

HomeFront

THE WOMEN'S HOME

Volume 8, Issue 2

Winter 2012

Update on Apartments for Chronically Homeless Women

As part of The Women's Home's Housing First pilot program, staff at our permanent supportive housing complex, Jane Cizik Garden Place, have worked diligently to fill and serve the 10 units designated for women who are chronically homeless. We partnered with specific agencies including SEARCH, Mission of Yahweh, Volunteers of America, and the Montgomery County Homeless Coalition to find women in need of our services and who meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition of chronically homeless.

According to HUD, for a person to be considered as chronically homeless, she must have:

- a disabling condition
- been homeless for a year or more or had four episodes of homelessness in the past three years
- been living in a place not meant for human habitation or in a homeless emergency shelter
- documentation provided from a third party such as an emergency shelter, homeless outreach worker, or any other health or human services worker.

Today ten women meeting these criteria enjoy living in dignity in their own furnished apartments at our Spring Branch complex. Case management services and application of our WholeLife model of care support them in their endeavors to be autonomous. Each has access to resources in health, job development, legal help, budgeting, and faith-based programs. Six of the 10 women are now employed and two receive Social Security benefits.

Judy, the first chronically homeless tenant, wrote in a letter of thanks, "As days go by, I feel blessed that I do have a place to live and enjoy. So thanks to The Women's Home...and most of all, God."

Octavia never imagined she would have to choose between living on the streets and staying in an emergency shelter until she was unexpectedly separated from her family. The city of Houston was completely unfamiliar to her, a former California transient. She took refuge at Jane Cizik Garden Place through placement from the Houston Area Women's Center. Now she wants to serve as a voice for other homeless women.

"I'm thankful for moving here," she

Judy, the first chronically homeless tenant, wrote in a letter of thanks, "As days go by, I feel blessed that I do have a place to live and enjoy. So thanks to The Women's Home...and most of all, God."

Bedroom in one of our furnished apartments



said. "I got some of my independence back."

Octavia sees life a little differently than she did before moving into the facility five months ago. She has reconciled with her family. She spends quality time with her three grandsons each week. She prays daily for serenity. She works part-time and is actively seeking a full-time job.

Before Rachel found affordable housing at Jane Cizik Garden Place, she lived in several shelters and survived on assistance from SEARCH. "Having my own place is better than where I've been," she said. "Everything is perfect. It's not like an apartment; it feels more like a home."

She recently passed the State Board Exam for Dental Assisting through a program sponsored by SEARCH and the Baylor College of Medicine. She studied an entire year to prepare for the 200-question exam.

"It wasn't easy, but I was determined [to pass]," Rachel said. "The people at Jane Cizik Garden Place encouraged me, and that helped me stay focused. My faith kept me through the whole thing."

She has completed hundreds of volunteer hours in an externship. Her goal is to buy a home, a car, and become a nurse one day.

Success stories abound at this sober living community of 87-units. Susan, who suffered from years of physical and substance abuse, feels peaceful at her new home. Since staying at Jane Cizik Garden Place, she and many women like her have experienced fewer hospitalizations, less crises, and are more productive and stable, evidence that supportive housing is an economically viable solution for ending homelessness.

"We're meeting the women where they are, honoring and respecting where they have come from and how they show up to us," said Cayman Tirado, case counselor. "We're looking at the cards that we have in front of us and strategizing with the client on where they want to go and how we can support them to get there."

For Octavia that means providing the resources she needs to make her goal of moving on a reality. Although she likes her apartment, she wants to give another woman a chance to live where she has lived, to become self-directed.

"I want to pass the torch along to someone who's walked in my shoes," she said. "Maybe they can gain their independence too."

The Women's Home Partnership & Acosta, Inc. *Donate Bikes to Those in Need*

The lack of dependable transportation is a common issue for many tenants at Jane Cizik Garden Place. One tenant walked 15 miles in the rain, traversing train tracks and unpaved roads to get to work. When members of The Women's Home Partnership learned of this problem, they were compelled to act. They teamed with Acosta, Inc. and donated bikes for the women. The bike donations were a lifesaver for both tenants at Jane Cizik Garden Place and clients in our Transitional Treatment program. This simple act of kindness has made running errands and getting to work a more pleasant adventure.





Message from the Executive Director

PAULA PAUST, MSW

Some exciting changes are occurring at Jane Cizik Garden Place, our 87-unit apartment complex. Nationwide, and particularly in our Houston community, there is a growing focus on fair and equal access to permanent housing for all persons. As a nationally recognized model of excellence in affordable housing, we are proud to take a leadership role in meeting federal fair housing standards.

Equal access has become increasingly important because there is a great shortage in our

area of housing that is safe and affordable. In our community alone, nearly 10,000 households are without a permanent home. To help meet this need, The Women's Home will no longer limit Jane Cizik Garden Place to single women only.

We at The Women's Home embrace this opportunity to extend housing opportunities to those who have not been a part of our community in the past, such as the single mother and her child or her significant other who needs housing assistance. The Women's Home is

well-positioned to succeed as we expand access to permanent housing that is affordable for a broader group of Houstonians and strengthen our commitment to fair housing.

I can assure you that The Women's Home will continue to be women-focused. Future housing will serve women and their families, and we will continue to specialize in and focus on women-centered services.



2012 Leadership Circle

The Leadership Circle recognizes those supporters who commit to ensure a robust charitable base for our work. Members of The Leadership Circle annually contribute from \$1,000 to \$10,000. This gift is above and beyond participating in the golf tournament, the gala, and other events and signifies their dedication to helping homeless women in our community live a life fulfilled.

\$10,000 to \$24,999 -
(\$10,000.00 +)

Karen Kash Redden
and Joe W. Redden, Jr.

\$5,000 to \$9,999
(\$5,000.00 +)

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Penny and Paul Loyd
Sarah and Ray Nesbitt
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\$2,500 to \$4,999
(\$2,500.00 +)

Orla and John Bourque
Karen and Larry George
Anne and Austin Greaux
Laurie and Alfredo Gutierrez
J'Anne and Jeff Rawson
in honor of The Julia and
Albert Smith Foundation
Brenda and James White

\$1,000 to \$2,499
(\$1,000.00 +)

Susan Ann Bailey
Deborah Bay and Edgar Browning
Kay and Rene' Joyce
in memory of
Mary Frances Polasek
Marilyn and Rex King
Harriet and Truett Latimer
in honor of Dr. Bette A. Stead
Irene Liberatos
Mary Lynch and Scott Enger
in memory of
Shanelle Cormier
Mary McIntire
in honor of Irene Liberatos
Susan R. Morrison
Than-Nhi Nguyen and Stu Moffitt
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Jackie L. Phillips
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Dr. Bette A. Stead and Dr. Carter
Eugene Carlton, Jr.
Sue Trammell Whitfield
Janne Williams
in honor of Kay Polasek Joyce



**Kay Joyce, Irene
Liberatos, Karen George,
Karen Redden, and
Deborah Bay**

THE MISSION OF THE WOMEN'S HOME IS TO HELP WOMEN IN CRISIS REGAIN THEIR SELF-ESTEEM AND DIGNITY, EMPOWERING THEM TO RETURN TO SOCIETY AS PRODUCTIVE, SELF-SUFFICIENT INDIVIDUALS.



**Janice Hall and
Kay Joyce
Gala Chairs**



Underwriters



Targa Resources



John P. McGovern Foundation



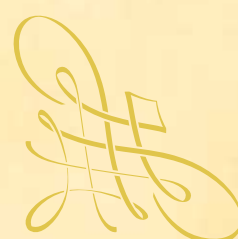
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Williams



WHOLELIFE is...

The Women's Home unique rehabilitation program

It addresses six areas of wellness through The Home's Clinical, Vocational, and Residential Services. Vocational wellness is featured in this issue.

Vocational wellness means more than being employed. For clients in recovery at The Women's Home, vocational wellness means utilizing a variety of strategies and tools to achieve and retain full-time

employment with benefits. Success is measured by the ability to:

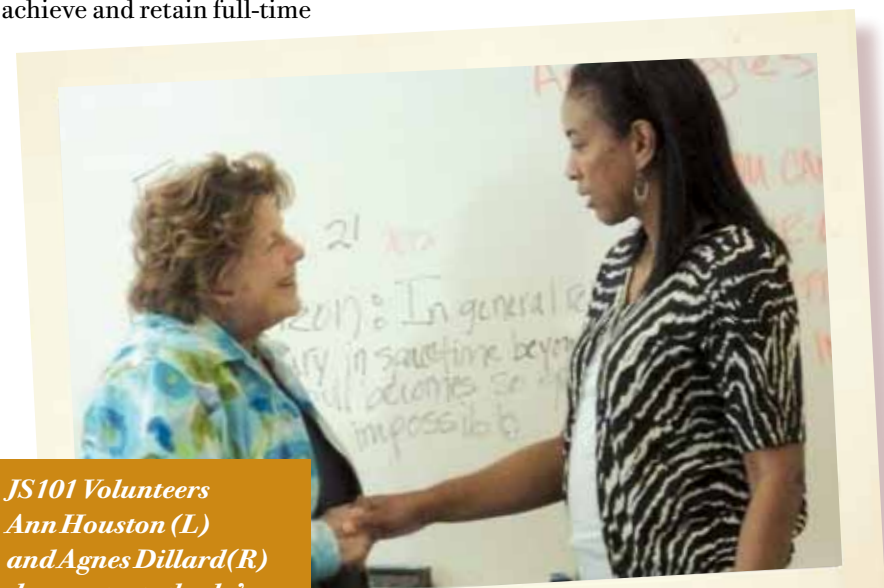
- interview effectively
- create a resume and job application
- demonstrate knowledge in computer programs
- learn skills for problem solving
- communicate well with others
- cope with changes

Vocational staff at The Women's Home work with volunteers to help each client develop her career goal. One such example is our partnership with JobSearch 101 (JS101), a private, subsidized initiative designed to improve the job search process. JS101 is funded through the generosity of an anonymous philanthropist, which makes it possible for the program to offer free services.

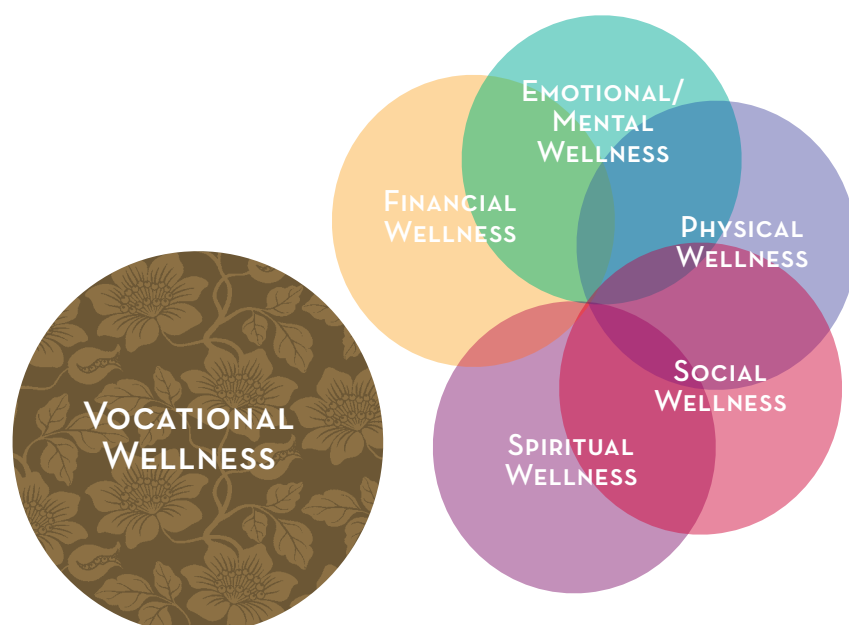
Ann Houston, Agnes Dillard, and Peggy Williams are professional job coaches and trainers from JS101 specializing in group training with individuals who lack job skills or have employment gaps. Each week during Vocational Fridays, they conduct workshops to help alleviate the stress and intimidation that comes with job hunting.

Our volunteers kicked off JS101 this fall with a workshop that focused on each client getting to know her strengths, attributes, and values. They helped the women develop a career objective and job search plan. Clients learned the do's and don'ts of greeting a potential employer and practiced their personal elevator pitches.

Future workshops in this five-week course will address creating compelling cover letters, networking, and preparing for an interview. By the end of the course, clients will not only be ready to enter the workforce, they will have the power and confidence to choose a calling that will last them a lifetime.



*JS101 Volunteers
Ann Houston (L)
and Agnes Dillard (R)
demonstrate the do's
and don'ts of greetings.*



Lester & Sue Smith Luncheon Series with Brené Brown

Nationally renowned speaker and *New York Times* bestselling author Brené Brown drew 350 guests to the Houstonian for the Lester and Sue Smith Luncheon Series benefiting The Women's Home on Wednesday, October 31st.

The Women's Home honored Tina Carr, a graduate of the program, with the annual 2012 WholeLife Award. The award recognizes graduates who demonstrate excellence and growth in WholeLife's six areas of wellness: spiritual, vocational, social, emotional, financial, and physical.

The Lester and Sue Smith Luncheon series brings together members of the community with dynamic speakers to discuss societal issues including homelessness, poverty, crime, mental illness, substance abuse, health and medical issues and lack of job skills. Past headliners include philanthropist Lester Smith and YouTube sensation Ted Williams.

*Above: Sarah Fisher,
Trish Morille, and
Brené Brown
Left: Jennifer McGee,
Brené Brown and
Heather Davis*



*Above: Susan Hoffman,
Jill Wasserstrom,
Varda Dror, Catherine
Chandler, Elise Niefeld
and Evi Katz
Left: Xavier Peña,
Roxy Riefkohl, and
Barry Mandel*





Fashionistas and friends with flair were in the crowd supporting The Women's Home at our annual fashion show and designer sale, reNew and reDux, Thursday, September 13, 2012 at Morton Auctioneers and Appraisers. With the help of volunteer models, nationally renowned producer Lenny Matuszewski created a spectacular fall preview featuring signature pieces from DKNY, Jimmy Choo, Prada, Michael Kors, Ralph Lauren, Escada and other top-notch designers.

Guests nibbled on noshes from Phoenicia while sorting through donated clothing and accessories displayed on the baroque showroom floor. Everyone had a chance to purchase the apparel parading down the runway at discounted prices.

The fashion frenzy raised \$51,000 to support the women benefiting from our unique WholeLife program.

We owe special thanks to John P. McGovern Foundation, Williams, Morton Auctioneers & Appraisers, and SOK Salon owned by Alden Clark for making this event possible.





The Women's Home Honors JUDY WINOGRAD WITH LIFE MEMBER ACHIEVEMENT

The Women's Home was delighted to present former Board Member and longtime volunteer Judy Winograd with the first Life Member Achievement Award for her 25 years of service. The Life Member Achievement Award recognizes men and women who have dedicated their time and talents in outstanding ways at The Home.

Although Judy has served in different capacities for the past two decades, she is most passionate about her meticulous, hands-on work of polishing shoes

donated to The Cottage Shop, which she does every Wednesday.

She is also valued for being an exceptional cook. "Judy has consistently brought delicious homemade lunches and desserts to volunteers at our Sidewalk Sale, one of the busiest days at the store," said Shelley Bridges, Manager of The Cottage Shop. "She hardly misses this event, and when she does, we really miss her. We're so grateful to have her as a volunteer and a part of our family."



Thank You THETAS

The Women's Home is honored to be a beneficiary of the 60th Anniversary Theta Charity Antiques Show held November 15-18, 2012, at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, TX. The Kappa Alpha Theta Houston Alumnae and the Theta Charity Antiques Show have raised over \$6.5 million benefiting 90 local nonprofits. Proceeds from Sunday's event - one of the top three antique shows in the nation - will support the WholeLife program.

Clients Revive at Nature Retreat



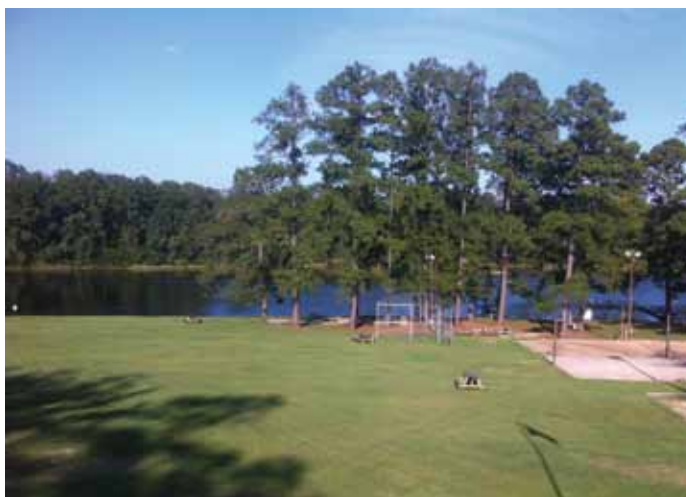
Major renovations at The Women's Home's dormitory gave clients in our residential program the opportunity to travel to Lake Tamahawk Christian Retreat Center located on Lake Livingston. The women used this chance to connect with their teammates, attending interns, and staff members including Theresa Allen, Vocational Case Counselor, Andrea Battle, Manager of Vocational Services, and Stella Williams, Manager of Clinical Services. Being an hour and a half away from the hustle and bustle of city life was a very therapeutic experience for everyone; the natural surroundings inspired plenty of creativity and a newfound appreciation for the outdoors.

For two weeks clients focused on improving communication among themselves, allowing the environment to help them in the process. They participated in a variety of expressive arts activities such as creating recovery bracelets, taking powerwalks and guided meditation tours, and writing letters to family members. They discovered that despite being housemates, there was a lot they did not know about each other. The retreat encouraged self-awareness as well. Emily C. reflects:

I decided to express my anger in a letter to God. I was afraid being angry at God would offend others, but I learned in that moment that I could be vulnerable with my sisters; I could trust them. Grief and anger is something everyone has to deal with. If I don't deal with mine, I'll stay sick, and I'm determined not to go back there. Being vulnerable and exposing my emotions to others has been huge for me.

I felt alive and alert at camp. I realize that feeling was always with me; I carry it wherever I go. I keep my eyes open and stay in gratitude. And it grows as I grow.

When I first came to The Women's Home, I thought it was too late for me to try something new, but after this experience I realize I can do anything.



All returned to Houston recharged and motivated to continue the lessons learned. Awaiting them was a beautified dormitory with freshly painted walls, new light fixtures, modern doors, and spectacular hardwood flooring.

Being at camp helped me to explore the grief I'm experiencing. We did a writing activity, and I began writing a letter to my best friend who had passed away, but the memory was too painful.

The Women's Home would like to give special thanks to The Fondren Foundation for donating \$100,000 to the project and to The Elkins Foundation for their \$10,000 contribution. We also appreciate the efforts of our Facilities Committee Members including Chairs Bob Dyer and Carol Gradziel for providing leadership; Auturo Chavez and Marie Flanigan for determining the scope and purpose of the project; Jerry Gauvin for overseeing the general contractor and sub-contractors; and the clinical team, under the guidance of Cynthia Kay, for providing excellent ancillary support.

Taking Strides to Build Whole Lives

The Women's Home is proud to be an official charity of the 2012-2013 Chevron Houston Marathon's Run for Reason program. If you want to make a difference while running in the race of a lifetime, consider fundraising for The Women's Home. Your contribution will help women in need at our residential programs in Montrose and Spring Branch. There are a few ways you can help us meet our goal:

- Become a HERO by purchasing an entry for \$350 plus the cost of registration in the full marathon. HERO runners receive guaranteed entry into the race.
- Become a fundraiser and set your own fundraising goal.
- Sponsor a runner by donating to their personal fundraising page.
- Make a general donation. A minimum of \$25 provides transportation for our residents.

To register and for more information, visit our Run for a Reason page at www.chevronhoustonmarathon.com or contact Bethany Fields at 713-328-1951 or bfields@thewomenshome.org.



Upcoming Events

New Year's Celebration

HOSTED BY THE WOMEN'S HOME'S
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
Wednesday, January 16, 2013
FLOR at West Avenue

The Women's Home 2013 Crawfish Boil

Saturday, April 6, 2013, 1 pm – 5 pm
West Alabama Ice House



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*We would like to thank
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their on-going support.*

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Jessica's Story

At age 12 Jessica was introduced to marijuana and alcohol by her mother, an active drug user. Her mother died a year later, leaving Jessica with the thought that addiction was her only option in life. Jessica told herself she could quit using anytime, but the next ten years became a pattern of self-neglect and desperate attempts to do whatever she could to sustain her dependency. She depleted her father's savings and disability income, leaving both of them homeless. She roamed from shelters to abandoned houses and spent many nights in jail.

Her aunt, who overcame her own addiction, encouraged Jessica to seek treatment and attend 12-step meetings. Each day she set a place at the dining table for her niece with the hope that one day she would fill it as a sober young woman. Jessica is grateful that her aunt pushed her to achieve sobriety, which led her to complete recovery at The Women's Home.

Staff at The Women's Home not only helped Jessica maintain sobriety, they allowed her to recognize her full potential. Their faith in her success made all the difference. Her counselor and therapists developed an individualized treatment plan based on the WholeLife program, through which Jessica gained emotional/mental, spiritual, financial, physical, social, and

vocational stability. Now she knows how to manage a budget, provide for herself, and maintain successful relationships.

"Years ago, I couldn't keep a job. Today, I'm honest, hardworking, and passionate," she said.

Jessica is completely substance free and enjoys sober living at Jane Cizik Garden Place, a safe permanent housing complex owned and operated by The Women's Home. She receives aftercare services at The Women's Home and attends weekly support groups. She works full-time and is a part-time student at Houston Community College. She has more energy to pursue other goals including becoming a skilled guitarist.

In her support groups, Jessica confidently tells others that the tools she gained at The Women's Home saved her life. With her aunt by her side, she had the courage to share her journey in front of hundreds at The Women's Home spring luncheon and was a featured spokesperson for United Way's 2012-13 video campaign.

When Jessica compares the person she was before to the person she is today, a smile lights her face. She looks to her future with excitement and dreams about having a career, building her savings, and moving into a home of her own one day.



“A turning point for me was when I learned I have power over choice...A healthier life is my decision.”