



Friends to friends

Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Dear Landlord,

We couldn't do it without you

Landlords are the key to preventing and ending homelessness for the families we serve. Truly, we couldn't do our work without them. Landlords partner with us in several very important ways: they lower rental amounts to keep them affordable; refer their tenants to services before seeking an eviction; and waive application fees and security deposits so that families can more quickly access housing.



Friends Association Landlords attend 3rd Annual Landlord Appreciation Dinner

Why would landlords do that? We find that the landlord/service provider relationship is a match made in heaven. Landlords don't want to be social workers and we don't want to be landlords. By working together doing what we each do best, we create a strong safety net to obtain and keep families in homes of their own.

We are dedicating this issue of our newsletter to the landlords who work with us every day to make sure the families we serve have access to safe, stable and affordable housing.

Catherine

Catherine Friedman, Executive Director

A Match Made in Heaven: Landlords help end homelessness

We recently reached out to a few of the more than 30 landlords we work with to learn what they had to say; it was gratifying to see that our mission to partner with landlords to prevent and end homelessness is doing exactly that!

Mary was fired from her job after spending a month at the hospital with her toddler who had been diagnosed with cancer. Getting back on her feet took time and she fell behind in her payments.

Sarah and her daughter were moving into their first home after having always lived with her parents. Despite her and her fiancé working full-time, when the bills started coming in at month two they were involved in a car crash and were faced with also paying their insurance deductible.

Sonja's partner was abusive and when she reached out for help he was sent to jail. Despite working full-time, she couldn't afford the rent on her own.

Each family fell behind in their rent and was facing eviction. We often surprise the landlords by telling them to seek an eviction the first month the rent is missed. When families are living on the edge and getting deeper into debt, it becomes exponentially harder to recover.

"Friends Association helped keep a good long-term tenant from being evicted by assisting them with a one-time rental payment which got the tenant back on track during a difficult time. From the point of view of the owner, Friends Association helps to keep vacancies down and some of the best tenants in our units." **Omar W.**

"Knowing you are really helping someone who truly needs the help, I have found that in difficult times when someone is shown grace many times it has a positive "domino effect." Often all someone needs is a chance and someone to believe in them to begin to see a way out of their circumstances." **Sharon S.**

"We would definitely take a Friends Association family even if they had a poor rental history. It is so nice to see our tenants get help and know that we aren't going to be left on the losing end. It is very rare that a family that falls so far behind is able to get caught up, but we watched as you helped to pay the rent and slowly step down support while also teaching the family how to manage their finances better and encourage them to take more responsibility." **Nancy E.**

"I definitely feel that I am helping to end family homelessness by working with Friends. During the last three years three evictions were avoided and those residents are still housed. I am confident that when I eventually move a family from the shelter into an apartment they will be supported and it will be a successful and lasting transition." **Omar W.**



Jose ready to catch the school bus from his new home



Longtime landlord, John Abele and guest joined us at the Charity Ball



2015 Friend of the Community Honoree Glenda Brion with her husband Skip and Kim Alexis, guest emcee.

Top Right - West Chester Mayor Carolyn Commita and her husband Tom ham it up for a worthy cause.

Center Bottom - Kelsey Mattson and Matthew Kowalski

Bottom Right - Ivan and Lisa Kaplan, generous donors of Kaplan's Fine Jewelry.



It Takes a Village - All Three Friends Association Programs Work Together to Create Lasting Change

Twelve years after safely and successfully escaping domestic violence and seeing her family settled and thriving in Chester County, Heike faced everyone's worst nightmare; in a sluggish economy she was laid off. As the weeks went by she had to face the reality that she could not pay her rent and stop the eviction process on her own. Moving her family to the Microtel she continued her job search and started reaching out for help. Her luck started to turn when she got a great job at a local bank paying a living wage.

After many wrong calls, one right call put her on the path to receiving assistance to pay for the motel until shelter space became available and finally, moving into a beautiful apartment which was offered rent free for one year.

Microtel, ConnectPoints, Friends Association, Open Hearth and Berger Rental Communities all came together to bring this hard working family home.

West Chester Charity Ball 2015

We are grateful to our generous sponsors and attendees who helped us raise over \$200,000 to help homeless and near-homeless families in our community.

The Charity Ball included beautiful music, fine food and drink, live and silent auctions, portrait photography, a temporary tattoo artist as well as dancing to live music.

Many donors contributed to our "Fund for Friends," which provides childcare, food, and emergency transportation for homeless families.

We rely on generous contributions from donors like you to continue our work. Please join us at the next West Chester Charity Ball on December 3, 2016.

A Powerful Choice: Become a *Sustainer of Hope*

You can provide meaningful help in a budget friendly way by making recurring donations to Friends Association as a *Sustainer of Hope*. As little as \$1 a day makes an impact as do larger donations.

Did you know ...

\$25 a month contributes case management to homeless families so that they get back on their feet and into homes of their own

\$50 a month contributes daily shelter to a family experiencing homelessness, or provides case management to a family that can't access the County's overcrowded shelter system

Visit www.friendsassoc.org, scroll down to the bottom and click on "Sustainer of Hope." or contact Robin Meixner at 610-431-3598 ext. 204 for assistance.



Martin Luther King Day of Service

Dusting, vacuuming and scrubbing are not how most of us would choose to spend our day off from work. The 110 volunteers participating at our family shelter during the 21st Annual Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service did just that.

Philadelphia hosts the largest King Day event in the nation, inspiring tens of thousands of people throughout the tristate region to take a “day on” of service instead of a “day off.” Volunteers from our community scrubbed the shelter from top to bottom cleaning ovens, moving refrigerators, washing screens and windows in order to give the six units their annual spring cleaning.

Thank you, MLK Volunteers!



Donations Help Families Meet Their Budgets!

Thank you for your interest in donating much needed supplies to families at Friends Association! We have an ongoing need for the following items:

- Alarm clocks, electric
- Baby wipes
- Can-openers
- Cutting boards
- Diapers: sizes 4, 5, 6
- Dish towels
- Dishwashing liquid, small size
- Kitchen sponges (Scotchbrite or equivalent)
- Measuring cups & measuring spoons
- Pillows
- Pop-up laundry hampers
- Pot holders
- Soft Scrub liquid non-abrasive (no powders, please)

For more details visit our website at www.friendsassoc.org



What a Difference a Donor Makes

On December 23, Karen Wise, Outreach Case Manager Outreach to Homeless Families was sitting at her desk wondering, “What is this family going to do?” Justine’s family of six had been **living in a motel since November** and needed to stay there for an additional week until they could move into permanent housing but **their money had run out**.

Meanwhile Robin Meixner, Volunteer Coordinator was sitting at her desk when a **long-time donor called** to say that she **wanted to pay for housing** for a family that would not otherwise be housed over the holidays. **The magic of the season** at work?

There were many factors working together for a positive outcome: a generous donation at just the right time, and an involved case manager at Friends Association who helped the family bridge the gap until permanent housing was available and who provided guidance in securing full-time employment so they could afford a home of their own.

P.S. We are happy to report that the family has been living in their own apartment since early January.

Welcome: New Board & Staff Members

We are fortunate to have two new members join the Board of Trustees:

- Lee Bohs, Sr. Vice President, Nobel Learning Communities
- Jim Kane, Retired Engineer

A special welcome to Amy Descovich, Volunteer Coordinator.



Lee Bohs, Sr.



Jim Kane



Amy Descovich

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*Yes, you can help
prevent and end
family homelessness
in our community*

By contributing online

- or -

Enclosing your gift

See our wish list
at www.friendsassoc.org



It's A Wash!

Life just got a bit easier for the more than 25 families served in our shelter each year.

Last year when the laundromat across from the shelter was razed and with the closest laundromat located more than a mile away, we decided it was time to install a laundry facility in the building.

We only had to reflect for a moment to know that this was the right decision. Most shelter families do not have cars and the difficulty of packing up babies, children and laundry and then walking more than a mile (especially during cold winter months) was unacceptable.

It was going to be a challenge installing a laundry facility in the more than 100 year old shelter with limited space requiring modifications for plumbing and electric. With the help of our generous community partners, the upgrades were completed, machines installed and everything was readied by December.

Community partners who donated their valuable time, money and expertise to help make this project a reality included:

- **Best Built Construction**
- **Phase I Electric**
- **Drake Plumbing and Heating**
- **Elite Companies Charitable Foundation**
- **The Kistler-Tiffany Foundation**
- **Greater West Chester Sunrise Rotary**



As one smiling Mom told us, **"With a newborn and two other children, it was a struggle to get to the laundromat. Right now, that washer and dryer downstairs are the best Christmas presents I can think of."**

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HELPING TO BRIGHTEN THE LIVES OF FAMILIES IN NEED

LIFE IS A CABARET!

An evening of Jazz and Broadway to benefit Friends Association

SUNDAY, APRIL 17

5-7:30 P.M.

Sprout Music Collective

130 E. Prescott Alley

West Chester, PA 19380

heavy hors d'oeuvres and cash bar

Suggested donation \$25 per person

Reserve your spot today as space is limited.

Robin Meixner 610-431-3598 ext. 204 • r.meixner@friendsassoc.org

Performers will be:
Catherine Friedman, Vocals
Heidi Starr, Vocals
John Braceland, Guitar
Rob Sparre, Keyboard

