center at 101 Celia Way in Ewing, N.J. As a local non-profit organization established to combat and lessen the immediate pain of homelessness by harnessing the resources and expertise of the community, HomeFront is beyond excited to make full use of the many resources and opportunities the amazing facility offers.

The newly opened Family Preservation Center Campus is making an immediate impact on the local community. As a fully funded public project, the new building is designed to provide a safe learning environment and shelter for families in need in the central New Jersey area.

Since opening, the facility has welcomed over 30 thankful families



“Hey There”
By Emery Williams

with open arms. The top floor has 30 residences for families with single moms, while the bottom floor has eight residences for families with single fathers, a new feature of the HomeFront program, which had previously been devoted to providing care for solely female parents.

According to Liza Peck, the Volunteer Coordinator for family campus, “The center works closely with a number of different agencies, such as the Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBSS), to ensure that HomeFront can accommodate all the things a family needs in one space.”

Throughout the day, families are given opportunities to discover new interests, break bad habits and learn new skills. Children are provided with childcare every day. In addition to an art space and sewing area, via HomeFront’s already established program called ArtSpace, the Family Campus provides parenting and budgeting classes, housing and tutors.

“The overall impact of this building — every corner, every room,

every decision that was made — is with an eye to making sure our guests are treated with dignity and respect,” said Director of Development Judy Long.

As Long envisioned the near future for the new facility and its families, the excitement in her voice was palpable.

“We want to give these families a vision for a better future with endless possibilities, not just by giving them hope, but by giving them the tools to fulfill that hope,” Long said.

In addition to the many skill-based workshops and programs, the residents are provided with Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT), which emphasizes the importance of thinking before you act. HomeFront has also included the WorkFirst program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The WorkFirst program is a welfare reform program offered to residents who are looking for new job and career opportunities. Career specialists are available daily in the Hofmann Career Center. Volunteers

aid adult residents by providing them with the opportunities and resources they need to discover or realize their desired career path.

Healthcare services have been implemented in conjunction with local agencies to ensure the utmost comfort of guests. Cooking classes are located in the Teaching Kitchen with recipes for affordable, nutritious meals. There is a computer lab, lounge, library, yoga studio, music room and so much more.

The ArtSpace facility on the main floor of the center is a great place for guests to relax, cope with stress in healthy ways and escape from daily struggles.

According to one of the guests, Jamie, the ArtSpace program serves as “a place where we can learn a lot about ourselves.”

Jamie, who has been a part of the HomeFront family for two months due to her experiences with domestic violence, discussed how she has changed from the time she first starting living at the center.

“I have gained a more positive outlook on life,” said Jamie. “I can now see myself going further, beyond where I am today.”

While her struggles have not magically disappeared, Jamie saw a profound transformation in her attitude and well-being since she first arrived.

“I have an urge to want to do more — not just for myself, but for others,” Jamie said. 🏠

HomeFront Family Campus

101 Celia Way
Ewing, N.J. 08628

Phone: (609) 989-9417

Website:
www.homefrontnj.org

Email:
homefront@homefrontnj.org

Providing Stability: The Crisis Ministry Of Mercer County

"Partnering with our community to achieve stability for our neighbors in need."
— Crisis Ministry, Mission Statement

By Shai Bejerano

The Crisis Ministry of Mercer County, located on Hanover Street and Clinton Avenue in Trenton, NJ, as well as Nassau Street in Princeton, NJ, offers a support system for those who need it. It has a variety of services designed to help individuals who are struggling with poverty, or simply making ends meet and improving their quality of life.

"Most of the people that come have a one-time financial crisis, because of unemployment or poor health," said Sarah Unger, Communications and Development Director. "They are generally steady and stable in their home."

The services are split into four parts: housing stability and homelessness prevention, hunger prevention and nutrition education, workforce development, and license to succeed.

Housing Stability and Homelessness Prevention

Meant for families and individuals facing foreclosure or eviction, this program is designed to keep people in their homes. Crisis Ministry offers emergency financial aid for things like utilities and security deposits. In order to be eligible, individuals need to bring three things with them to the Crisis Ministry: a photo ID, an eviction notice, and proof of income for one month.

The housing stability management program also works one-on-one with clients. It allows clients to stay in touch with a case manager, and fosters a mentor-mentee relationship that teaches them the basics of budgeting and finance. In addition, it can connect clients to different services that they may not yet be connected with. The goal is to strive for long-term housing stability, and Crisis Ministry will help

every client the best they can to ensure that this happens.

"Of the people we serve 85 percent are still stably housed, six months to a year after we've given them assistance," said Cynthia Mendez, the Director of the Housing Stability Programs.

Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Education

Much like the housing stability program, this service seeks to offer food stability to families and individuals that may not have much money to spend on food. However, instead of offering monetary assistance, the Ministry has Client Choice pantries in its three locations stocked with food to give to those who visit. They promote nutrition among low-income families by providing a wide variety of healthy produce and groceries.

In addition to offering health screenings and educational programs on nutrition for the patrons, Crisis Ministry offers personal hygiene necessities such as shampoo, toothpaste and soap.

Workforce Development

The Trenton locations of Crisis Ministry offer a training and education program known as Harvesting Hope. The program aims to qualify individuals for jobs in retail and other areas by providing them with job experience through working for the Ministry. It also offers them the opportunity to take online courses and career workshops to help them become more marketable to employers. Many of the graduates of Harvesting Hope have gone on to become employees at other establishments, or to obtain higher education.

License to Succeed

Working hand-in-hand with the Workforce Development, this service helps restore drivers' licenses to people whose licenses may have been revoked due to an inability to pay fines for tickets or license renewals. It gives partial financial aid to offset the cost of the fees, and works with clients to come up with a manageable payment plan. With the help of License to Succeed, those individuals regained the freedom of driving, which improves job prospects and other qualities of life.

The services offered by the Crisis Ministry offers are excellent and vastly improve the lives of those using them. However, benefits of the Crisis Ministry do not stop at people in need. The Crisis Ministry also offers opportunities for people eager to get involved and make a difference.

One way to get involved with this organization is to volunteer.

"We consider our volunteers to be so essential to what we do. The fact that many of them come week to week to work, that kind of dedication I think, comes from the fact that they feel so welcome here. The welcome that we offer to our clients is the welcome that we offer to everyone," said Unger.

Volunteering can be done on-site at the Crisis Ministry locations around Mercer County through assisting clients who visit or the administrative staff. Volunteering can also be done off-site by giving donations, conducting food drives, doing fundraising events, or helping out with inventory sorting, among other things.

The help of donations and volunteers is what has kept the Crisis



"Tweeting"
By Mary Shannon

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Selfless Service: Greater Trenton Expands Housing First Program

By Kristen Capano

As the 2016 Presidential Election rapidly approaches, discussions regarding mental health reform policy have continued to avoid the debate. Nevertheless, one certainty has remained consistent among all candidates — that every American, regardless of race or ethnic background, should be offered the same opportunities in order to succeed. That being said, one question advances — can these two topics exist independently?

For staff members at Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness, the answer is *no*. Over recent years, this New Jersey organization has made it their goal to rapidly rehouse Mercer County residents who suffer from homelessness in addition to mental illness and substance abuse. This program, known as Housing First, has been pushed by Oaks Integrated Care (formally known as Greater Trenton Behavioral Healthcare) as a model to provide impoverished individuals with mental health issues apartments in order for them to get the medical attention they need — and it's making a difference.

The Housing First program began its development back in 2008, when it was launched as a pilot program. Originally, its strategy was to place clients into shelters temporarily, and from there move them into transitional housing. Years later, the program was changed in attempt to move people into their own personal spaces, rather than under the same roof.

"Homelessness is the problem," said John Monahan, former President and CEO of Oaks Integrated Care and current Chief Executive Officer of Housing First. "Our program [now] takes people off the street who have not been successful in the shelter system and puts them in apartments so that they can get healthy."

By providing private housing situations rather than large-scale accommodations, individuals struggling with health issues — whether



"Beside Herself"
By KC

they be physical, mental, emotional, etc. — are safe from the diseases and traumatic events that inhabit the streets and are more likely to receive the treatment and space they need in order to establish themselves and/or their families.

Clients who suffer from mental illnesses as well as physical illnesses are usually picked up from one of the

many state psychiatric hospitals and are then referred to the program by hospital staff or by personal choice.

"The mental health issues that we are finding most prevalent among those in the program are schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder, and in 96 percent of cases, post-traumatic stress syndrome," said Monahan. "Many



"Tuscany"
By Paul Norris

clients also undergo different types of assault on the streets ... you just can't be healthy if you're homeless, it's not possible."

Despite recent cutbacks from different funding sources that amounted in a major loss of \$600,000, the program continues to receive an annual public grant from the New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, as well as a rent subsidy of \$9,000 and direct services of \$5,700 per person.

While \$15,000 a year might seem like a lot, the original cost per person before cutbacks were made was around \$12,000. Even emergency care police services cost more, amounting to a whopping \$33,000 per year.

"For \$15,000 a year, you're helping someone get healthy," said Monahan, who came across as enthusiastic when discussing savings. "There have been \$4,000-\$9,000 savings per person since last year, as well as a 78 percent medical reduction."

Oaks Integrated Care also has access to data that both Medicaid and hospitals have in order to reinvest money into Housing First and preventive care.

Monahan also attributes much of the program's success to the work of its dedicated staff. Those hired are required to have either a bachelor's or master's degree, usually in social work or psychology. This way, they are prepared to develop long-term relationships with the individuals they serve.

"For every staff member, there is a 16-person caseload," said Monahan, comparing that figure to the 1-10 caseload from last year.

Regarding staff interactions with potential clients, Monahan added, "We hope to reduce the stressors that are afflicting [the patient], and from there we develop a relationship

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Lawrence Community Center

By Kaitlyn Njoroge

The Lawrence Community Center (LCC) has become a second home for many in the Lawrenceville community. It is a non-profit organization that strives to help the area's impoverished while also providing members of the community with a safe place to come together.

Director Brian Helmuth runs the center, which has recently come under the management of HomeFront. HomeFront is a non-profit organization focused on helping central New Jersey's homeless population; its mission as stated on its website is "to end homelessness in Central New Jersey by harnessing the caring, resources and expertise of the community."

Every first and third Thursday of the month, HomeFront provides bags of food and school supplies for the LCC to distribute to those struggling in the area. Along with these support services, HomeFront coordinates multiple other initiatives and programs to help local residents including social services, emergency assistance, funding, and youth activities, among many others.

There are afterschool programs that run from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., sports teams that involve a number of sports including basketball and soccer, as well as clubs like the Young Rembrandts and the Discovery Club: the former helps children with art-projects, while the latter helps them design games and activities that Mr. Helmuth says will later "help [them] bring out skills that they have and the talents that they can use in the future."

The LCC also runs an eight-week summer program called Camp Mercer, which hosts between 85 and 90 kids every summer, between the ages of six and 12. The days are split into educational mornings, during which volunteers put a twist on the classic school atmosphere making it both interactive and enjoyable

for the children, and nights filled with swimming, arts and crafts, and team-building activities.

The cost of the camp also covers various field trips for the children. In recent years, the children have been on day trips to Belmar Beach, Trenton Thunder baseball games, and Colonial Bowling.

The Educational Testing Service is a computer lab that consists of 20 donated computers and Wi-Fi for individuals over 18 to use. The lab also hosts multiple computer learning programs, which include how to properly use PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, and Excel. Access to these programs has allowed patrons to not only browse available job opportunities but to also create resumes and complete applications.

Those who are struggling financially can come to the LCC where they are provided with a full-time case manager. The case manager can provide them with a number of resources as well as financial assistance for necessities like paying rent. In the past, case managers have helped patrons attain security deposits for new homes.

In the short time that it's been open, the LCC has accomplished much success. In the past few months, it has served as a safe haven for those struggling with issues like homelessness and poverty — a place where they can access services that help them move forward. It has also served as a gathering place in which members of the community can gather and help one another. 🏠

Lawrence Community Center

295 Eggert Crossing Road
Lawrence Township, NJ 08648

Phone: (609) 883-3379

Email:
lawrencecomctr@homefrontnj.org

In Memory Of Patrick Donohue

"Fighting the good fight."

Patrick Donohue, former Assistant Provost of Community Engaged Learning Programs and Partnerships, as well as Executive Director of the Bonner Institute for Civic and Community Engagement at the College of New Jersey (TCNJ), passed away this July at the age of 50.

Donohue was one of the biggest proponents behind starting the Wall in 2011, and remained on the Editorial Board until his retirement in June. In his nine-year tenure at TCNJ, he helped grow the Bonner Community Scholar program to comprise over 100 students delivering 30,000 hours of service to the community annually, and fostered collaborations

with the state's Office of the Attorney General, resulting in the Trenton Prevention Policy Board and the Trenton Violence Reduction Strategy. Donohue also spearheaded the creation of TCNJ's Center for Community Engaged Learning and Research, which provides TCNJ students with the opportunity to engage in service that advances their education and benefits the local community.

Donohue is survived by his widow, two children, three siblings, mother and father.

The legacy of Patrick Donohue will forever inspire generations both on the TCNJ campus and within the community. 🏠

— Raj Manimaran

"Hard Poems Left Alone In My Life."

Poetry

By Pervis Upshur

Time left alone for hard poems.
Time spent alone even left for hard poems.
All day only have to listen to people throw stones of survival.
I'm listening to people throw stones of survival.
I'm listening; I hear cracks in hard bones.
I'm laying back but I'd rather hear songs.
When I'm at home thinking about loans.
People walk around on phones,
While mothers at home see the baby moan.
Others all alone with nobody,
But some people like to think they know karate.
People ride around in nice rods.
They don't see what is inside me.
When I was drinking and smoking, I watched my whole life go by.
I hope to move on because of the brightness of the sky.

Health Services

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.

Catholic Charities, Behavioral Health Services

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Oaks Integrated Care

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

Oaks Integrated Care

See 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.

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.

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.

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 Adult Rehabilitation Center

Salvation Army: (609) 599-9801

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.

Note that most Health Services accept Medicare and Medicaid.

Human Services

A Better Way

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

Mercer Emergency & Community Services

132 N. Warren St, Trenton, NJ 08618. Outpatient (609) 394-8847.
Provides support related to housing, food and mental health.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

County of Mercer - Department of Human Services

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

Crisis Ministry of Mercer County, Inc.

123 East Hanover Street, Trenton, NJ
714-15 S. Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ
61 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ
(609) 396-9355
Food pantries; emergency financial assistance (rent, utilities, security deposit, mortgage); workforce development and driver’s license restoration.

Division of Disability Services

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

Family Guidance Center

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

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.

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).

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.

Office on Aging

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

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 MCBOSS, unemployment. Walk-ins accepted. (Monday-Friday), 8:30am- 5pm, Tuesdays, 8:30 am- 8:30pm.

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.

Rise-A Community Service Partnership

Main Office, 116 North Main Street 2nd Floor Hightstown, NJ. (609) 443-4464.
Providing case management to low-income individuals in the East Windsor/Hightstown area.
The Rise main office is open: Monday-Friday 9am - 4pm
(Closed for lunch from 1pm - 2pm daily)

Salvation Army - Homeless Drop-In Center

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

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

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.

VA Hamilton Outpatient Clinic

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

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)

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.

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.

Dial 211 for Community Resources.



Voting Affects Policies That Affect You

By Annette Espinoza

The United States is undergoing dramatic economic, social and political change. With an African American President and a diverse set of nominees for the upcoming presidential election, it is evident that the U.S. is redefining history.

However, these changing times have not been resistant to injustice and discrimination. Our individual duty as United States citizens is ultimately to exercise our right to mold the social system our diverse communities need.

In the opening letter of the Voter Restoration Handbook, the Secretary of State, Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno, expressed the following:

“Voting is one of the most precious rights we have as Americans. Of course, it was not always that way. Over time, many people in our nation fought – and some gave their lives – for the cause of equal voting rights for all individuals. That tells us something about the power of the vote. Like all hard-won rights, voting is something we should not treat lightly. It is a right we should respect, and it is a right we should exercise.”

Across the state of New Jersey, we have able citizens with unique experiences and circumstance. Yet, a growing wealth gap and statistical evidence show a small voter turnout from minority and lower middle class populations. With this, we can see and continue to expect the under-representation of this community and misrepresentation of the American public.

Here is what you can do about it.

As a citizen, you must register to vote before you can cast a ballot. According to the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey, the registration the deadline for the Primary Election is 21 days before the official Election Day, which is set for Nov. 8, 2016.

The last four digits of your Social



“Happy Flowers”

By Jo Ann Abdelwahabe

Security number or your New Jersey Driver’s License number are required for voter registration forms. If you do not possess either of these identifications, please write “NONE” on the form. According to MYMOVE online, the State will assign a number that will serve to identify you for voter registration purposes.

The following forms of identification will be accepted on the day that you cast your vote: driver’s license, student or job ID, military or other government ID, store membership ID or United States passport.

The American Liberties of N.J. states that you have the right to register at the address considered your primary address. If you are a college student, it can be a dorm, off-campus address or a home address. If you are experiencing homelessness, it can be a shelter, park or any place you usually stay (Section 6 Voter Registration).

Can someone register to vote if he or she has been charged with a crime, but not yet convicted?

Yes. According to the Voter Restoration Handbook “any person who is a pre-trial detainee does not lose the right to vote while he or she is awaiting trial, even if the person is in jail. However, they cannot be serving a sentence, or on probation or parole as the result of a felony conviction. If this person is not in prison while his or her appeal is pending, he or she is eligible to register and vote.”

It is our civic responsibility to contribute to the nation that we are a part of. Voting and voicing your choice to elect who will be our representative is your most important duty as a U.S. citizen.

For more information on voting in the U.S., contact Voters Hotline at 1-800-792-VOTE. 📞

“Reclaiming Time”
Continued from Page 1

steal, just to get more.”

Jenks attributes his recovery from his addiction and homelessness to his support network.

“They saw things in me that I had forgotten about myself,” explained Jenks. “They reminded me that everyone was special and that I could do whatever I wanted to.”

Once he completed drug rehabilitation himself, Jenks sought to help individuals who were going through the same struggles as he had, and was hired by the Juvenile Justice Commission. Simultaneously, Jenks began working towards a degree at Thomas Edison State College and Lincoln University. He worked hard to maintain a 3.5 grade point average, and looked toward the big picture, all the while.

“I just prayed to keep my sanity,” said Jenks. “You can’t just need it, you have to want it more than anything.”

Today, Jenks works as a lead outreach worker for the Trenton Violence Reduction Strategy and has begun to work on a second Master’s Degree. He believes that education is crucial, but the lessons that life and his loved ones have provided him are irreplaceable and have made him the man he is today.

“Once someone planted the seed in me, my ambitions began to grow,” said Jenks. “The trust of others means a lot to me, and when people began helping open doors for me, it helped restore my faith in human nature. It’s been a great journey; the hard times helped me build character, and I learned something at each step. I’m hungry and have a thirst for life.” 📞

“Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.”

— Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mercer County 2015 Point-In-Time Count Summary

By Engy Shaaban

Every year, the state of New Jersey conducts a Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of the homeless population. This provides us with statewide estimates of the number of homeless households in our communities, information about where these individuals find shelter and the different factors that contribute to their homelessness. All N.J. counties also conduct a similar count within their municipality.

The following is a comprehensive summary of the 2015 Mercer County PIT Count. Poor weather conditions made it possible for only half of the communities in Mercer County to conduct the count on the night of January 27th; the other half completed the count on the night of February 3rd.

Total Population of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Homeless Families and Individuals

On the night of Feb. 3, 2015, a total of 600 individuals, in 493 households, were experiencing homelessness in Mercer County. This is a decrease of 32 individuals (5 percent) and a decrease of seven households (1.4 percent) from 2014.

On the night of the count, 351 homeless individuals were living in emergency shelters, 144 were in transitional housing, and 105 were unsheltered (an increase of 67 individuals or 176.3 percent from 2014).

Over the past five years, the total number of homeless individuals has been decreasing steadily in Mercer County. During the period from 2011 to 2015, the number of homeless individuals in Mercer County decreased by 243 individuals (28.8 percent). The number of homeless individuals in emergency shelter and transitional housing has also gone down.

Demographics

There were 64 (10.6 percent) adults between 18 and 24 years of age, 438 (73 percent) adults over age



"Underwater"
By Diane Clark

24, and 98 (16.3 percent) children under 18-years-old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count.

Disabilities, Victims of Domestic Violence, Veterans

Of the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness, 54 percent reported having a disability; 61.7 percent of individuals 18 or older reported a disability compared to 16.3 percent of children. Among disabled adults, 49.3 percent reported mental health issues, making it the most prevalent disability (30.5 percent of all adults experiencing homelessness). The majority of children with a disability and experiencing homelessness reported having a developmental disability (68.7 percent reported this).

On the night of the count, 65 homeless households (13.2 percent

of all households) identified as victims of domestic violence. The report concludes that a total of 100 individuals experiencing homelessness, who were members of these households, were impacted.

A total of 31 veterans experiencing homelessness were counted; this is seven fewer (18.4 percent) than 2014.

Income and Benefits

Of all the homeless households reported on the night of the count, 50.5% had no source of income. Only 4.2 percent reported receiving earned income. The three most common sources of income among respondents were SSI and General Assistance with 26 percent and 17 percent receiving each, respectively.

The PIT Count reported that some respondents were receiving

non-cash benefits, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or Food Stamps) being the most widely received benefit, received by 38.5 percent of households. In terms of healthcare coverage, 34.9 percent of households were receiving Medicaid, and 5.9 percent were receiving Medicare.

Length of Homelessness

When asked about the length of time that they have been homeless, 156 (31.6 percent) of the total households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted from one day to one week, 317 households (64.3 percent) said they had been homeless for less than three months, and 13.6 percent of households said they had been homeless for more than one year.

Cause of Homelessness

When asked about what may have contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, the majority of households attributed it to being asked to leave a shared residence (131 households, 26.2 percent). The next most common factor reported was a loss or reduction of job income/benefits (19.8 percent).

Chronic Homelessness

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a "chronically homeless individual" as "someone with a long-term disabling condition, who has been continually homeless for a year or more, or at least four times in the past three years and/or a family with one adult that meets this definition."

According to the count, 74 households, made up of 75 individuals, were chronically homeless in Mercer County in 2015. This is a 17 percent increase (11 individuals) from 2014.

Over the past five years, these

Continued on Page 11

Survival Guide

For A Long And Cold Winter

By Maggie Kurnyta

As autumn comes to a close, we eagerly prepare for hot chocolate and warm coats to issue the arrival of a frigid winter. In between Black Friday shopping and snowman making, some introspection is necessary to examine the luxuries we have and the basic essentials that others lack.

According to the Rescue Mission of Trenton's Annual Report for 2013-2014, approximately 127,978 meals were served and 57,277 beds were used to serve the local homeless community. The two most populated shelters locally are the Rescue Mission of Trenton and HomeFront Inc. While these shelters provide safety and warmth all year long, they significantly increase production during the winter season.

When the freezing temperatures of winter make living outside impossible, these two buildings act as refuges for individuals experiencing homelessness by providing them with food, clothing and basic hygiene products.

During the week, the number of available beds double to accommodate for the chilling weather. Rescue Mission even has expanded occupancy during weather emergencies and does not turn anyone away.

During the weekend, the shelters act as soup kitchens.

Donations are accepted at both locations, and items, such as clothes and furniture, are given back to the community. Therefore, both locations work in transferring people to provide the best service possible.

While many shelters focus on emergency response during winter, HomeFront operates as both an emergency location and an educational resource. Instead of just aiding individuals, HomeFront focuses

on the issues that eventually lead to homelessness and strives to educate people about escaping it. For example, HomeFront provides financial support for dependents to pay off their debts, along with job training, interview tips and a temporary shelter for families.

HomeFront also deals specifically with homeless families and provides care for children while parents search for employment. This particular shelter boasts a pre-school program, an after-school tutoring program and even a summer camp for children. During the winter season, when children spend the majority of their time indoors, these activities keep them active and spirited. This also provides relief for struggling parents who might not have free time to spend with their kids.

These facilities acknowledge the support and encouragement they gain from their local communities by continually thanking their donors and volunteers. Although it is not always easy to dedicate time and energy to a cause, volunteers prove how important just one person helping out can be. Volunteers can pre-package hygiene kits and food boxes, which are small actions that make a profound impact.

Winter gives us an opportunity to recognize the importance of every human life and the privilege we are entitled to just by having a home. However, a house and a home are two unique things that are independent of each other. Just because someone does not have a house does not mean they do not have a home, especially if they have a supportive community behind them. Sometimes, the same warmth and comfort that is found in a house can be found in people. 🏠

“The winter season gives us an opportunity to recognize the importance of every human life.”



“Winter Wonderland”
By Sharon Jackson

“Billows and Rolls”

Poetry

By Paul Norris

The stain canvas of the sky is painted.
Pale blues, violet hues, silver streaks blended in.
The billows and rolls of the approaching storm,
Giving new textures from nature's brush.

The glass of the sea is being wiped clean.
A dreary grey revealing luminating greens.
The billows and rolls of the white-capped waves,
Rising up to kiss the artists masterpiece.

Turner, Monet, Van Gogh standing in awe.

“PIT Count 2015”
Continued from Page 9

numbers have varied constantly, with the total number of chronically homeless individuals having increased by 44.2 percent (23 individuals) overall. Between 2014 and 2015, the number of unsheltered, chronically homeless individuals increased from 16 to 64 (a 300 percent increase), while the chronically homeless population in emergency shelters decreased from 48 to 11 (a 77.1 percent decrease).

In terms of length of homelessness, eight chronically homeless households (10.8 percent) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted between one day and one week. A large portion, 14.9 percent of the 74 households, reported being homeless for less than one month and 67.6 percent reported being homeless for more than one year.

Unsheltered Homelessness

The HUD defines an “unsheltered homeless individual” as any individual or family “with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.”

According to the count, 105 households, comprised of 105 individuals, were living unsheltered in Mercer County in 2015. These numbers increased significantly in comparison to the 2014 statistics: an increase of 71 households (208.8 percent) and 67 individuals (176.3 percent).

Over the past five years, the total number of unsheltered homeless individuals has increased significantly. Since 2011, this number has gone up by 54 (105.8 percent).

In terms of length of homelessness, more unsheltered homeless individuals reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for over a year (53.3 percent). In total, 72.3

percent of unsheltered households had been homeless for more than six months.

It is important to note that the PIT Count report focuses on individuals who meet HUD’s definition of “homeless.” It does not, however, include information about those who may be at risk of homelessness, precariously housed, or considered homeless under other federal statutes. The information that was collected on these individuals was shared with municipalities for local planning purposes, but it was included in neither the N.J. PIT Count nor any of the county PIT Counts.

It is also important to consider the implications of the count’s design. The statistics above only represent the extent of the issue on a single night. Undercounting has been and continues to be a concern of the HUD which recognizes that during cold weather, like that of late January/early February (when the count is conducted), additional services and sheltering is provided, making numbers like those for “unsheltered homelessness” significantly lower.

The issue is far more complex than the statistics that we have included. Monarch Housing Associates Inc., the non-profit spearheading the annual counts, relates: “This data should not be viewed as a comprehensive measurement of all families and individuals who experience homelessness throughout the year, but rather as a minimum number of persons who experience homelessness in New Jersey on a given night.”

We share these numbers as a reminder and an incentive to approach the problem with more vivacity in communities like Trenton and others across the state. 🏠

Point-in-Time Count 2015

The official report of Mercer County’s 2015 PIT Count can be found online at www.monarchhousing.org/ending-homelessness/nj-counts

“If...”

By Ethel D. Mack

Prose

If I had two wings, I could fly high above my troubles;
I would be able to let go of many of my burdens while
I’m singing. It would be as though I’m releasing the
bad seeds while sitting, and floating in a bubble.

If I had two wings, I would help those who are
disabled. I would help psychiatric patients
understand what is wrong with their brain, and give them a
chance to observe life without the feeling of being
insane. I would fly around the world and touch the hearts
and souls of many people. My wings would
be comfort for our country; no shootings, no bombings,
and no more surprises — even Mother Nature would be
at peace and not release her load.

If I had two wings, I could fly high above my troubles;
I would be able to help people on any level. If I had two
wings, there would be no sorrow. Instead, there would be
peace for the children of tomorrow—the peace that they
deserve. They deserve to have their teachers to help them
along the way, and to have the opportunity to choose a
career that suits them.

A gun in the street, a child we teach.

Troubled souls come in, out of the cold.

Nappy heads need a wash, and a comb.

A warm place to lay my head, but never my home.
If I am late, I am turned away, and the streets I must roam.

Now I am tired and hungry, but I must wait to get
something to eat at the soup kitchen. People wait outside
until the doors open at 10:30 a.m. I am waiting until it
is my turn to walk inside.

I am thinking about how the Government screwed me out of
getting my food stamps. Do you think that they care about the
people living in this messed up economy? No. Because they just keep
taking our little bit of money.

If I just had those two wings for a day, I would enjoy
the freedom and the spirit that comes with such power.
I would not worry about the things that are bringing me
to shame — no worrying about my pain. On that day, my
wings would be for you — the people of the world. I would
explore your concerns and listen to your questions.
I would show you love and peace and not let you worry
about the almighty dollar.

“Crisis Ministry”
Continued from Page 3

Ministry successful in its mission for the past several years. Through its existence, a tremendous number of lives and neighborhoods in Mercer County have been changed for the better. 🏠

Crisis Ministry of Mercer County

Phone: (609) 396-9355

Locations and Hours

123 East Hanover St.
Trenton, NJ 08608

Food Pantry: M – F: 9:30 a.m.
– 12 p.m.

Homelessness Prevention: M:
9 a.m. – noon; W: 1 – 3 p.m.; Th:
9 a.m. – noon

716 S. Clinton Ave.
Trenton, NJ 08611

Food Pantry: M – F: 9:30 a.m.
– 12 p.m.

61 Nassau Street
Princeton, NJ 08542

Food Pantry: M, W & Th: 1:30
p.m. – 4 p.m.; T: 1:30 p.m. – 7
p.m.

Homelessness Prevention: M,
W, Th 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.; T: 4
p.m. – 6 p.m.

“Housing First”
Continued from Page 4

based on trust that helps them work through underlying problems.”

Although many of the homeless patrons adopted into this program improve their conditions after a mere couple of months, their relationships with the staff members will continue for years to come.

Last year, in 2014, Housing First served 165 chronically homeless individuals with disabling mental illnesses and another 185 residents who were in danger of losing their homes. Since then, Housing First has expanded to nine New Jersey counties, and has generated the most success in Trenton and Camden, where they have teamed up with the Good Care Collaborative, a group of New Jersey healthcare advocates led by Dr. Jeffrey Brenner that is committed to sensible Medicaid reform. Because of this success, Housing First currently houses 365 residents, a 33 percent increase from June 2014.

When asked if he saw any future success for the program, Monahan responded affirmatively: “I see this continuing,” said Monahan, “I would like to see people recognize that this is the way create more funding opportunities and to also keep people off the street — at the same time.” 🏠



“Alligator River”
By Brooke Lachelle Beatty



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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Acknowledgements:

We appreciate all of the support and submissions for this project from: Bonner Institute for Civic and Community Engagement of TCNJ, Bonner Foundation, Robert Hackett, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton, Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing, HomeFront Family Campus, ArtSpace, Lawrence Community Center, Housing First, Crisis Ministry of Mercer County, Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, Trenton Community A-TEAM and the artists who submitted their inspirational artwork. A special thanks to all of the writers who contributed to this edition.



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THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Bonner Institute for Civic & Community
Engagement



**MERCER ALLIANCE
TO END HOMELESSNESS**