

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

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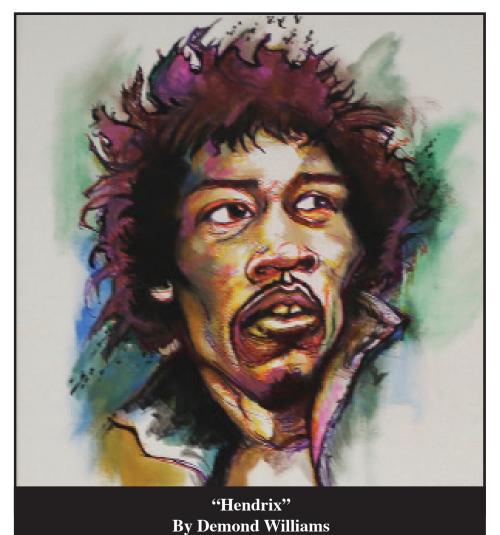
"It's All Love" at Stockton 51: The A-TEAM Gives Back

By Jared Wolf

Sixteen years ago, a small group of visual artists met with Extra Helpings volunteer, Susan Darley, to discuss the possibility of forming an art cooperative within the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK). Founded in 2001, Extra Helpings was a small art program designed to alleviate the stresses of poverty by encouraging artistic expression.

The small collection of amateur artists came to be known as the A-TEAM, eventually morphing into the Trenton Community A-TEAM (formerly know as TCAT), which recently opened Stockton 51, a neighborhood art center within a previously abandoned two-story carriage house at 51 North Stockton Street in Downtown Trenton. The space was given to the A-TEAM by Isles Inc., a Wood Street non-profit organization that is working to establish an arts district in the surrounding community.

Today, the Stockton 51 art studio is a popular haven for a number of local painters, sketchers, musicians, and sculptors to unwind from the vices of urban life in America, and simply create.



In its earliest form, TCAT was designed to offer an open facility to those who possessed creative talents or an interest in the arts, but it did not have the necessary resources to pursue its creative endeavors. Darley wished to create a "collegial environment in which they [the artists] could hone their creative abilities."

The goal: sell artwork and realize the benefits of seeing hard work come to life.

From the beginning, the artists decided how the A-TEAM would operate and which projects it would undertake. In this way, "membership in the group also provided an opportunity for the artists to learn entrepreneurial skills," said Darley.

Membership expanded, and the walls of TASK quickly became an open display of their work. Over the years, the 'A-TEAM Artists of Trenton' have participated in hundreds of shows. From displays in museums and galleries to corporate offices and government agencies, the A-TEAM has seen their pipe dream become reality.

Moreover, the A-TEAM artists have given back to the Trenton community in a multitude of ways, by lending work to local businesses and non-profit groups, or by leading monthly art workshops for residents of the Rescue Mission of Trenton and patrons at The Arc Mercer.

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C.'s journey to
finding a voice.

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The artists have also hosted clients from the Trenton Psychi atric Hospital's art therapy program in their studio. And just last summer, Stockton 51 hosted a community cookout in which over 2,000 people attended. During the event, which was funded by TASK, the studio gave out over days without sleep to compete the 1,000 hamburgers and hot dogs.

examples of how this facility has stay awake. given back to its community.

had a profound impact on the A-TEAM family. Self-taught artist Walter Roberts, Jr. learned how to shade from his sixth grade math teacher. His teacher told him that a representation of the beautiif he taught him how to shade, he ful art that can emerge from the had to start paying attention. Today, Roberts is celebrating over city. "It's all love," he said. "Givtwenty years as a member of the A-Team and considers his ability to shade his greatest strength.

Derrick Branch, another selftaught artist, has been with the A- to go three-dimensional: the art-TEAM for over ten years. A bass guitarist, Branch helped begin a music program within the TCAT crew and hopes to see it expand clothing, and jewelry. in the coming years.

Branch, in collaboration with other musicians, has made several hip-hop compositions, in addition to rehearsed renditions of prominent Jazz scores from musicians like Duke Ellington.

From what started as a few friends seeking extra community services at TASK has transformed into a playground for the disenfranchised. Roberts described Stockton 51 as "a sanctuary in the city" from which "anything can be thought."

For many of the teens who go to the studio to paint, draw, build, jam, sketch, or create, Stockton 51 is a healthy way to stay off of the streets and out of trouble. Wellequipped with tools and gadgets,

artists can spend endless hours creating and composing.

Roberts recalled several nights where he and other artists worked until 8 in the morning to complete some of their more complex pieces. Roberts' was happy to share one of his proudest pieces: a portrait of the 20th century academic and activist Angela Davis. Roberts' worked for five straight piece—his desire for perfection This is one of the countless acting as the sole motivation to

When asked if he could name One artist in particular has a few of the artists who come to Stockton 51, Roberts simply responded, "I can name a billion of 'em". The studio has become a symbol of the community, and struggles of a childhood in the ing kids a place to openly express themselves distracts them from the jungle."

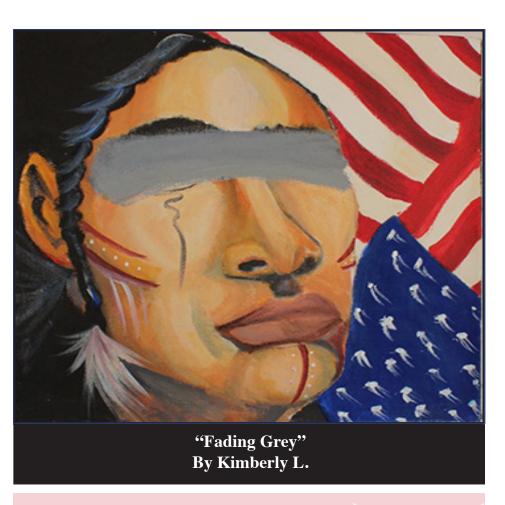
> Looking forward, TCAT hopes ists want to pursue projects that don't just hang on walls. They are looking to create statues, T-shirts,

> With new projects and ideas constantly flooding in, TCAT will continue to change and expand. A gift shop is currently being built at Stockton 51 and the artists are always redefining their image, both as creators, and as contributors to the community.

> If you are interested in buying art or would like to reach out to one of the artists/directors, please go to their website at www.trentoncommunityateam.org/.

Stockton 51

51 North Stockton Street Trenton, NJ trentoncommunityateam.org (609) 421-0793



"As The Ink Pours Out On Paper"

By Agnes Abdelwahbe

As the ink pours out on paper to form every single word And the sentence comes together so this poem could be heard

Poetry

And sentence by sentence, a lil' more I'm free Releasing the emotions I've trapped inside of me

Expressing the anguish when anxiety kicks in Pretending to be normal in a society I don't fit in

Telling myself it's okay, all will subdue And when I think it's over, the problems only grew

So I'll write when I'm angry, I'll write when I'm hurt It's been a while since I been happy, but to write about that I yearn

And when my words jumble up and I'm unable to speak My thoughts and my hands go to work instinctively

So I'll write what I'm feeling in that moment that day And spill out my thoughts that my mouth couldn't say "I Speak" By Ethel Mack

Poetry

Broken faces, without places, leaving no traces, while looking for a place to stay, if only for a day.

I speak for the weak who know not what goes on, nor what they seek.

I speak for those who are stranded, because already, they have been branded.

I speak to the people who show no interest or concern. I speak for so many people who have crashed and burned.

I speak for those still fighting and willing to learn. I speak for the poor who wish they had more.

But today they have the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK), and it is always an open door.



By Joann Abdelwahabe

City Agency Keeps Trenton Residents Healthy

By Maksymilian Popinski

have been about scrambling to get the flu shot and scheduling checkups before the fall weather goes mercy of inclement weather. from brisk to frosty. For individuals experiencing homelessness in Trenton and elsewhere in the state, the cable diseases (such as HIV/AIDS, reality is very different.

less population in New Jersey has It works to contain infection and declined by over twelve percent, helps individuals procure antiretbut this is not the case in Trenton. roviral drugs, antibiotics, or other Currently, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness is on The RMT's initiatives also address the rise as individuals are moving a wide slew of chronic conditions, to make use of Mercer County's or- including cardiac disease, diabeganized effort to alleviate poverty. "People come on the River Line tion. Those who have these serious from other areas because we have medical conditions are put in touch the Rescue Mission and we have with Henry J. Austin Health Center. the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen,"

and Human Services (DHHS). experiencing substance abuse problems or other mental health issues. And Trenton is having an increasof the Trenton Health Team, a nonprofit that includes Capital Health, St. Francis Medical Center, and the Anchor House, a non-profit that lo-Henry J. Austin Health Center (their only federally qualified health center). The four entities collaborate to provide medical services for individuals experiencing homelessness to illicit substances. Anchor House throughout the county.

very closely with the Rescue Mission of Trenton (RMT), a major point of entry for individuals experiencing homelessness Trenton. The RMT locates and them throughout the year. It also be healthy. ♠

includes an outreach program that seeks out at-risk individuals who For many, the past few months are on the brink of experiencing homelessness, have deteriorating medical conditions, or are at the

In coordination with the DHHS, the RMT also monitors communituberculosis, and hepatitis) within Compared to 2015, the home- the city's homeless population. medicines they may need, as well. tes, and drug and alcohol addic-As a federally qualified health care said Director James A. Brownlee of clinic, Henry J. Austin is partially the Trenton Department of Health funded by the federal government to provide primary as well as pre-A number of these individuals are ventative health care to individuals experiencing homelessness. These services include oral health, psychological/behavioral health, and ingly difficult time accommodating specialized geriatric care for the inthe influx. The DHHS is a member creasing number of elderly persons experiencing homelessness.

The DHHS also collaborates with cates and supports juveniles experiencing homelessness who may also be facing dangers like abuse/neglect, pregnancy, and susceptibility coordinates with the Trenton Health In particular, the DHHS works Team to provide medical services to the adolescents that it works with.

As the cold winter weather approaches, the DHHS works around the clock in partnerships with organizations across Mercer County provides a complete medical to ensure that individuals experievaluation of incoming homeless encing homelessness are receiving patrons, and continues to track the medical supports they need to

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Could The River Line Light Rail Come To The State House?

By Jared Kofsky

County was once quite simple to navigate. Dozens of trolleys and bus routes made transportation across the capital region much easier. However, today, there are just a handful of bus routes ing homelessness and poverty to acserving the county, no intercity bus service in Trenton, just one bus line to Pennsylvania, and train fares on NJ Transit and SEPTA are continuing to rise. Trips that would take just a few minutes by car across the county can take hours by bus. Yet, according to local leaders, one of the region's most frequent access to the many services inexpensive modes of transit in this area could potentially be expanded.

Right now, it costs \$1.60 to ride the River Line light rail, which connects the Trenton Transit Center with Camden, over 30 miles south, stopping in communities like Palmyra and Pennsauken. No matter if you are traveling one stop or 20, the fare remains the same. However, accessing of whom come from low-income the line is difficult for many Trenton households, currently take the Rivresidents, due to the fact that the line does not serve most neighborhoods, and has just three stops in the city.

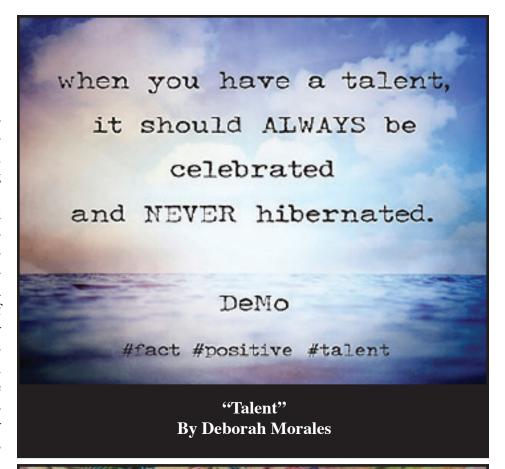
Now, proposals once again call for extending the River Line by several blocks to an area near the New Jersey State House off of West State Street. Although NJ Transit spokesperson Nancy Snyder told *The Wall* that there are currently no plans to extend the line, many area officials remain undeterred. The MIDJersey Chamber of Commerce, published a report regarding the proposal earlier this year, advocating that "wages and employment opportunities will increase due to the light rail extension," and that "14,000 direct and indirect jobs will be created as a result of the project". It also stated: "the light rail system is associated with connecting low income households with new economic op- to our West Ward, and generate portunities prior to the presence of the more business and more preservatransportation system.'

Although the Trenton area has hundreds of resources available to in-For those without a car, Mercer dividuals experiencing homelessness. without a personal vehicle, accessing them can be difficult and expensive. An expansion of the River Line would allow more area residents experienccess more resources without having to spend the extra 70 cents for a bus ride. For example, just south of Trenton, there are food pantries near River Line stops in Roebling and Burlington. In addition, South Trenton residents could have easier and more available in Downtown Trenton, or within close walking distance across the river in Morrisville, Pennsylvania.

> Likewise, there are hundreds of employers within walking distance of River Line stops, such as industrial parks and warehouses in Florence and throughout Burlington County. Many Trentonians, some er Line to work at Bai in Bordentown, but have to transfer from a bus to the light rail. This can cause inconveniences and missed opportunities. And while the River Line operates every half hour, many local buses in Trenton, like the 624, operate more infrequently.

> Not all politicians are enthused about the plan. Earlier this year, Governor Chris Christie spoke against it, recommending that to reach West State Street, residents "use Uber" instead, according to The Trentonian, referring to the convenient, yet costly, taxi service.

> Mayor Eric Jackson is, however, in favor of the River Line's expansion, telling *The Wall*: "the expansion will spur economic development through our Downtown, even tion throughout our city." ♀





East Trenton Organization Brings Housing To City Residents

By Maksymilian Popinski

On 794 E. State St in Trenton is the Martin House, the building from which Father Brian McCormick of the Catholic Diocese first established his non-profit organization, Better Community Housing Trenton (BCHT) in 1972. Father Brian McCormick, known as Father Brian within the community, devoted his life to building the organization into what it is today: A non-profit that restores dilapidated and neglected homes and sells them strictly to struggling families in the region.

According to their website, the purpose of BCHT is to provide homeownership and ownership skills to those who fall below the poverty line.

The Martin House itself was designed as a clothing store, in which members who qualified for and purchased a home had to volunteer one day of service to the Trenton community.

In the store, individuals can purchase a grocery bag of clean clothes for eight dollars, and those with special conditions (behavioral issues, burn victims, physically disabled) receive this clothing at no cost. Martin House receives the majority of their inventory from donations, a portion of which is from locals moving out of the area.

Originally, the bulk of the building housed only the Martin House, but when the organization started to expand and sell homes, Father Brian McCormick decided to use the adjacent buildings (through very generous donations from the community) to add new wings to the Martin House. Likewise, the staff originally consisted only of Father Brian, a few priests who resided in the bedrooms, and a few secretaries.



wings are used for recreational or Martin House sponsored events. These events embody the viva- cational initiatives, parents were furniture or clothing to stop by cious spirit of the East Trenton community, attracting individuals alongside their children as they from across the state including actor Martin Sheen who attended a program in 1989.

the Martin House Learning Center operated by Ms. Sheila Conway. Conway devotes her time to hosting a number of educational, recreational and social activities of the Catholic Church. Now the former bedrooms and including boy/girl scouts, a pre-

school, and afterschool programs. In conjunction with these eduinvited to study for their GED complete their schoolwork.

In 2011, BCHT completed a project on the 900th block of Along with the Martin House is E. State Street where they built twelve new homes. This was the last project by Fr. Brian McCormick who reached the age of 70 and retired as per the regulations

Unfortunately for the Martin

House, the only tie that the Diocese had to the organization was Father Brian McCormick, and without a new priest to take up the reins, Martin House no longer has access to a \$120,000 stipend from the Catholic Diocese.

Unfortunately, this has taken a toll on the home rehabilitation operations. Despite not having the help of the Diocese, many of the organization's Catholic affiliations are still very much involved with BCHT's efforts.

The Martin House is currently headed by Pearleen Waters. Waters, the Chief Executive Director of Operations, became a homeowner as a result of the Martin House several years ago. Waters spends her time sharing the organization's rich history and advocating for individuals' equal opportunity to own and maintain their own home.

"With housing in general, a basic necessity in life, it is very upsetting that some people cannot even maintain a roof over their heads," said Waters.

Despite the humanitarian merit of the organization, Waters admits operations have become difficult without the funds from the Diocese, and Martin House requires a contractor and bookkeeper in order to continue with home rehabilitations. Martin House accepts donations of all kind and encourages those who may have spare and donate.

Better Community Housing Trenton

302 E. State St. Trenton, NJ 08602

Phone: (609) 989-0271

www.bchtrenton.org

Where You Can Turn For Help

All days and times are subject to change without notice. Call before visiting. Updated November 2016. Check thewall.pages.tcnj.edu for more listings and map. * = Not Located in Mercer County

Trenton And Mercer County Homeless Shelters

Amani House

518-520 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Trenton, NJ itional 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 St, Trenton, NJ (609) 396-8329

24-hour program for runaway, homeless and at-risk youth ages 10-17 in Mercer 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

Better Community Housing Trenton - Doorway to Hioe

827 East State St. Trenton, NJ (609) 396-5579

Emergency shelter for homeless families in an apartment setting for up to 90 days.

Administration Office – 509 Perry St, 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. Escher Street SRO & Transitional Housing

50 Escher St, 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 Mercer County Bord of Social Services or New Jersey Department of Corrections

HomeFront New Jersey Family Preservation Center 101 Celia Way, Ewing, NJ (609) 989-9417

Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Housing are available.

Lifeline Emergency Shelter

300 South Clinton Ave. Trenton, NI (609) 989-7712.

Rescue Mission of Trenton

98 Carroll St, Trenton NJ (609) 695-1436 Emergency Shelter: Overnight shelter, meals and clothing for single adultsSoup 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 SupOther Services: Adult education, job training, thrift store, courtesy store and Day Center services for homeless patrons

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.

UPI - Trenton Treatment Center

56 Escher Street, Trenton, NJ, 08609 (609) 392-2822 and Fax: (609) 392-3215 Providing 22-bed transitional housing service for single homeless males of Mercer County. Accepting transitional housing referrals from Mercer County Board of

1530 Brunswick Ave, Lawrenceville, NJ (609) 394-9000 Emergency services designed to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault immediately following the initial crisis. 24-hour hotlines (1-800-572-SAFE) and Spanish-speaking staff available. Short-term emergency housing in a confidential location for victims of domestic violence.

Food Banks And Meal Services

Abundant Life Christian Fellowship Food Pantry 1440 Pennington Rd., Ewing, NJ. (609) 883-9780

Bethel Seventh Day Adventist Church

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

Cadwalader Asbury United Methodist Church Food Pantry 900 Stuyvesant Ave, Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-1037

Catholic Charities Community Food Pantry

132 N. Warren St., Trenton, NJ (609) 394-8847 EXT 2504 Open Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 9am-12:30pm.

Celestial Church of Christ Food Pantry 46 Weber Ave., Ewing, NJ. (609) 771-9227

Christ Preshyterian Church (Ginny's Pantry)

726 Klockner Rd., Hamilton, NJ, (609) 587-0751

Concerned Citizens of Ewing Inc. Food Pantry 320 Hollowbrook Dr., Ewing, NJ (609) 882-0856

Open Monday through Friday from 9:30am-1:30pm

Divine Mercey Parish, St. Stanislaus Church 60 Randall Ave, Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-4826. Thursday dinner, 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.

First Baptist Church of Princeton John Street & Paul Robeson Place, Princeton, NJ. (609) 924-0877. Dinner Tuesday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

First Haitian Church of God Food Pantry

1501 Greenwood Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-3708

First Presbyterian Church of Cranbury (Skeet's Food Pantry) * 22 South Main St., Cranbury, NJ. (609) 395-0897

First Presbyterian Church of Hightstown

320 North Main St, Hightstown, NJ (609) 448-0055

Rise to the TASK Community Supper on Mondays from 4 pm - 5:30pm

First United Methodist Church of Hightstown

187 Stockton St, Hightstown, NJ (609) 448-0041. Rise to the TASK Community Supper on thursdays from 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Hamilton Township's Bromley Neighborhood Civic Center

1801 E. State St, Hamilton, N.J (609) 587-8100. Open Tuesdays from 9:30-

11:30am and Thursdays from 3-4pm.

Hamilton Township's J. O. Wilson Neighborhood Center 169 Wilfred Ave, Hamilton, NJ (609) 393-6480. Open Mondays from 10am-

12noon, Wednesdays 1pm-3pm.

Holy Apostles' Episcopal Church

1040 Yardvillve Allentown Rd, Yardville, NJ. (609) 208-0228. Dinner Tuesday, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

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

Holy Trinity Catholic Church Food Pantry * 201 North Pennsylvania Ave. Morrisville, PA (215) 295-3045

Jerusalem Baptist Church

150 N. Clinton Ave, 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

Jewish Family & Children's Services Food Pantry 707 Alexander Rd. Suite 102. Princeton, NJ 08540 (609) 987-8100

Lawrence Community Center

295 Eggerts Crossing Rd., Lawrenceville, NJ. (609) 883-3379

HomeFront-managed food pantry provides food bags on the 1st and 3rd Thursfay of the month. Various programs for all ages and computer access for visitors.

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer Food Pantry 189 South Broad St. Trenton, NJ (609) 396-2411.

Last Thursday of month. Opens at 8am on a first come first serve basis.

Meals on Wheels of Mercer County

320 Hollowbrook Dr, Ewing, NJ (609) 695-3483

Provides nutritious meals to homebound individuals throughout Mercer County

Medallion Care Behavioral Health

1 Electonics Dr, Suite 105, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 586-0766. Lunch Monday - Friday from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

Mercer Street Friends

824 Silvia St, Ewing, NJ. General inquiries (609) 396-1506. Food Bank inquiries

Mount Carmel Guild

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

1965 South Broad St., Trenton, NJ.(609) 393-4725

New Covenant United Methodist Church

New Hope Church of God

400 Hamilton Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-3293

NJ Conference Adventist Community Services Center

2160 Brunswick Cir, Lawrenceville, NJ. (609) 392-7131

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

Princeton Deliverance Center

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

Princeton United Methodist Church

7 Vandeventer Ave., Princeton, NJ. (609) 924-2613. Free community dinner,

Wednesdays 5pm - 6pm

98 Carroll St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-2183. 1st Saturday of a 5-Saturday month and every Sunday. 11am-12pm.

Resurrection Lutheran Church Food Pantry 4315 Nottingham Way, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 586-3355

225 Franklin Street Hightstown, NJ. (609) 443-4464.

Open for limited food distribution on Monday-Wednesday from 9am-12pm Please call the office for requirements and information.

Sacred Heart Church

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

Salvation Army - Homeless Drop-In Center

575 East State St., 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. Sat. 9am-11:30am

South Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

First Baptist Church, 128-140 Centre St., Trenton, NJ (609) 393-8810 Monday Tuesday, Wednesday Dinner from 4:30pm — 5pm

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

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

St. Mary's Parish Community Food Pantry

45 Crosswicks Street, Bordentown, NJ (609) 298-0261

The Crisis Ministry of Mercer County, Inc.

123 East Hanover St., Trenton, NJ. Open Monday - Thursday 9:30 am - 12pm. 714 S. Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ. Open Monday – Thursday 9:30 am – 12pm 61 Nassau St, Princeton, NJ. Open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 1:30 pm – 4pm

(609) 396-9355. Food pantry, emergency financial assistance (rent, utilities, security deposit, mortgage) for low income families and individuals in Mercer County. Pantry visits require photo ID and proof of Mercer County address.

The Food Center at Morrisville Presbyterian Church

771 North Pennsylvania Ave. Morrisville, PA (215) 295-4191

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral Food Pantry

801 W State St, Trenton, NJ (609) 392-3805. Food Pantry. Every other Saturday 9am-11am. Services via the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen are also available.

72 Escher St, Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-5456. Mon. – Fri. Lunch from 11am-1pm: Mon. - Thurs. Dinner from 4pm-5:30pm. Call for other services.

Turning Point United Methodist Church

15 S. Broad St, Trenton, NJ. Dinner served / Food Pantry. 3rd Sun. 1pm-3pm.

United Progress, Inc. 62 West State St, Trenton, NJ (609) 392-2161. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and

West Trenton Soup Kitchen

Friday 9am-12pm.

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. 801 W. State St, Trenton, NJ. Thursday Dinner, 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.



Health Services

Henry J. Austin Health Center (Chambers)
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

Henry J. Austin Health Center (Ewing Street)
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. Ap-

73 North Clinton Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08609, (609) 392-5159. Limited Utility

Catholic Charities, Behavioral Health Services

Integrated behavioral health and physical health services

One Capital Way, Hopewell Township, NJ. (800) 637-2374.

Clinics, Medicaid, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care.

Mental Health Crisis Assistance. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare

Behavioral Healthcare Services and Primary Health Care:

2210 Hamilton Avenue, Hamilton, NJ 08619. (609) 587-7044

946 Edgewood Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08618. (609) 393-1626

1931 Nottingham Way, Hamilton, NJ 08619. (609) 586-2574

Children's Day School / Children's Day Treatment Program

1925 Pennington Road, Ewing, NJ 08618. (609) 882-2288

housing counseling, financial counseling and education.

321 North Warren Street Trenton, NJ - (609) 278-5900

1040 Pennsylvania Ave., Trenton, NJ (609) 392-1224

509 Perry Street, Trenton, NJ (609) 989-3722

City of Trenton - Health & Human Services

319 E. State St. (609) 815-2160

Rte 33 and Paxson Ave, Hamilton, NJ

unity Health Law Project

Crisis Ministry of Mercer County, Inc.

Family Guidance Center - Outpatient Care

Consumer Credit / Counseling Service:

Behavioral Healthcare Services and Primary Health Care

2210 Hamilton Ave, Hamilton, NJ 08619. (609) 587-7044

946 Edgewood Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08618. (609) 393-1626

1931 Nottingham Way Hamilton NI 08619 (609) 586-2574

Children's Day School / Children's Day Treatment Program

123 East Hanover St, Trenton, NJ

714 S. Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ

61 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ

310 West State St, Trenton, NJ (609) 218-5120.

Community Justice Center

and will make appointments.

Specializes in mentoring, re-entry (has program) & gang reduction.

CEAS (Coordinated Entry and Assessment Services) Center

ing, identification, and information about benefits eligibility

Emergency assistance for back rent, first month rent for the

rsday, 10 am – 8 pm. Saturday, 10 am – 3 pm.

225 East State St, Suit 5, Trenton NJ (609) 392-5553.

agency assists families in their search for quality child care and p

252 County Route 601, Belle Mead, NJ. 1-800-933-3579 Access Center (24/7).

Substance Abuse Recovery Programs / Family Preservation & Recovery Programs:

family preservation services, a school for children with emotional difficulties,

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

Operated by the City of Trenton, this center strives to provide services like hous-

1001 Spruce St, Suite 201, Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-7770. Resource and Referral

child care subsidy funds, Mon. Tues, Wed. Fri. 9am-5pm, Thurs. 9am-6pm

homeless and/or at-risk homeless and as well as assistance for Senior Citizens

County ID card and passport services. Mon. Wed. Fri. 10am – 6pm. Tuesday &

Discusses legal questions with those with disabilities. Will make appointments.

Encouraging the empowerment, resiliency and rights of those struggling with

Food pantries; emergency financial assistance (rent, utilities, security deposit

mortgage); workforce development, and driver's license restoration assistance.

Substance Abuse Recovery Programs / Family Preservation & Recovery Programs:

disabilities by providing the essential ingredients of legal education, outreach, ad-

vocacy and representation. Will discuss legal questions with veterans and disabled

Specializing in psychiatric and substance abuse treatment. Accepts Medicaid

10 Southard St, Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-4557

Capital Health Medical System at Hopewell

Capital Health Regional Medical Center 750 Brunswick Avenue, Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-6722

(mental issues only) and Medicare.

Consumer Credit / Counseling Service:

Henry J. Austin Health Center (Main)

8am-5pm and Sat 9-1.

A Better Way

M-F 8:30am-4:30pm

Family Guidance Center - Outpatient Care

and Prescription assistance. Home Health Nursing Services: visits for medication management, vital sign checks, pre-filling syringes, adminster 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 main 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.

1065 River Road, Ewing, NJ (301) 587-2916, Toll Free: (800) 689-6411

on from rehab to independent living for individuals Halfway houses to trans Services include: outpatient mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, Princeton House Behavioral Health 741 Mount Lucas Road, Princeton, NJ. (1-800) 242-2550; (609)-497-3347 Inten-

sive outpatient, partial hospitalization. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare

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. experiencing drug and alcohol addiction.

Human Services

1925 Pennington Rd, Ewing, NJ 08618. (609) 882-2288 Services include: outpatient mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, family preservation services, a school for children with emotional difficulties, housing counseling, financial counseling and education.

50 Escher St. Trenton, NJ (609) 396-7515

services to low income people, and operates a prison re-entry initiative in Trenton.

Administrative Offices

Tuesday 12-8pm (609) 989-9417.

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

Provides counseling, employment placement services, housing and other social

Central Jersey Legal Services, Inc., 198 West State St, 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 ndividuals with General Assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, emental Security Income and other services M-F, 8:30am- 4:30 pm, T 8:30am-8:30pm. Can call or walk-in.

Mercer County Clerk's Office

209 S. Broad St, 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

Mercer County Department of Housing and Community Development 640 South Broad St. Trenton, NJ (609) 989-6858 Provides heating/cooling assistance, first-time homebuyer assistance, residential rehabilitation assistance, and affordable housing.

M-F 8:30am-4:30pm Mercer County Department of Human Services 640 South Broad St. Trenton, NJ (609) 468-8296 or Fax: (609) 989-6032

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

Mercer County Office on Aging Information for Seniors (877) 222-3737, (609) 989-6661

Mercer County Office on Disability Services

Mercer County Veterans Residence

2280 Hamilton Ave., Hamilton NJ. (609) 989-6120.

Rescue Mission of Trenton

6 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 Pl, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 586-7900

Clinics, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care Accepts Medicaid, Medicare

St. Francis Medical Center

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

Trenton Adult Rehabilitation Center 103 Enterprise Ave, Trenton, NJ (609) 599-9801

Operated by The Salvation Army

Trenton Division of Health and Human Services 218 N. Broad St., Trenton, NJ, (609) 989-3242

Health Promotions and Clinical Services; Health Incentive Program for Women

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,

University Medical Center at Princeton

Mercer County residents.

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. Dial 211 for Community Resources.

client walk-ins, and referrals from other service provider agencies, and uninsure

One-Stop Career Center

(NJ Dept. of Labor), 26 Yard Ave, 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 St, 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 St 2nd Floor Hightstown, NJ. (609) 443-4464. Providing case management to low-income individuals in the East Windsor/Hight

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 St, Trenton, NJ (609) 393-2801

Hours 8am – 3pm, 5 days a week

635 South Clinton Ave, 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 St, 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 Rd, 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 St, Trenton, NJ (609) 392-2161 (Main Office). Provides substance abuse treatment, HIV/AIDS counseling, employment and job development coun-

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Trenton Vet Center 934 Parkway Ave, Ewing, NJ (609) 882-5744

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Hamilton Outpatient Clinic 3635 Quakerbridge Rd, Hamilton, NJ (609) 570-6600 General Medicine for veterans.

utility, housing services and homeless prevention. (609) 392-2161

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 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

(1-877) 4AID VET (877-424-3838)(National)

MERCER ALLIANCE

Jamie C: The Endeavor to Find Her Voice Again

By Annette Espinoza

IL to New Jersey brought unex- and an inability to sing songs the pected hardships, hindering her way she once had. Once again, in musical talents and expression, HomeFront New Jersey in Lawrenceville helped Jamie rewrite Director Ruthann Traylor providthe lyrics and find her voice again.

the move to New Jersey but unforeseen circumstances put her in a challenging and unstable situation. Six months ago, these trying battling PTSD, depression, anxitimes brought Jamie to Home- ety and BPD, Ms. Traylor went Front, where she learned how to beyond her role at HomeFront, channel her frustration into in- driving Jamie to therapy sessions. spiring works of art. There, she found a strong support system that motivated her to pursue her goals. "It is not always an easy road, especially when you are alone. But HomeFront never made me feel hopeless," said Jamie.

Jamie credits HomeFront and obstacles in her life. its incredible staff for opening her eyes to what she is truly capable of achieving. With an extensive uals like Ms. Traylor on her side, background in music including Jamie is set on reaching red carpet experience co-writing songs, participating in church choirs with Shirley Caesar, and singing back-relationship with her mental health, up for R. Kelly, HomeFront gave and an impact on the stage. As she Jamie access to singing lessons and similar training opportunities to get her back on the stage. much to her. "My life experiences "They made me feel like a super- are not for me. They are for othstar," said Jamie.

sical background, regaining her Jamie said. voice did not come easily. Jamie recalls feeling restless, uneased, voiceless, before her artisticbreakthrough. To assuage these emotions, she became involved with the ArtSpace art therapy program at HomeFront's Family Campus in Ewing. "I began painting music. The first piece I painted and sold was a set of piano keys," Jamie explained.

But even after this, Jamie continued to struggle. She was frus-When the move from Chicago, trated with her "rusty" vocal cords a dark and desolate place, Jamie reached out to HomeFront where ed her reassurance and motivated Three years ago, Jamie made her to preserver in the face of such temporary adversities. Jamie credits Ms. Traylor for much of her success today. As she began

> Several months removed from all this, Jamie has recently moved into her own apartment. She is grateful to HomeFront for the skills she learned there and the invaluable support system that continues to guide her through the

With the support of organizations like HomeFront and individgoals: independence and financial stability, a healthy and sustainable moves forward, Jamie hopes to give back to those who gave so ers who are going through and need Despite Jamie's extensive mu- to move past similar experiences,"

HomeFront New Jersey

Main Office

1880 Princeton Avenue #3 Lawrenceville, NJ

Phone: (609) 989-9417

homefrontni.org



"Listeners"

By Ethel Mack

Poetry

It is hard enough being homeless and having nowhere to go, or anyone

It is embarrassing for me to ask for help, when everybody is trying to label and judge you.

It is just something that happens to me and many others.

Oh darn, just when I thought things could not get any worse,

I look across the room of the Rescue Mission and I see my brother.

I'm not the only one who ended up in the Rescue Mission for food and

We are not the only ones who are down and out. There are people from

There are young people, middle class people, and a pretty good share

Curious and concerned, I took it upon myself to ask someone what had happen, and how did they ended up at the Rescue Mission.

Their answer was: It was as if a switch was turned off, and I was left in the dark. It was then that I began to lose my will.

Because one day the government decided to cut my check, and I could not pay my bills.

They went on to say that homelessness does not have a face. It will somehow leave you hungry and without a place.

It does not have a special time, and if you are not careful it will play with your mind.

Scott: Open Space and New Playground Enrich Children's Lives

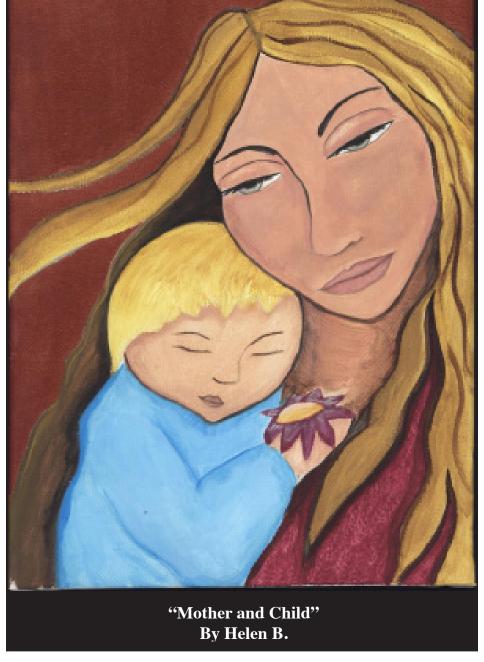
By Essence B. Scott

Children should be encouraged to explore nature and their surroundings: the sunny sky above their heads and the green grass underneath their feet as they go on adventures that exist entirely in their imaginations. When a child is experiencing homelessness, the only thing out there is a parking lot. Oftentimes, there are no other children to play with. Their interactions that they have with children their own age are limited and brief-maybe at a rest stop where families stop on their way to a vacation destination.

In 1999, the Trails End Motel in East Windsor, where I grew up, had a large grassy area to play in and a tree to climb. My siblings and I were usually the only children there and so we played with each other. We wanted other children to play with, . though. In school, we were finally given this opportunity, but it was short-lived. Here, we spent recess playing tag and swinging alongside our classmates. A short half-an-hour later, we returned to the classroom and later that night, to the empty motel yard.

Today, HomeFront's Family Campus paints a different reality one that I am happy to see. The Campus built a playground for its resident children to enjoy. It is unsafe for children to play on pavement and parking lots where they can be easily injured. They need to feel the wind on their face, the dirt between their fingers, and the static of the slides as they go down. They also need to connect with other children to build important social and emotional skills. Programs like HomeFront's Joy, Hopes, and Dreams and Camp Mercer bring children together and provide them with this opportunity.

When I was a part of HomeFront's community, I took part in the different recreational activities that



they offered. I was a teenager, so I I got older, I enjoyed signing up for was not interested in the slides and iungle gyms, but the swings were my with people besides my brother and sister. It also fostered a love for the outdoors and encouraged me to live a healthier life. I was always out running around.

Gym classes are another good way to encourage activity and play, especially in elementary school where it is much less competitive. still holds. Children and teenagers When I was younger, I did not like structured play in gym class; but as stressed and recreation can allow

different extracurricular activities that were offered through favorite. It got me out of the house physical education department like and should afford children these and allowed me to build relationships the weight room, ultimate Frisbee, important opportunities to enjoy and volleyball. Sometimes, the older kids would

get together to play football. I remember being reluctant to play with and about, constantly walking and them—being tackled and breaking my glasses? No, thank you. When I finally had the courage to play, I had a great time. I was no longer homeless at that point, but the fact experiencing homelessness are often

them to let off some steam and build supportive relationships with others. Playing outside or on a sports team and the face-to-face interactions here give children a place to channel their energy. Conversations on the playground are much more helpful then those had over platforms like Skype or FaceTime (though those can help, too).

The opportunity to interact with others is also important for adults. My mom did not have anyone to talk to but my siblings and I when we were homeless. There were no other adults to regularly mingle or chat with. The offices in the motels we lived in had adults who were too busy with their jobs to socialize with a lonely teen, an energetic child, or a quiet adult.

Backyards, public parks, and school playgrounds are all great places to socialize with others. Children who are homeless are consistently deprived of the opportunity to meet new people, especially if they are living in places that do not cater to this need, like motels and shelters. I am grateful for HomeFront's Family Campus playground where children can be children everyday. They should not have to grow up so fast. Maybe there is a small playground that a family has built in their backyard where the neighborhood children stop by to play; or a safe park where children can meet—we can themselves and grow.

HomeFront New Jersey

Family Campus

101 Celia Way, Ewing. NJ

Phone: (609) 883-7500

homefrontnj.org

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"Wisdom and Knowledge"

By Derrick Branch

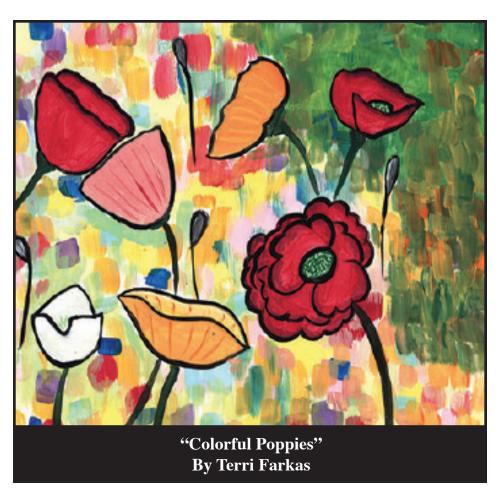
Poetry

Knowledge is to wisdom like water is to a cup. The more of one you have. the quicker the other one is filled up.

Wisdom is like knowledge, but knowledge must come first. The better quality of knowledge, the more your wisdom is worth.

Some think they have wisdom much before their time, but wisdom only comes with the maturity of the mind. Some say that I am wise, and that I know a lot, but I know only of my experiences and most of what I was taught

In order to get wisdom of a solid, useful kind, you must live long enough and do good with that time. Wisdom is to knowledge like a father is to a son. You must first have the latter, before the other one can come.



Organizations Deliver Food to Local Homebound Residents

By Shradha Suresh

In addition to families, single parents and children, many of the elderly in our communities are faced with food insecurity. According to Feeding America, about 8% of households (2.9 million seniors who are above the age of 65) experienced food insecurity in 2015. The Mercer Street Friends Food Bank's website states that oftentimes the elderly have to chose between food and medicine. Food insecurity has a dangerous impact at any age, but it can be particularly problematic for the health of the elderly.

There are a number of problems that contribute to the rising number of elderly faced with food insecurity and the gravity of the issue. The website of Food Insecurity and Aging Adults states that "the elderly feel that food stamps are reserved for the young and would be judged if they used them. They also lack transportation and are bands and daughter's deaths through unable to prepare food."

The Mercer County Nutrition Project for the Elderly is combating the organization has helped her work choose the day, meals and length of

cess to satiating, nutritional meals and an opportunity for these individuals to engage with their communities.

from other programs because they stress on the importance of socialization; it is a program that is catered for the elderly to get a warm meal," says Jenifer Williams, the program's Executive Director.

it provides these same services to those who are homebound and immobile, as well. The program, which is both locally and federally funded, runs from Monday to Friday. The only requirement is that the client or his/her spouse must be over the age of 60.

Kamille Munger, a client of the program, said that she started visiting the program with her husband years ago. Today, the same location is where she seeks closure for her husan extensive network of friends that of elderly residents who are immobile. she first met there. In this way, the

and depression.

Another organization that delivers similar resources and support to indi-"This program is quite different viduals who are homebound is Meals on Wheels of Mercer County. With the help of a large base of committed volunteers, the organization delivers meals to these individuals.

Patrons may receive one hot meal and one cold meal per day on Mon-The program is also unique in that days through Fridays. There are also a small number of weekend meals available to weekday meal recipients. In addition to these services, the program offers nutrition education, shelfstable groceries once a month, 'Blizzard Bags" during inclement weather, and pet food for those who need them.

> And although the program only requires that patrons be over the age of 21, Sasa Montano, the Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of Mercer County, said that the program finds that it is serving an increasing number

The program allows patrons to can

problem on two fronts, providing ac- through a challenging period of grief the services that they need. A nutritionist determines all the ingredients and meals provided on a daily basis. Additionally, the program uses federal poverty guidelines to determine if patrons require a subsidy.

> According to Joyce Stilwells, the Director of the Lawrence Township Meals on Wheels Program, "the delivery system is like a check with the elderly where they still have their independence and dignity but through which they can connect to people."

> Moreover, they provide these individuals with the independence and nutrition that they need. These two programs serve as an important resource to an often-overlooked population in the community. $\mathbf{\hat{P}}$

> > **Mercer County Nutrition Project for the Elderly** (609) 989-6650

> > > **Meals on Wheels** of Mercer County (609) 695-3483

New Law Provides Free Access to Birth Certificates

By Tasneem Amer & Jackie Rogan

A bill signed into law in January grants individuals experiencing homelessness in New Jersey access to a free copy of their birth certificate. After requests are made, IDs are processed by a social worker and can be used to access other forms of legal identification.

"The enactment of this law can be a first step toward healthcare, government assistance, and a path to self-sufficiency and a roof over their heads," said Assemblyman Raj Mukherji, according to The Jersey Journal. Reliable forms of identification are needed to access many services and resources across the state such as disability benefits, food stamps, and health coverage.

In order to purchase a birth certificate, prices can vary from as much as twenty to almost fifty dollars in certain states. As for New Jersey, an online process and consultation costs approximately \$25.

For many, this meant access to proof of citizenship which is particularly important for employment. "Many homeless citizens have no hope of getting off the streets and accessing social services and government benefits without proof of identity," said Mukherji. Access to a free birth certificate can open doorways out of homelessness and home insecurity.

State Senator Shirley Turner expressed her views on this issue in a interview with The Wall: "Birth certificates are the most reliable form of identification which can serve as proof of identity when applying for public services or other forms identity, for example; photo ID cards, driver licenses, etc," addng that "a birth certificate can also be used for the purpose of replacing or updating any other lost

or incorrect vital records, such as social security cards, or marriage certificates."

According to Turner, before this legislation was passed, it cost \$25 for one to receive a birth certificate copy and an additional \$2 for each subsequent copy, a cost that was prohibitive for many individuals experiencing homelessness, Turner stated.

"Homelessness is a complex social problem," Turner explained, adding that "in order to decrease the homeless population, communities need to address a variety of underlying factors, which affect an individual's ability to maintain gainful employment and access to housing." ♀

Free IDs for Residents Experiencing Homelessness

By Jason Kantor & Rob Nason

on both sides of the political spectrum. Many feel that photo identification should be required to vote. Similarly, a valid photo ID is crucial to anyone who is trying to get a job, or receive many supportive services. With that being said, there are many ID is required but inaccessible. The people who do not have a driver's law removes the \$24 fee that makes license, and cannot afford the necessary fee to obtain a government is- homelessness or insecurity to obtain

sued photo ID. While voters are not required to show a photo ID to vote in New Jersey (something that residents of several other states do not have to do), there are still many everyday situa-

tions in which they do need to present a photo ID. If one cannot get a photo For the past several years, of voter ID, it becomes increasingly difficult identification has been a major issue to perform basic tasks or to receive many of the services that all Americans are entitled to.

A recent NJ law works to corect this. The law, which starts in August. will interrupt the cyclical nature of poverty that occurs when a photo it hard for individuals experiencing these ID cards.

Assemblyman Raj Mukherji notes that the fee was very worrying for these individuals: "The administration fee is the only thing preventing many homeless people from acquiring identification, when shelters and social services organizations are willing to help these citizens."

Assemblyman Reed Gusciora also spoke of the importance of the new law in a statement posted in January on the website of the New Jersey Assembly Democrats: "Waiving this fee will make it easier for a homeless person to get the identification they need to get a new start. It is a simple but effective idea," Gusciora said.

The process for obtaining these IDs remains the same. Not including the fee, the steps to obtain one includes providing proof of identity and address, filling out an application either in person or by mail, and having a photo taken. Recipients must visit their local Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) agency to get the identification card printed. Individuals fourteen years of age and older can apply for a non-driver identification card.

The MVC has Mercer County locations at Bakers Basin at 3200 Brunswick Pike/Route 1 in Lawrenceville and in Downtown Trenton at 120 South Stockton Street.



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TDI: Connecting the Capital

don't have access to your

mean? You don't have

access to education."

By Odalys Quito

"Trenton makes the world takes" can be seen by anyone who passes the Lower Trenton Bridge. The powerful slogan represents the historical significance of a city that was once a landmark for business and opportunity. Today, while the city is still alive with the same vivacious spirit, it is also home to high rates of homelessness, unemployment, and poverty.

For many of the individuals who experience these adversities, access to the internet, technology, and a basic understanding of how a computer works underlies many of these

problems. Fortunately, programs as the Trenton Digital Initiative lessly to provide these same individuals with an opportunity

overcome such modern challenges.

TDI receives donations that are then renovated into functional computers and laptops. Their mission is to get a computer into every home in Trenton, where over 17,000 families lack access to the Internet. As of today, TDI has provided over 580 computers and laptops to families in the community

And although TDI does not provide families with direct Internet access, they have partnered with Comcast to implement the Internet Essentials Program (IEP). Families who have a child enrolled in the federal lunch program are eligible for IEP, which provides internet access for the price of \$10 per month.

According to the City of Trenton, 62 percent of K-12 public school students in the city are enrolled in the federal lunch program and a large majority of these students now have access to the internet through IEP. Families receiving housing assistance are also eligible for the program.

Dave Zboray, the program's cofounder spoke of the importance of Internet access to many of these families and children: "Imagine for a day, let alone a year, that you don't have access to your laptop. What does that mean? You don't have access to education." For children in particular, the lack of access to this important resource can hinder academic success and achievement. Zborav also discussed the lack of public technologic resources in the city, citing the city's few libraries as a limited source of access.

Zboray's work "Imagine for a day, continues to make in the capital such let alone a year, that you a positive impact on the residents of Trenton. He cheerare working tire- laptop. What does that fully recounts the experiences of the residents that he has worked alongside. For example,

an unemployed single father of two received a computer from TDI. The same day that he received the laptop, he started to apply for jobs on the internet.

Zborav elaborates on this experience by stating that "the father calls me and says 'I got an interview at The Cheesecake Factory. A week later, he tells me that he got the job."

With technology and the internet become more and more of a necessity, programs like TDI are moving the lives of many forward and working to close the gap one computer at a time.

Trenton Digital Initiative

(609) 689-9960 x16 (609) 203-9064

tdi@midjerseychamber.org



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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