



Peace House Community
1816 Portland Avenue S.
Minneapolis, MN 55404

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PEACE
HOUSE
COMMUNITY

1816 Portland Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55404

FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

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Mission:
Peace House Community (PHC) nourishes its members’ bodies and souls by providing a safe space for everyone. PHC enriches the lives of its members, volunteers and students by offering a place to belong for everyone who comes through its doors.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: MEET DAVE AND DENNIE SCOTT



In a recent conversation with Dave and Dennie Scott about their experience as Peace House Community volunteers, the dominant theme was hospitality. Hospitality, as the Scotts model it, goes beyond being friendly; it means recognizing and respecting that community members come from varied and complex lives, and that listening is the best way to recognize the other person as a distinct individual. Dave and Dennie came to Peace House ten years ago as they explored ways to volunteer together. They are currently the only volunteer couple at PHC, but they each have their individual, distinctive style. Dave describes himself as a committed introvert which translates into a preference for having a task to accomplish rather than just an open-ended charge to “go and meet people.” Dennie is more of an extrovert and has carved out her own special approach to extending hospitality. Dennie learned how to do hand massages, a talent she makes available to community members, but not just for the benefits of massage. When a community member accepts her offer, the massage creates a unique way to be in touch, physically and conversationally. Both

Dave and Dennie concur that as much as they enjoy their service as volunteers, they are not what brings people to PHC; it is PHC itself. “Community members know,” Dave says, “that Peace House is a place to rest, to meet up with friends, and to share a meal.” Society is a challenging and sometimes bleak reality for many people. As a result, the need for hospitality, centered in genuine listening, is greater than ever. People like Dave and Dennie Scott make that hospitality a reality as they ensure that all who enter Peace House’s doors can come as they are and be welcomed.

To read the complete interview with Dave and Dennie, please go to our website:
peacehousecommunity.org/2024/09/17/making-hospitality-real-dave-and-dennie-scott/

ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIFT BAGS AND WINTER COMING SOON!

Every December, PHC distributes 200 gift bags to our community members. Each bag is packed with essentials—a backpack filled with socks, gloves, a hat, hand warmers, cough drops, a \$10 bus pass and more. These gifts can make a world of difference for those in need. And these gifts are more than just items; they symbolize our commitment to caring and fostering a sense of community.



As winter approaches, we invite you to join us in this mission. We need about \$5,000 to purchase the items for the backpacks. Your generous donation can help us cover the costs of these vital supplies, allowing us to bring warmth and hope to those who need it most. Together, we can make a real difference in our community’s lives. Thank you in advance for your kindness and support as we strive to help our community navigate the challenges of winter.



DIRECTOR’S CORNER

I recently got to chat with the Associate Director of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits about the state of nonprofit organizations in Minnesota. Kari is a self-professed data geek, and we discussed the fact that over 75% of nonprofits in Minnesota are currently reporting some level of financial distress, with many actively planning to close their doors. She asked about PHC, and I said that this year’s budget isn’t looking great, but that there are reasons to be hopeful. As she asked more questions, I told her stories about life at PHC, including the fact that PHC’s staff members are saving a couple of lives a month by administering naloxone (also known as Narcan) to individuals who are overdosing on drugs near our building. Kari asked if I ever tell our supporters that, and when I said no, she responded, “You probably should. I think they’d like to know that people are walking around today instead of in the graveyard because your supporters are keeping PHC open.”

For whatever reason, I had never thought of it like that before. Because I’ve worked at PHC for six years, I’m used to the drug epidemic in the neighborhood. Most meetings I attend with other agencies include some reference to drugs, or naloxone, or overdoses, or some related topic. I’ve gotten to the point where I think seeing overdoses is a normal occurrence, and jabbing someone in the leg with a syringe of liquid that can keep them alive is just part of my job.

The point is, your support provides more than just a welcoming community or a safe space. With all the problems PHC’s neighborhood and community are facing, you are literally saving lives with your gifts. I don’t know how to properly say thank-you for that, other than to let you know just how important your support is to our community. We are so thankful for your support, and we want you to know how important you are to the community members here whom you’ve never met.

Marti Martiny



COMMUNITY MEMBER SPOTLIGHT MEET WILLIE JOHNSON, AKA CAPTAIN RECYCLING

Ask Willie Johnson about himself, and you may not get a lot of details. But ask him about his passions, and you will discover an articulate, thoughtful individual.

Willie thinks about big things. He’s an artist, a poet, and a subversive, using his creative skills to make his points to those around him. He’s also known as Captain Recycling for his efforts on behalf of the planet. Whatever he’s doing at the moment, he’s passionate about it.



Poetry is the most important means Willie has of helping others discover what he is saying. He explains, “Poetry, it’s like a verbal play where I cast out the characters, and extend the potential of what could be, and what some of the changes are that may have to take place to get it done. Almost every piece has a secret message in there. I don’t know who it is for or what it is for, but there’s a bunch of them in there, and it’s going to catch people if they are acute enough to see. So I always try to add an extra layer of secrecy.”

The goal, says Willie, is to help his readers discover a truth for themselves, rather than him explaining it to them. “I’m not trying just to plot out stuff to people, and bombard you with my message. I’m trying to get you to trick yourself into, ‘Wait a minute.’ Then you become one of the engines to get things done.”

His desire to help people uncover truths for themselves supports his recycling efforts too. As he puts it, “I just don’t get it, why we’re destroying our world like this. Captain Recyclng is a big deal for me because it’s all about how we have to live now. I just want to promote people to get out there and try to find friends to cooperate with and to do things with to help the community, because we don’t have much of a chance. We have to work hard to team up and to get things done. We can’t just say, ‘Oh, they did it, and blah, blah, blah.’ No, we’ve got to fix it.”

As you’ve probably realized, Willie doesn’t want to be a lone crusader, and he doesn’t want others to feel like he is looking down on them. Instead, he wants to bring people together. “I’ve had a very stressful life. I’m not too upset about it, but I just wish we had more unity on the planet. Look at all the wars, and the violence, and the scams, and the lies. It’s just too much.”

For those who do want to know about Willie, he was in the army. He came to Minnesota in 1990, spent time in the wilderness of Northern Minnesota, and then came to the Twin Cities. He left briefly to look for his son on the East Coast, but was unsuccessful. He isn’t trying to hide his past; he’s just focused on the things that are most urgent to him now.

“I’m always a citizen, but I’m not happy with the history of this country,” he explains. “It’s taken too long for them to stop hurting us. Not just us, people of color, but people who are being depressed by society.” Rather than falling into depression and self-pity, Willie continues to use his skills and passions to bring people together to reshape the world.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

PHC has been honest with its supporters about our financial struggles over the last two years, and now we get to be honest about how well things are going! We are in the middle of switching accountants, so we don’t have final numbers yet, but October may have been our best month ever for income. Between Marti’s bike ride, one very generous gift, our contract with the State of Minnesota, and our regular donations, we have a good chance of ending the year with a surplus, rather than the \$100,000 deficit we had expected! We cannot expect every month to be like October, but we are extremely grateful to everyone who made October happen. For the moment, we can breathe a little easier and know that PHC is on good financial footing for at least another year. Please help us finish 2024 strong by balancing our budget, or even coming out with a surplus to replenish our financial reserves. We sincerely thank you for your past support and hope that we can count on that support in the future.

STAYING WARM AND DRY ON COLD NIGHTS



Once again, our favorite “Church Ladies” from Montgomery, MN have blessed us with a carload of sleeping mats for the community members at Peace House. These amazing women, with their creativity and resourcefulness, crotchet recycled plastic bags into functional sleeping mats for those in need. It’s heartwarming to see how quickly these mats are welcomed and appreciated. We are so grateful for their kindness and generosity— their continued dedication truly makes a difference in our community!

MARTI’S BIKE RIDE FUNDRAISER – WOW!



On October 4th, PHC Executive Director Marti Maltby set out to do a 150 mile in one day bike ride as a fundraiser for PHC. Yes, you read that right – 150 miles in one day on a bike! Well, he not only met his goal, he exceeded it and rode 158 miles! There was a \$2,000 matching grant so with all of the generous donations received, Marti earned over \$10,000 for his bike ride! Thank you so much, Marti! And by the way, it’s not too late to donate to this awesome fundraiser, just go to the PHC website, click on the Donate button and add a note indicating your support in the Tribute section.

WATCH FOR IT! EXCITING NEWS ABOUT OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY!

It’s hard to believe that 2025 will mark 40 years since Sister Rose Tillemans opened the doors of Peace House on Franklin Avenue. Today, we are proud to affirm that the mission and guiding principles of the Peace House Community remain steadfast: to be a safe and welcoming space for everyone who walks through our doors. Stay tuned for next year’s special 40th anniversary events!

LEARNING THROUGH SERVICE



Olivia Beaulieu, fondly known as Liv, completed her degree capstone experience at Saint Catherine University by spending several months at Peace House gathering data to create some hands on ways to meet the community members’ needs. She interviewed community members to understand what they wanted and needed to improve their health. She found that PHC members have expansive needs; she developed meal preparation education, foot care education and programming, first aid and overdose care education, job skill exploration, and budgeting programming. Through some trial and error, she found that conversation/ interactive-based programs and education sessions were the most meaningful. Liv summed up the experience by saying, “I met so many people and heard so many different voices, all of which helped inform/shape my project outcomes.” We thank Liv for her efforts and wish her all the best in her future.

LABOR DAY BARBEQUE



On a warm, sunny Friday in August, the PHC staff fired up barbecue grills to celebrate the end of summer. Milton Manning, one of PHC’s Outreach staff, took charge of the grills, somehow managing to cook up a feast of burgers, hot dogs, chicken, and ribs all on his own! Generous volunteers contributed an array of delicious salads, beans, fruit, chips, and tempting desserts to complement the grilled meats. We were thrilled to serve around 200 grateful and hungry community members. It was a day filled with laughter, good food and wonderful connections!