



PEACE HOUSE COMMUNITY

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Mission:

The goal of Peace House Community is to offer a non-violent, welcoming and inclusive community for poor and marginalized women and men who are seeking companionship, safety from the streets and personal affirmation. PHC provides a platform for expressing beliefs, hurts, desperation, hopes and fears too long hidden in so many bruised and broken hearts. Community members are affirmed through mutual sharing, respectful listening and appreciation of each person's value and worth.

2021 SPRING NEWSLETTER

We all know that 2020 was a time like no other. Global pandemic. A contentious election. Racial and societal reckoning. Chaos and heartache that has left us all shaken. But the year gave us the chance to show our resiliency. We have learned patience, perseverance, a renewed sense of what is important, and how we can take nothing for granted. Now, as we see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, we can take a deep breath and once again feel joy and hope.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Recently Mary Cassioppi asked community members and staff about how the pandemic has affected them, and what they look forward to. Kat and Joy are longtime community members; Tom, Vern and Ed are employees. We thank them for their willingness to share their thoughts.

How has your life changed because of the pandemic?

Kat: It was so difficult at first because I have depression and there were no outlets or socializing. There is no place to go, everything closed down, no place to gather. I did get a kitten which gives me a lot of company; she also helps my depression by giving me responsibility and love.

Joy: It has been a big struggle; my husband lost his job at the airport. I use a therapy pool and they have all been shut down, I can't get the relief I need so I now have spasms at night.

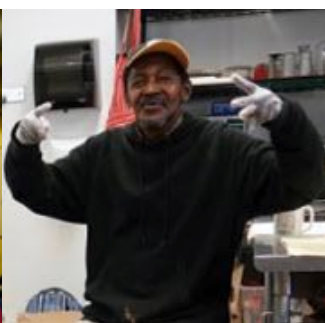
Ed: I can't go anywhere and cannot see the people I want to. I cannot travel to see my latest grandbaby. We can't congregate in the "day room" of my apartment complex, and we aren't having any of the barbecues the landlords would put on. The food shelf at our complex closed because of restrictions.



KAT



JOY



ED



TOM



VERN

Tom: You develop an underlying fear of people and germs. It takes over your outlook on life. Living in south Minneapolis I have stayed up all night many times in fear of rioters. There is a lack of fresh produce since our supplies have been cut off. I feel dishonesty as a chef to open so many cans of vegetables as opposed to the fresh salads PHC always provided.

Vern: You live in a state of paranoia that you are going to catch the virus. You always have to be on guard; especially when I ride the bus at night, large groups of guys come on and masks are not enforced. Not being able to see my daughter and the rest of my family for Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, Super Bowl parties. Not being able to gather with the guys to watch football on Sundays.

What are you most looking forward to?

Kat: Peace House being back open so we can hang out with our old gang and seeing the volunteers who I miss so much!

Joy: I can't wait to teach again. I teach medical vocabulary. I can't wait to go on a trip.

Ed: Socializing with my friends and family. Going out to a restaurant. Even my Burger King is take out only.

Tom: Music. Live music. Sitting down to jam sessions and attending festivals.

Vern: I just want things to get back to normal.

36TH ANNUAL HOMELESS MEMORIAL

Peace House Community participated in the 36th Annual Homeless Memorial on December 17th. We were sad to not be able to attend in person, but the organizers hosted a wonderful virtual event, including recorded memorials for many of those who had died. The ceremony remembered 197 people (89 formerly homeless and 24 advocates). The names of three PHC community members and one volunteer were not included during the ceremony: Roger Donnelly, Peter Nikiforakis (always fondly remembered as Pete the Greek from Crete), Terry Mack, and Avis Allmaras, CSJ.



A NEW YEAR, A NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A warm welcome to the 2021 Board of Directors! David Scott (Chair); Tim Sheehan (Vice Chair); Jim Reetz (Treasurer); Deborah Dapkus (Secretary); Patrick Messmer; Bill Cullen; Jane Murphy; Trisha Gilbert; Jen Vetter; Rachel Kennedy; and Catherine Mamer (Honorary Board member).

And a heartfelt thank you to the outgoing Board members who generously gave of their time, talents and love during their terms: Mary Cassioppi, Mary Robinson, Susan Oeffling and John Gries. As Catherine Mamer said, “No one is going away! They can leave the Board but they cannot leave the Peace House Community!”

DIRECTOR’S CORNER

Do you remember the two weeks in February when the temperature did not rise above 7 degrees for over a week? I do, because I was outside with Peace House Community’s community members during a lot of it. Despite the cold, we had only one day when less than 30 community members visited PHC to get some coffee, warm up under our heaters and say hi to their friends.

Our community members have shown that they still want and need PHC, even (and especially) in the most trying circumstances. Tragically, homelessness and loneliness aren’t weather dependent. Frigid temperatures don’t replace our community members’ misery; they only add to it. By staying open, PHC provided a respite, however small and temporary, from the worst sufferings that our community members experience. We are thankful to and for all of you who support us with donations of money and supplies, and who give our community members somewhere to go when life is at its bleakest.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

As we started this newsletter, we will end on the same sentiment – this past year has given us a renewed sense of what is important. And for the Peace House Community, that is to continue with the mission that Sister Rose set forth 35 years ago - to provide a welcoming, non-violent and inclusive community for those seeking companionship and safety from the streets. To provide a place to belong.

We ask that you help us to continue on this mission. The need remains great and we trust that you will answer the call. For complete information on the various ways to donate, please see our website www.peacehousecommunity.org. And one more time, thank you for your generosity!

