



# Over-the-Rhine Community Housing

WHERE COMMUNITY COMES FIRST

Summer 2016 Newsletter

## RECOVERY HOTEL CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY!

*“Today I realize that the answer to what happens to dreams deferred is that they are sent to special places. Places like the Recovery Hotel. Where they wait patiently for the dreamers to arrive.”*

– Donald Whitehead

On Friday, May 6, 2016, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of Recovery Hotel, which provides permanent supportive housing for homeless men and women in recovery from substance abuse. Sponsored by U.S. Bank, our staff, residents, and neighbors celebrated and enjoyed a ceremony in the Recovery Hotel parking lot on Vine Street. Everyone in attendance enjoyed delicious food provided by Bakersfield and Eli’s BBQ.

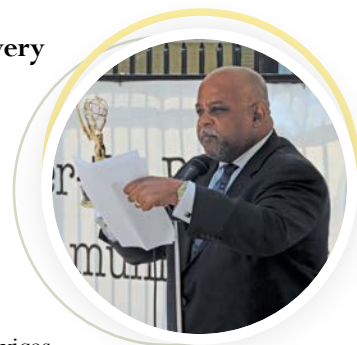
Since 1996, Recovery Hotel has provided skilled case management services as well as daily, on-site Narcotics Anonymous meetings, which provide residents the support needed to maintain their housing, secure income, and rebuild their lives. Over-the-Rhine Community Housing serves as owner, manager, and service provider of the project.

The 20th anniversary celebration featured current and former residents speaking about their experience at Recovery Hotel. The keynote speaker, Donald Whitehead, is one of the country’s foremost experts on homelessness and a former resident of Recovery Hotel.



Donald is now the Associate Director of N Street Village, the first shelter for single women in the District of Columbia and has also served as Executive Director for the National Coalition for the Homeless. Speaking of his time at Recovery

Hotel, Donald said, **“For me, Recovery Hotel was much more than a building; it was an oasis in the desert of destruction caused by active addiction. It was the place where I learned that my situation was not my destiny.”**



Andy Hutzel, Director of Housing Services at Over-the-Rhine Community Housing, helped open Recovery Hotel 20 years ago. **“The Recovery Hotel has stood on Vine Street in Over-the-Rhine for the past 20 years as a place for homeless men and women to recover, work, and become part of a supportive community,”** said Hutzel. **“Several people, like buddy gray [sic], worked for years to make this project happen and it has delivered on all of its promises!”**

Many former residents of Recovery Hotel move on to successful careers and give back to the community by supporting others who engage in the journey of recovery. Since opening in 1996, the program has served 255 individuals with a successful completion rate of 83%. 46% of residents were employed and 72% increased their income during their stay at Recovery Hotel, a remarkable achievement for individuals who were homeless and now in recovery. Now in its 20th year, the success of this innovative housing program demonstrates how housing, compassion, and support can transform the lives of individuals in recovery.



# FROM THE DIRECTOR AND BOARD PRESIDENT

Summer is in full swing in Over-the-Rhine. Kids are on their way to Camp Ernst, block parties are underway, and we are feeling the heat.

And, as the summer rolls on, the world seems to be running off the rails with incidents of unspeakable violence in our communities, our cities and around the world. The angry rhetoric can be intense and our differences are magnified to the point of complete alienation.

Honestly, it is hard to know how to continue. What part do we play in solutions, in seeking peace and justice? We often seem to experience things so differently even if we occupy the same space. What do we do with that difference that seems to provide fuel for so much angry action.

The often repeated words of Fred Rogers, “Mr. Rogers”, come to mind.

*“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” To this day, especially in times of “disaster,” I remember my mother’s words and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers – so many caring people in this world.”*  
– Fred Rogers

That is in part why we are grateful to be a part of Over-the-Rhine Community Housing. Even when the news of anger and violence fueled by fear and hate dominate the news, we get to be witness to ‘the helpers’ that Mr. Rogers tells us to seek.

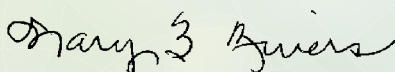
We see helpers when an 84 year old woman is homeless and applies to us for housing and Cynthia Bell processes her application quickly and suddenly Jane W. is signing a lease and getting her keys. Then Andy and Sophia move into action. Andy takes her bags of laundry to our basement where he does several loads of her laundry in between meetings and paperwork and phone calls.

Or when a resident arrives at our office at 8am to visit with our Director of Property Management to tell her that he has been promoted. He thanks Tanya and tells her that he would not have been in a position to be promoted had it not been for her willingness to work with him when he fell behind in rent. Or when Tanya and Cynthia Talbert drop everything to support a resident whose husband has passed. Or DaKenya who lends a supportive ear to a resident who has had a tough few weeks. And there is Angie who is using her experience to provide support and hope to other women in Over-the-Rhine.

There are lots of helpers here. Lots of kind and caring people. So, even in those days when it seems there is only violence and hate in the world, we at Over-the-Rhine Community Housing are afforded the opportunity to watch the helpers. Our world feels less dark and hope works its way back into our consciousness.

If you need some hope, come visit us. Even on the darkest day, there is always a ray of hope here. Or, if you feel compelled, support our helpers with a donation.

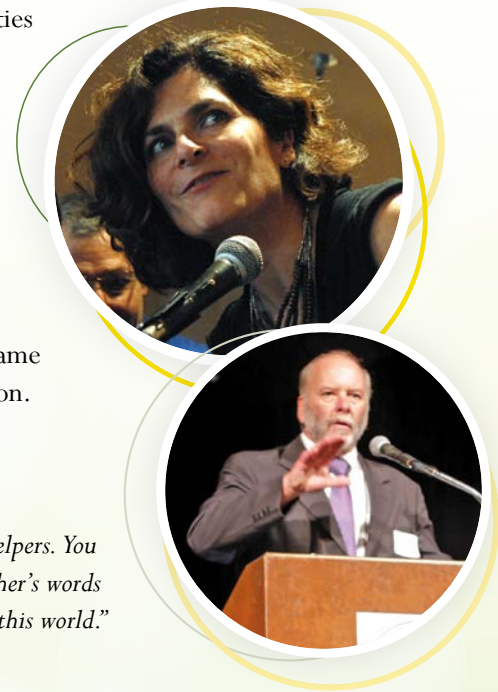
There is another saying that is helpful, “Focus on the solution and the solution gets larger; focus on the problem and the problem gets larger”. Let’s focus on the solution, which we believe is rooted in Love.



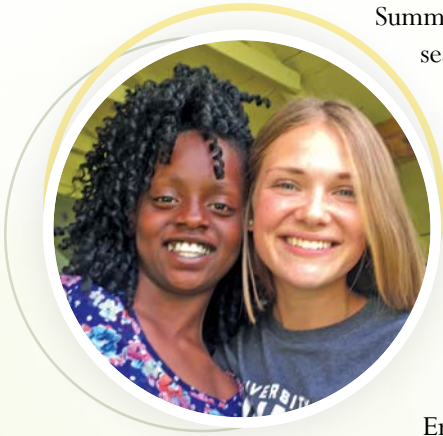
MARY BURKE RIVERS  
Executive Director



ROGER AUER  
President Board of Trustees



# SUMMERTIME FUN FOR KIDS AT YMCA CAMP ERNST



Summertime is a busy season for Resident Services at Over-the-Rhine Community Housing—and arguably the most fun! Thanks to generous funding and donations, we have the joy of sending 32 children to YMCA Camp Ernst, a sleep-away summer camp in Burlington, Kentucky.

This summer, we are taking several groups of kids—ranging from ages 5 to 15—to Camp Ernst to spend a whole week soaking up the joys of summer camp. From bonfires and high-ropes to horseback-riding and canoeing, a week at camp is an invaluable and unforgettable experience for any child. Here in Resident Services, we are lucky to witness the positive and powerful impact of that experience on our residents.



10-year-old Beautiful Payne (also known as Beauty) went to Camp Ernst this summer for her 3rd year in a row. Beauty says, “Camp Ernst is a fun place to go. You get to make friends with people you don’t know yet. We go swimming, play on the banana boat, and go down the big water slide.”



## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CAMP SPONSORS!

We would like to thank Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Christ Church Cathedral, First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati, and Ann Retford. Their donations made it possible for 32 children to attend Camp Ernst this summer!



Beauty says that during a normal day at camp, she eats delicious meals at the dining hall, goes swimming, does a choice activity such as archery or the climbing wall, and plays name-games to get to know her cabin-mates.

Not only does she have a blast at summer camp, but as an older camper, Beauty is a helpful friend supporting our first-time campers to feel comfortable and settle in. We truly enjoy seeing kids like Beauty flourish and thrive at Camp Ernst every summer and we are sure she will continue as a camper for many years to come.



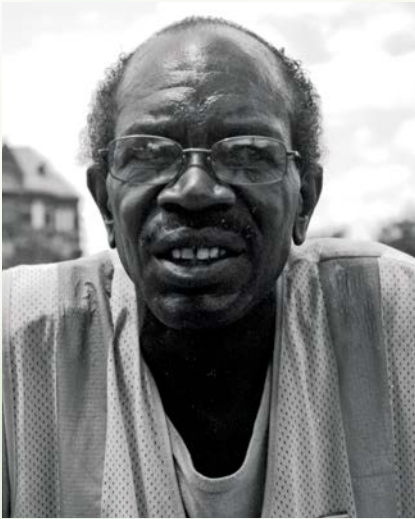
# JERRY'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS AT JIMMY HEATH HOUSE

At the Jimmy Heath House, one of the more successful collaborations this year has been with the Homeless Coalition and Yvette Simpson's "Pilot Work Program", that focuses on removing the barriers that often hinder a homeless individual's return to employment.

The Pilot Program brings together residents, case managers, and employers such as the City Parks Department, Building Value, and Nehemiah Industries to provide a venue where clients can find support and encouragement while they work towards a goal of permanent full-time employment. The collaborative nature of the program allows clients to overcome typical employment barriers such as spotty work histories, criminal involvement, or homelessness, while providing ongoing support through regular meetings which establish a link between the employers, the client's service providers, and

the Pilot Program's management.

One success story for both the Jimmy Heath House and the Pilot Program is that of Jerry D. He was accepted into the Pilot Program in the first round hiring and has been working 32 hours a week at the Parks Department for the last two months.



Jerry recently had his performance review and received accolades from his managers.

When asked to reflect on the role employment is playing in his life, Jerry said, "It's providing stability, and having a set schedule allows me to plan for things I want to do, and the job gives me motivation to work on other aspects of my life." He also informs us that he is looking forward to paying rent, and feels that paying rent helps him feel more invested in the community. Jerry's job efforts can be seen in the upkeep of Washington Park, where he focuses his work. Jerry's work also increases his sense of ownership and belonging in the larger OTRCH community. Jerry's advice to other residents seeking employment: "If you're going to join a program, or go to work, make a commitment to be there, and be on time."



Photos by Nicholas den Haan

## OTRCH IS A STAR

In March, OTRCH won the 2016 OTR Chamber of Commerce Star Award for Nonprofit of the Year. Each year the Star Awards highlights outstanding individuals, businesses, and organizations working in Over-the-Rhine. OTRCH was honored for our unique contributions to the neighborhood, providing not only affordable housing, but quality resident services, commercial space, and community events.



# WEST SIXTH BREWING PAYS IT FORWARD

It's no secret that our neighborhood has experienced a recent influx of development, with new people and new businesses appearing seemingly every day. We are always deeply appreciative when a new neighbor reaches out and takes the time to hear our story.

One such business who has become a supporter of our mission is West Sixth Brewing, based in Lexington, Kentucky. The company recently branched out into the Cincinnati market and their products can be found in many of the restaurants around Over-the-Rhine. West Sixth was a supporter of our Chef Jeff event last spring, and recently honored us as a recipient of their 'Pay It Forward' program, in the form of a donation of \$4,780.

Matt Fay, sales manager from West Sixth, says the company's decision to reach out to OTRCH was all part of their greater mission to "brew great beer and positively impact our communities." Fay explains, "Ben Self, one of our owners, serves on several non-profit boards and previously worked in consulting roles with non-profits. With this experience, a big problem that seemed to be reoccurring many non-profits was sustainable fundraising. This certainly played into West Sixth's mission to be a for profit business that often collaborates with non-profits. The tenants in our building, consisting of several non-profits also ties into this commitment."



For the "Pay It Forward" program, Fay says, "West Sixth donates 50 cents from each 6-pack of 'Pay It Forward' Cocoa Porter sold and our distributors and select retailers match this contribution." Fay explains, "When our staff chose to support Over-the-Rhine Community Housing, I really appreciated the history behind the organization.[...]Being a native to the area and understanding how the neighborhood continues to change, it was neat to learn how the work of the organization has also changed. It was apparent to me that OTR Community Housing's mission is as important now as it has ever been."

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## BIG THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Our work would not be possible without the support of our donors. We would like say a special thank you to the following organizations and businesses who have provided grant support so far this year:

PNC Charitable Trust  
PNC Community Development Foundation  
West Sixth Brewing  
Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing  
Cincinnati Area Board of Realtors  
Community Shares of Greater Cincinnati  
U.S. Bank  
SC Ministries – William Groneman  
First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati - Carter Memorial Fund  
Greater Cincinnati Foundation  
Elder High School  
The Marianist Province of the United States

Interact for Health  
City Studios Architecture  
CDC Association of Greater Cincinnati  
Monica McGloin and Janet Linz  
Barbara and Butch Otting  
Gregory and Susan Friedmann  
Robert McGonagle  
City of Cincinnati  
Ohio Development Services Agency  
Strategies to End Homelessness  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

# MORGAN APARTMENTS AND CARRIE'S PLACE RECEIVE LIHTC FUNDING

In June, OTRCH received big news! Two of our new affordable housing projects, Morgan Apartments and Carrie's Place, will receive financial support through Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). LIHTC is an extremely competitive program that helps support many affordable housing projects across the country. This support will allow OTRCH to significantly expand affordable housing in Over-the-Rhine and also help preserve existing affordable units in the neighborhood.

For these projects, OTRCH will renovate 21 at-risk historic buildings in total. The Morgan Apartments project will feature 48 affordable units in total. We will preserve 15 existing homes in our 19-27 West Clifton apartments and also add 33 new affordable scattered site units. Carrie's Place will be a 43-unit

supportive housing project consisting of two vacant buildings and our existing Sharp Village apartment community. Carrie's Place will add 22 new affordable units and preserve 21 existing units. Apartments in both projects will be updated with new appliances, interior and exterior finishes, and be completely rehabilitated to meet Enterprise Green Communities certification and federal historic standards.



## OTRCH WELCOMES NEW STAFF

This summer we're welcoming some new and familiar faces to the OTRCH team.



Katie Cunningham, who recently graduated with a Master in Arts Administration and Master of Business Administration and has worked with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, will be our Fund Development Manager.



Ryan Dyson, who has interned with OTRCH since 2014, recently graduated with his Master of Community Planning degree. Ryan is now our Grants Manager.



Andrea Harrison will fill in for Ashleigh Finke, Director of Real Estate Development, while she is on maternity leave. Andrea has volunteered with OTRCH throughout this past year, helping with property development and asset management.



Lauren Stoll, who was our resident services intern from 2014 to 2015, graduated this spring with a Master of Social Work degree. Lauren is now our new Resident Services Advocate.

# REMEMBERING OUR FRIENDS

## Mary Grafe



Mary Grafe (left) with neighbor Mildred Grinney  
Photo: Bonnie Neumeier

Our dear friend and justice seeker, Sr. Mary Grafe, SC, died New Year's day with family and community surrounding her at Mercy Hospital West. Mary was everywhere supporting the cause of justice. There isn't an Over-the-Rhine organization that she didn't support. Mary was

instrumental in the founding of Bethany House and cared deeply about women and children experiencing homelessness. Often on the streets youth would call her by name, for they met her in prison when she served at Juvenile 2020. She raised money for all of our neighborhood causes; she was always telling her family and friends about the work of the people. She visited the sick through Hospice. Mary was known to be soft spoken, but the way she lived her life spoke loud and clear about her commitment to justice and her faithfulness to her family, friends, and community. She lived the beatitudes. We give gratitude for her life. We had a gem of an activist in our midst. We will miss our Mary.

—Bonnie Neumeier

## Catherine Comello Stehlin



It's hard to put into words what it means not to have Catherine living and walking our streets of Over-the-Rhine. She has been a presence and a gift to us for many years. Catherine, wife of Mike Stehlin, mother of Oscar and Clara, and friend to many died February 4th, 2016. Catherine

worked at the Drop Inn Center Shelterhouse and Jobs and Family Services. She volunteered at a number of organizations in the neighborhood, always being an advocate for those vulnerable

and in need. She and her husband Mike put down stakes in the neighborhood and made it their home, and raised two beautiful children here. She loved what was natural. She fought to save the trees she saw from her window looking down on Washington Park. Her children, Oscar and Clara, enjoyed swimming in the Washington Park pool. She put much energy into trying to save both trees and the deep-water pool. She appreciated Mother Earth and made magic happen in the gardens she tended, both Pleasant Street and 13th and Republic gardens. Together, their fingerprints and footprints are all over the map of Over-the-Rhine. We will remember her and we will carry her spirit forward.

—Bonnie Neumeier

## Roland Kreager



Roland Deeds Kreager, surrounded by love of family and friends, died Saturday, May 28, 2016, at his home in Richmond, Indiana. His life-long passion for social justice was manifested in volunteer and professional work throughout his life. Roland served with Quaker Volunteer Service, and went on to work for American Friends Service

Committee, Freestore Foodbank in Cincinnati, Ohio and for other non-profit organizations serving poor and marginalized persons. From 1992 to 2011 Roland worked for a Quaker organization, Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR), which he led to be an independent non-profit with staff persons in the U.S., India, Kenya, and Sierra Leone. Through Roland's efforts toward economic justice, thousands in the developing world were able to earn a more equitable income. For the last four years of Roland's career, prior to retirement, he was the Development Director of Over-the-Rhine Community Housing. There he helped to raise funds for affordable housing. Roland was a man who loved life and brought much love to others. His primary passion and love was for his wife, step-children, granddaughters, and many friends.



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# HOW TO SUPPORT OVER-THE-RHINE COMMUNITY HOUSING

## Donate!

The following information and “hot” links are available on our website, [www.otrch.org](http://www.otrch.org). Click the Support Us! tab.

- Make a one-time or monthly gift online via the secure form.
- Make a gift by check: Over-the-Rhine Community Housing, 114 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202.
- Make a gift, online or by mail, to memorialize or honor a person(s).
- Remember OTRCH when you begin the Required Minimum Distribution from retirement accounts.
- Make a gift of stock, or wire funds from a cash account
- Remember OTRCH when naming beneficiaries in your life insurance, annuity, and estate documents.

Please reach out to Katherine Cunningham ([kcunningham@otrch.org](mailto:kcunningham@otrch.org)) if you have any questions about making a gift.

## Be Informed!

- Receive email updates.
- Like us on Facebook.

## Be Engaged!

Invite a church, school, business, or friends group to join you in a volunteer project in Over-the-Rhine. Contact Jake Merritt ([jmerritt@otrch.org](mailto:jmerritt@otrch.org)) for information. If you don't have a group, Jake can help you find one.



## Use Community Resources to Help OTRCH!

- Make OTRCH the beneficiary of your Kroger Plus card. Visit [KrogerCommunityRewards.com](http://KrogerCommunityRewards.com) and enroll by entering the OTRCH code, 82812. Remember to re-enroll every April.
- Make your Amazon purchases by using AmazonSmile. 0.5% of your purchase price will be donated to OTRCH.
- Use Goodsearch as your search engine. For every internet search you do, Goodsearch gives a penny to OTRCH.

