

SPRING NEWSLETTER

April 2022

NEWS FROM
THE BOARD



PLYMOUTH
HEALING
COMMUNITIES

House of Healing Provides Respite for Evacuated Afghan Family

by Mike Pierson, President

PHC's House of Healing has become the temporary home to a recently evacuated Afghan family supported by Seattle's Plymouth Church Welcome Circle. We expect the House of Healing to provide the family with this transitional housing until mid-June. We feel a lot of joy at being able to offer this support.

We are very grateful for the opportunity to put the House of Healing to this good use. At the same time, we are facing the reality that our ability to make this change – and to do so remarkably quickly – is also due to our struggles in recent years to keep strong the original House of Healing model. That model was one of combining multiple resident companions with a steady stream of persons referred to PHC by Harborview Medical Center and having a history of mental illness and homelessness – together with good prospects for succeeding in short-term shared housing as a bridge to permanent housing.

The challenge at the House of Healing has come from both ends of the original model. First, even before the pandemic, recruiting and retaining resident companions for the work had become challenging. Second, as our community's mental health and homelessness landscape has changed, it has become harder to draw enough residents for whom the traditional House of Healing model can be as effective as we want.

PHC already had entered into a proactive effort to work on the House of Healing model and explore possible alternatives when the opportunity to house an Afghan family arose. We are committed to working hard to identify a sound and sustainable future for the House of Healing model, and we look forward to sharing more news about that later this year. In the meantime, we welcome the newest residents of the House of Healing and look forward to their making it their home over the next several months.

PHC's other houses and apartments continue to provide permanent housing to their 40-plus residents.

PLYMOUTH HEALING COMMUNITIES

MISSION STATEMENT

Healing takes place when people are shown the care, love, and respect all people deserve.

Plymouth Healing Communities provides companionship, housing, and circles of support for people who live with mental illness and housing instability.

Program Committee Board Members

- Paul Carlson
- Jane Dunkel
- Robie Flannagan
- Brigitte Folz
- Sanjay Shernoy

Staff

- Padrica Hoffman
- Stephanie Monroney

BOARD BRIEFINGS



House of Healing

Program Committee Charting a New Path Forward

An inspired and visionary program of the Homeless Mental Health Chaplaincy, Plymouth Healing Communities (PHC) was founded over 20 years ago to create a home where people with mental illness can live alongside community volunteers who share their journey towards healing, hope, and stability.

Faced with a decrease in referrals of individuals needing respite and a decline of volunteer residential companionship staff due in part to the pandemic, the Program Committee of the PHC Board was charged with developing a new strategic plan that continues to align with the mission of PHC and its companionship programs.

Setting the parameters of the new plan, the committee first agreed that the strategic plan needs to provide options that will make the best use of PHC properties and ensure fiscal sustainability for the long term. Other components of the plan focus on supporting diversity and the psychosocial and recovery needs of the residents, maintaining the respite and shared housing models and developing and supporting a relevant, feasible, financially viable and sustainable program that promotes staff and residents' resilience.

The committee expects to complete the plan for the House of Healing in the summer of 2022 and subsequently move on to focus on Hofmann and Eng Houses.

STEPHANIE'S CORNER

It is an honor to introduce the individuals who make Plymouth Healing Communities a dynamic organization. Each of our team members is dedicated to the mission and vision of Plymouth Healing Communities. They demonstrate their love for the work and respect for the residents every day and in every interaction. I could not ask for a more talented, compassionate, and caring group of people with whom to serve.

Stephanie



Stephanie Maroney, Executive Director

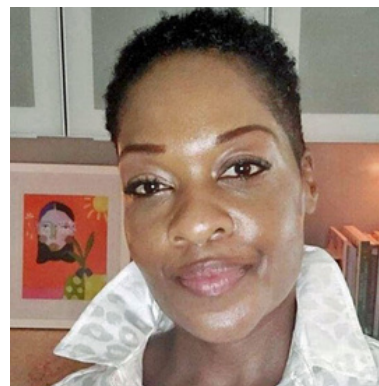
Drew Dasse, Office/HR Manager, enjoys fashion design. He is currently working on his second collection and hopes to show the finished line later in 2022.



Drew

"The past four years have given me a deep appreciation for how Plymouth Healing Communities continues to improve the quality of life for its residents and the community around them."

Padrica Hoffman, Program Director, is a vintage audio system enthusiast and, in her spare time, she enjoys selectively scouting out hard-to-find vintage stereo receivers, turntables, and speakers.



Padrica

"My work at PHC is meaningful because it allows me to thrive in my purpose to support the destigmatization of marginalized groups and build meaningful connections that impact positive change."

Janiah Tolbert, Community Manager, prides herself in being the "best cook PHC has seen, respectfully."



Janiah

"My work at PHC is important to me because I get to touch the lives of the people we serve; I get to make a meaningful impact on their wellbeing and recovery."

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GARDEN PROJECT

HEALING PROGRAMS

**Padrica Hoffman,
Program Director**



A little over a year ago, Padrica Hoffman, PHC's Program Director, adopted and revamped the Garden Project to provide therapeutic healing to the residents of PHC properties. To date, there are seven garden beds at Eng House, two at the House of Healing, with one designated to cultivate seeds to provide fruits, vegetables, and spices specifically for the Afghan family seeking refuge. Padrica and her merry band of gardeners just installed additional gardens in front of the Hofmann House and, on March 1, work began on a two-phase project that will bring to fruition a meditative space that will include a labyrinth, rocks, flowers, and a seating area behind the Eng House. 60-70% of all PHC residents participate in the gardens' maintenance, planting, watering, and harvesting.

Currently pursuing credentials to become a Horticulture Therapist to cultivate her love for gardening and therapy, Padrica explains, "The PHC Beacon Hill Community gardens allow residents to meet others who come from different backgrounds, including people of different ages, races, cultures, and social classes to forge friendships that provide a natural support system that strengthens their recovery. Residents gather for dinners prepared with vegetables hand-picked fresh from the garden. Spaghetti sauce made with ripe tomatoes and oregano is a popular entree for gatherings in the spring.

They have also used fresh mint leaves in their tea to promote a sense of calm and healing. The residents also share the gardens' bounty with their neighbors and other residents which encourage community or, as I like to think, a continuum of kindness."

The foundation of the Garden Project is PHC Community Garden Workshops which offer residents the opportunity to learn how to start and maintain the organic communal gardens. In partnership with the Seattle Tilth Alliance, the workshops are provided to residents throughout the year and usually last 1-2 days. Residents learn about organic gardening, understand the importance of healthy soil, design and map a garden, select crops to grow year-round, and properly harvest different plants and produce. The residents gain hands-on experience cultivating and amending garden beds by weeding and adding lime or compost, planting seeds and transplants, discussing the continued care of plants and harvesting existing produce. "We emphasize experiential learning and strive to provide educational opportunities that give people a chance to learn from one another, practice their skills, and gain hands-on experience whenever possible."



Janiah Tolbert, Community Manager and Gavin Tiemeyer, Garden Hotline Educator at Seattle Tilth Alliance, harvesting and amending the soil at Eng House last month.

News to Make You Smile

Spring Break at PHC

While some university students take the opportunity to have fun in the sun over their spring breaks, others spend their spring breaks in service to others. On March 4, eleven University of Utah students ranging from first-year students to seniors, spent a day of their spring break at the Eng House.

The University of Utah's Alternative Break program promotes lifelong activism by providing students with the experiences and skills necessary to build and organize communities through service, education, dialogue, and reflection. The students, for example, reflect on how food justice is connected to environmental justice, racial justice, homelessness, and many other forms of injustice. As homelessness is a significant issue, the students take a close look at how homelessness and hunger are interconnected.

In partnership with the Seattle Tilth Alliance, Padrica Hoffman developed a volunteer plan and provided Phase I oversight for students to convert the Eng House backyard into a meditative healing space. Students leveled the backyard and prepped the soil to apply mulch.

During an open Q&A session, students learned the causes of homelessness and how, as a community, they can help the different populations affected by poverty, whether it be because of mental illness, unemployment, or other societal factors, and the best practices for improving the lives of these individuals and families.

- Thank You!*
- Eian Brightwell
 - Nanci Delacruz
 - Victoria Ding
 - Maeve Haggerty
 - Devin Oldroyd
 - Brooke Larson
 - Mayzee Levet
 - McKenna Pastorik
 - Jennifer Pelagio-Gallo
 - Catherine Peterson
 - Eunjae Yoo (Amelia)



More News to Make You Smile

Lights, Camera, Action... at the House of Healing

It wasn't an epic Hollywood film production underway the second week of February in Seattle, but the 3-day video shoot at the House of Healing had all the hallmarks of one. The hustle and bustle were palpable as videographer Dylan Hammer and his assistant Alex Ravella set up their lights and cameras in anticipation of the arrivals of PHC's VIPs.

Founders Nancy Smith and Catherine Walker joined Board members Brigitte Folz and Sanjay Shenoy to record interviews for a September 15th, Night of Hope Dinner and Auction video presentation.

The topics covered ranged from PHC's inception and mission and memorable moments of the past 20 years to fostering community, building connections among PHC residents and the companionship required for healing, to the state of mental health care and Seattle's homeless challenges.

Dylan's reputation for capturing compelling stories through video promises that the video premiering at the Night of Hope Dinner and Auction will be a touching and informative piece that should not be missed.



Founders Catherine Walker and Nancy Smith visit during the video shoot.



Videographer, Dylan Hamar, and his assistant, Alex Ravella, outside of House of Healing.



Board member Sanjay Shenoy sharing memories.

Using Her Superpowers for Good



Ashley came to Seattle in 2014 as an AmeriCorps volunteer and a member of the Refugee Support Network, working with East African Community Services (EACS) in south Seattle. EACS expands K thru 8th-grade educational programs that serve low-income families who escaped persecution in countries like Somalia and Eritrea situated in the Horn of Africa.

Her last role as Schools for Salone's social media strategist focused on writing web content across their media channels, posting program updates, supporting fundraising goals, and gaining online traction ahead of their annual gala and silent auction.

Seeking a volunteer opportunity, Ashley approached her long-time friend Jamie Lyn for an introduction to Plymouth Healing Communities Board member Nancy Parker in late November 2021.

After meeting Ashley, Nancy identified an opportunity to revive and leverage the organization's social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to reach a younger demographic that share a passion for helping those facing mental illness and housing instability.

Ashley is committed to volunteering for one year to help the team decide what resources are needed to educate online audiences about PHC's work in the community. She maintains and grows online engagement and posts regular content to PHC's social media accounts.

Currently, she is drafting and implementing a 2022 social media strategy based on PHC's fundraising goals for social media-driven activism. The plan can be modified as needed to align with PHC's growing programs and activities.

Since coming on board, Ashley has spearheaded PHC's relationship with Audacy, the second-largest radio company in the US, to increase PHC's Night of Hope dinner and auction awareness and to provide text to donate services for the evening. Under Ashley's guidance, Audacy is targeting charitable adults 25-54 which will reach 35 million listeners across five radio stations. In addition, PHC's messaging will reach the KISW-FM audience through on-air PSAs and the "Rockaholics Helping Rockaholics" blog.

When Ashley isn't promoting PHC, she is a full-time mother to her 5-year-old, focusing on her daughter's emotional development, self-esteem, and success as her little one navigates early schooling.

THREE
CHEERS

For

Volunteers!

Meet

Ashley Elizabeth

Dykstra

Social Media Specialist

Follow PHC On



SAVE THE DATE

For the past two years, our fundraising event has been virtual due to the pandemic. This year we will gather in person. Please plan to join us.



September 15, 2022

4th Annual

NIGHT OF HOPE

Dinner and Auction

Plymouth Church, UCC

Seattle, Washington

Follow PHC On



NIGHT OF HOPE Volunteer Opportunity

Table Captains

We are looking for ten passionate PHC allies and friends to help us get the word out about Night of Hope! Please consider volunteering to become a table captain for this year's event.

We will provide resources, orientation, and ongoing support.

Sign-up at
events@plyhc.org
today!

Can't help but know
someone who can?
Please share this
information.

**Plymouth Healing
Communities**

**P.O Box 61125
Seattle, WA
98141-6125**

**206-755-4597
events@plyhc.org**

A FEW PARTING THOUGHTS

by Mike Pierson

This month, the PHC Board of Directors will elect a new president, and I will complete three years in that role. So, it's a good time to reflect a little on PHC and the past several years.

First, in the category of "The Best Laid Plans...": I recently reviewed our strategic plan for 2019-2022. Shockingly, there was absolutely nothing like "Prepare for and Effectively Respond to Global Pandemic." (Ok, NOT shockingly.) But of course, the COVID world of the past two-plus years has provided many, many unique challenges for PHC's residents and the organization. How to minimize the health risks for residents and staff. The additional impacts of social isolation on residents. The difficulties for a non-profit organization for which the personal connections and interactions of residents, volunteers, staff, and board members are essential to the work and the model of providing and being community. There are many more examples.

As we head into Spring 2022, I am grateful that we have a real reason to hope for better times on the COVID front and increased opportunities for PHC volunteers and, more broadly, for connection and community.

Second, I find it helpful to keep in mind some of the basics about PHC. Those who started PHC did not elect to work in this space because it would be easy. There was a great need, and there was an opportunity for a healing community.

There was the chance to work against the stigma and fear around mental illness without denying or ignoring the realities of what that could involve and the difficulties it can present in personal relationships, in living situations, and otherwise. So those who created and built PHC chose to be in this work, to enter into its often-challenging complex of needs and relationships. Those involved with PHC now are also choosing to do that. We commit to living into this choice with compassion, to doing the best we can to engage with a loving heart. It's a big call. It remains at the center of our mission and our work.

Third, even with the limits of these COVID times, I've felt fortunate for the times when I could talk with residents and learn some of their life stories and experiences of the world. I've heard many expressions of appreciation and been very powerfully reminded of how hugely important it is for an individual to have a secure home with good support.

Finally, as in so many things, it makes such a difference who is in the boat with you. PHC has an able, dedicated, thoughtful Executive Director and staff. We have a talented, diverse, quick-to-volunteer Board of Directors. We have generous, engaged supporters, both long-time and recent.

Much to appreciate!



Thank You!

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THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS! WITHOUT YOU, PLYMOUTH HEALING COMMUNITIES WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE HOUSING FOR THOSE IN NEED.

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