



EST. 1985

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peacehousecommunity.org

# WINTER 2025 NEWSLETTER



## 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.

# 40 YEARS AND COUNTING!

## Peace House Community Timeline



**1985: A Vision of Peace**  
Sister Rose Tillemans establishes Peace House Community at 510 E. Franklin Ave.



**1999: Building Stability**  
PHC becomes a registered non-profit and takes ownership of its building.



**2002: A Legacy of Peace**  
The beloved founder, Sister Rose, dies, leaving behind a thriving community.



**2004: Art Meets Purpose**  
A stunning mosaic is installed on the building, a symbol of community.



**2013: A New Beginning**  
PHC relocates to a new, purpose-built home at 1816 Portland Ave.

**2020: Resilience in Crisis**  
During the COVID-19 pandemic, PHC briefly closes but swiftly reopens.

That's right! Peace House Community will celebrate its 40th anniversary on October 17, 2025. To mark the event, we are planning several celebrations throughout the year to remember where we've been and envision where we're headed.

To begin, we've updated our logo. We're keeping the image that so perfectly captures PHC's essence. The house containing hands of different races and cultures releasing a dove (which itself is a pair of hands that work for peace) symbolizes all that PHC stands for. We've added the year of our founding so that everyone knows we're here to stay. Our longevity demonstrates that PHC is now firmly established as part of the Minneapolis landscape.

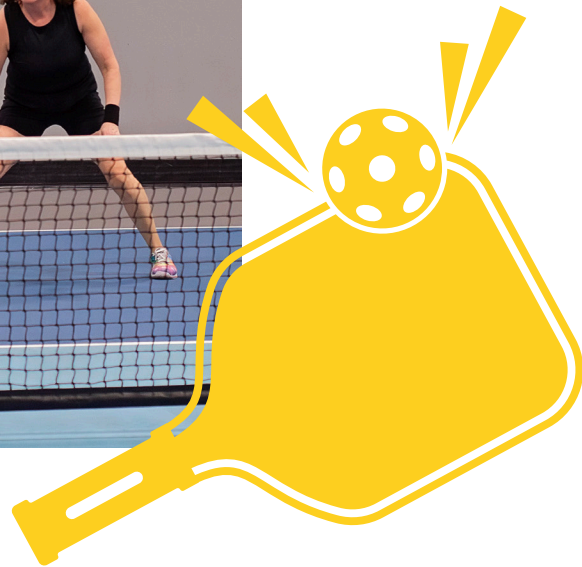
We are planning a couple of special events for 2025. On February 1, we hosted a pickleball fundraiser at Smash Park in Roseville. We hope to get our name in front of some new folks, and we want to learn how to put on fun events for our supporters. On October 9, Kevin Kling of MPR fame will host an evening of stories at the Southern Theater in Minneapolis. The evening will include live interviews, videos of the lives of some of our community members, and more. We hope to give our current supporters a better idea of what their gifts do in our members' lives, and to convince newcomers that PHC is the sort of place they want to join. Watch for updates about ticket sales and other details for the evening.

In sum, we are proud that the storefront organization that Sister Rose opened in 1985 is still going strong. As a community, we've weathered financial ups and downs, relocation, a pandemic, the opioid epidemic, and more. We look forward to celebrating PHC's success with you and laying the foundation for what comes next.

**2025: 40 Years of Community**  
PHC celebrates an incredible 40 years of fostering peace, connection, and compassion.



# PHC HOSTS FIRST-EVER PICKLEBALL FUNDRAISER



On February 1st, PHC hosted its first-ever pickleball fundraising event, and by all accounts, it was a smashing success! Fifty enthusiastic players registered to participate in friendly competition, all while supporting PHC's mission. The atmosphere at Smash Park in Roseville was electric, with volunteers, family, and friends cheering on the players while enjoying a delicious spread of snacks and beverages.

Adding to the excitement, attendees had the opportunity to participate in raffles featuring gift certificates and a thrilling 50/50 drawing, which proved to be a highlight of the event.

**We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous sponsors for their support:**

- Fogo de Chão – Minneapolis*
- Smash Park – Roseville*
- Cars Bike Shop*
- Saltie Rose*



**Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and contributed to making this event a tremendous success! We look forward to many more in the future.**



# IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

I would like to THANK YOU all for your support in 2024. We had a great year and truly appreciate everything our volunteers, donors and staff have done to make it a great year. With your support Peace House Community was able to support to over **33,500 Community Members**, provide **over 21,000 meals**, **hundreds of haircuts and manicures**, and **lots of bike repairs**. More importantly, your help provided our community members a safe, non-judgmental environment to gather, get out of the weather, and relax.

Several years ago, one of our supporters told me that he didn't understand what I was talking about when I encouraged him to give to Peace House Community. The reason? I never told him how much we needed, so he didn't know if I was asking for \$50 or \$50,000. A representative of one of the churches that supports PHC made a similar comment when he said, "You know, if you only ask us for \$5,000, that's all we'll give you."

It's taken a while, but we've finally gotten a grasp of how to tell our supporters what it takes to serve the community at PHC. We looked at the needs of our community, and how our donations have been dispersed over the last few years. And with that, let me introduce you to our fundraising goals for this year:

I have to explain a couple of things regarding these goals. First, these goals are aggressive. Our donors have never given

Fundraising Goal: \$420,000		
Amount to be Donated	Number of Donors	Cumulative Total
\$50,000	1	\$50,000
\$25,000	2	\$50,000
\$20,000	2	\$40,000
\$10,000	5	\$50,000
\$5,000	15	\$75,000
\$2,000	20	\$40,000
\$1,000	40	\$40,000
\$500	120	\$60,000
\$100	100	\$10,000
\$50	100	\$5,000
\$50	100	\$5,000
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>\$420,000</b>

this much in a single year before, but again, we've never properly asked before. The Board of Directors and I believe that PHC's supporters as a community have more desire and ability to give than we have given them credit for in the past. We also believe that clearly stating the needs of the community, and the opportunities we have to change lives, will allow our donors to make informed decisions about the amounts they want to give to PHC's mission and work.

Second, please don't think your gift won't make a difference. We don't want anyone to think, "They only want donations of \$50 or more" or "What good is \$10 when they need \$420,000?" Even our largest donors can't sustain PHC by themselves. Neither can our smallest donors. The chart above shows that everyone together, by pooling resources, can make a huge difference. And after all, isn't that the nature of community, and the reason that we come together?

Finally, these goals consider where we are today, and where we want to be tomorrow. As our community's needs continue to increase, and as new opportunities develop to meet those needs, we are positioning ourselves to make the most of what's coming. What does that mean? Imagine if we could add onsite staff who could help our community members navigate the complexities of County and State assistance and housing programs. What if we could buy one or more of the vacant lots by PHC to create a larger, better equipped building to provide even more services and bless even more people? How about PHC opening on weekends, knowing that our community members' needs don't take days off? All of these possibilities really are possible.

Again, thank-you for bringing PHC through the first 40 years. We're looking forward to seeing what the next 40 years holds.



# THE HOUSE THAT PEACE BUILT

By Willie L. Johnson, A Wordsmith

*Open to the public in the heart of the city,  
Where crime and hopelessness is a pity,  
Stands a house amidst the chaos of urban strife.  
It is inviting you to enter and seek a better life.*

*All are welcome, including the elderly and young,  
The tired and lonely even the rich and the sick.  
All are welcome who can control their tongue,  
As well as the bad, the poor and the slick.*

*As long as they come seeking peace,  
It doesn't matter from where they come.  
The north the south the west, or the east.  
They can still participate in the deeds of peace.*

*All are welcome to share a warm meal and a hot  
drink*

*During the cold months of the year.  
And a cool repast in the hot summer season without  
fear.*

*You should come too if its peaceful thoughts you  
think.*

*We can all share food, chit chat, art sessions and an  
open library.  
There we will also find the joyful singing of human  
canaries.*

*A loving caring place to feel good and merry.  
You will find community support and friends.*

*You will find shoulders to lean at the Peace House.  
At this house you might even find a friend, or  
You might find an open ear eager to hear your  
thoughts.  
Or you might find open hands ready to help or  
support you.*

*This meeting place can be and often is a peaceful place  
To go just to get out of the house.  
It was built on the foundation of earlier efforts  
Of people in the neighborhood.*

*Designed to help make this house  
A nexus of community unity  
A portal of peaceful interaction  
Between the people who live in the city.*

*It is a socially declared zone of peace  
i.e. the proverbial holy ground of group acceptance.  
One of the watering holes of friendship and may it  
stand forever  
As one of the local towers of diversity and peace!  
Amen, my friend!*



All of us at Peace House Community express heartfelt gratitude to our supporters and partners who have so generously shared in our ministry in 2024. You have played a vital role in making our community stronger, and we truly appreciate each and every one of you.

We apologize if we have overlooked anyone in our acknowledgements. Please know that we are grateful for your being an essential part of the Peace House Community family.

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## Born To Volunteer: Meet Mary Ellen Halverson



Some people seem to have an inborn disposition to volunteer. No scientific data exist to substantiate that, but a conversation with Mary Ellen Halverson easily leads to that conclusion. It is not because she recites a long list of service accomplishments. In fact, she's quite modest about her volunteering, including her years at Peace House. What one notices, however, is her gratitude for the opportunities she has had.

Mary Ellen found her way to Peace House because of a friend who said, "Come and see." That visit was to the original facility that Mary Ellen found somewhat dreary. But later she became a regular volunteer on Wednesdays when the new house opened, a service she gave without fail until six months ago when she had to stop driving. The decision to give up the keys is difficult enough, but for Mary Ellen it meant the end of spending time with people she admired for their resilience often in the face of daunting odds.

As one listens closely to her reflections, Mary Ellen's volunteer spirit flows from an openness to discovery. When she was in her senior year at the College of St. Catherine (now University), she saw a notice from a religious community in Yakima, Washington, looking for volunteers to fill in as a teacher for a year while one of the nuns was on sabbatical. Mary Ellen thought, why not? That experience, in part, led her to see if religious life might be her path in life. She spent four months with a contemplative Dominican community in Texas,

but came to see it was not her calling. After Texas, Mary Ellen joined the Papal Volunteers and was assigned to Chile where she taught 5th and 6th grade English and religion for two years in a Jesuit school staffed by American Jesuits, Papal Volunteers, and Chilean laity. Returning to the States, Mary Ellen taught Spanish at Saint Margaret's Academy for four years before joining the faculty at St. Kate's. That turned out to be her calling and she retired from the University after 25 years of service.

For Mary Ellen, what stands out about the Peace House mission is its commitment as a place where the unhoused and others (including her) experience a sense of community. As a result, she says, her primary task as a volunteer has been to listen, to hear people's stories. Or as one author recently wrote about the power of listening, "to bear witness" to what people encounter as they navigate life.

Mary Ellen is a good witness and expresses gratitude for having learned from community members - not just how difficult life can be, but the ways in which they manage to still find moments of hope. "We take a lot of things for granted [as privileged people] that community members simply can't. And yet they are people with amazing and varied interests, talents, and gifts that make them each unique."

Reflecting on her commitment as a volunteer at Peace House, Mary Ellen found it easy to identify lessons she learned. First and foremost, she noted that a person's stereotypes of community members get knocked down quickly. "They are individuals," she emphasizes, "and that means they have distinct life circumstances." Second, "I needed to develop a thick skin." Mary Ellen learned that community members can sometimes be quick to speak their minds, be blunt, or argue. "I realized I couldn't always take a remark personally but needed to redouble my listening to what people were really saying."

Third, "as volunteers, we are not fixers. We accompany people while they are at Peace House, listening of course, but not trying to resolve their issues." Fourth, related to not fixing was Mary Ellen's realization that "we don't have control over community members' lives." She acknowledges that can be uncomfortable at times but is offset by remembering that what volunteers do is sustain a sense of community.

Finally, Mary Ellen says that she learned what might be "better" for community members by listening to how they framed that. "What I thought would be good for someone to do was often based on my reality, not theirs." Embedded in these lessons is the heart of those "born to volunteer." Service flows from appreciation of what it means to give and receive, to be present to another human being and to learn from them. It is a spirit of mutuality that characterizes volunteers at Peace House, a spirit that Mary Ellen models even now as recalls what she describes as very happy years of service indeed.

**Interview credit:** Victor Klimoski  
**Photo credit:** Joshua Zuckerman



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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

2024 was quite a ride for Peace House Community. We started the year projecting a \$100,000 deficit, and contemplating having to close PHC's doors permanently. However, thanks to the amazing generosity of many people and organizations, we ended the year with a \$40,000 surplus. But even as we celebrated the continuation of our work, we ran into more challenges. Within the first two weeks of 2025, we heard that two of our grant applications had been declined, taking \$60,000 away from this year's projected income. Then, out of the blue, the Department of Human Services added \$30,000 to our grant for this year. I guess this is how a yo-yo feels.

Before I go further, I want to thank everyone for the high points of our yo-yo journey. As I said, we were starting serious conversations about how long PHC could survive. The fact that we made it to the 40 year mark is a statement about the compassion, loyalty and generosity of our supporters. Whenever PHC has needed them, they have come through. So thank-you for your prayers, your gifts, your encouragement, and your letters that have kept us going all this time. (Since I open all of our mail, I get to read all of the letters. Usually they come with a donation, but some folks write just to encourage us, even if they can't afford to give anything at that moment. When someone cares enough about our community to send a note because it's the most they can do, it reminds me of how much support we really have.)

As I mentioned, the yo-yo took a dip to start the year, but we aren't in panic mode. We know we have time to recover, and we have a strong community backing us. We're disappointed some foundations aren't supporting us this year, but we're not despondent. We are confident that together, we will get through this challenge.

So, again, thank-you. I have said this before, but it bears repeating. Let me know if you would ever like to drop by to see PHC in action. I'd love to show you around, partly because I am proud of PHC, and partly because it's fun for me to meet the people behind the names I see on our mailing list. Even if you just have a question, give me a call, so I can say a personal thank-you.

A handwritten signature in yellow ink that reads 'Marti Matty'.