



Connections

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Celebrating 10 Years of Outreach

Unique program has touched hundreds in Northwest Philadelphia

Since May 1999, the Outreach Program has been delivering free, confidential services and support for any individual who is 60+ and living independently in Northwest Philadelphia. Today, the program team includes Director Mary Fallon, Social Worker Roberta Balsam, Neighborhood Nurse Lynn Trimborn, and Clerical Assistant Delores Taylor. These dedicated professionals provide personal attention and support to individuals in their homes, host a variety of events, and actively collaborate with other community organizations.

In honor of Outreach's 10th anniversary, we've compiled a timeline that documents just a few of the program's many milestones. But as Mary notes, the facts and figures simply don't capture how inspired she and her team are by the older adults they're privileged to work with: "We've met older people who were dealing gracefully with incredibly difficult life situations," she explains. "Our clients have experienced a variety of losses and still keep going. They're juggling fixed incomes and serious health concerns. They're grateful that we care enough to come see them and keep in touch—and they appreciate our respectful approach, which puts them in the driver's seat."

1998: Outreach Committee established during merger of UU House and Lycoming House.

1999: Mary Fallon accepts the "temporary" position of Outreach Director and launches the program. Outreach hosts its first two public events at UU House: "How to Talk to Your Doctor" and "Avoiding Frauds and Scams."

2000: The Outreach team conducts 15 initial client assessment structured interviews. (As of March 2009, the team has interviewed more than 425 individuals.)

2001: The first Neighborhood Nurse comes on board. Today, Lynn Trimborn serves in this capacity—providing blood-pressure screenings, delivering health promotion presentations and consulting with clients and caregivers.

2002: Part-time Social Worker position is created. Today, Roberta Balsam serves in this capacity. 2002 also brings the first Thanksgiving and Christmas food drives, which are now annual traditions.

2003: The Outreach Neighborhood Nurse performs more than 800 free blood-pressure screenings.

2004: Outreach plans and executes a conference—"Living the Good Life in NW Philadelphia: Growing Older and Better"—and creates the "Walk By Faith" program for Neighborhood Interfaith Movement (NIM) ElderDiner participants.

2005: The Outreach team makes a total of 23 presentations—including eight sessions at UU House.

2006: Mary receives the Marguerite Riegel Award from Center in the Park—one of the largest senior centers in Philadelphia—for her work on behalf of older people in the Northwest.

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Letter from Dale

Dear UU House Families and Friends,

There's much to celebrate at UU House!

First, we're very excited that the Benjamin Rush House, our skilled nursing community, has earned a prestigious five-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), the federal agency responsible for regulating nursing homes.

To explore the results for yourself, visit www.medicare.gov and scroll down the homepage until you see "New Nursing Home Five-Star Quality Rating." From there, you can search under zip code 19144 to check out our results and those of other area facilities. You'll see that UU House earned high marks in all three categories that CMS measured: Health Inspections, Nursing Home Staffing, and Quality Measures. Our families and our staff have long known that we're a five-star community—and it's terrific to have this third-party validation.

Second, we're thrilled about the recent launch of our new website. We've unveiled a new look and feel for the site—giving it a fresh, vibrant look that reflects UU House. We've also added new content to help prospective residents and their families to learn more about our unique community. Visit www.uuhouse.org to see for yourself—and let me know your thoughts and comments about the redesign.

My regards,

Dale Jacobs
CEO/Administrator

For more information about UU House, please visit our web site at www.uuhouse.org, or call us at 215-843-0809.

Employee of Distinction: *Kathy Gannon*

Twice a year, UU House staff members have the opportunity to nominate a peer as "Employee of Distinction." In December 2008, we announced our current honoree: Kathy Gannon of the Administrative Department.



Kathy Gannon joined UU House over a decade ago as a part-time bookkeeper. In 2001, she assumed responsibility for payroll and became the community's full-time bookkeeper. In this role, she provides a number of critical services—including payroll, as well as accounts payable and employee benefits.

And she does it all with a demeanor that colleagues describe as diligent, reliable, and cheerful. Another word that describes Kathy: humble. She was stunned, and perhaps even a bit embarrassed, at being named "Employee of Distinction."

"I am thankful for my job and grateful for the opportunities that present themselves day in and day out," she says. "I'm blessed to be a valued, integral part of the UU House community." She adds that she truly enjoys working with—and making a difference for—UU House residents and their loved ones, as well as staff members and other contacts.

Outside work, Kathy enjoys spending time with her two children—Bridget, who is in her last semester of college, and Jack, who is a junior in high school. Kathy's hobbies include singing, dancing, art, Christian ministry work and keeping up with her alma maters: Mount Saint Joseph Academy and Philadelphia University.



Portrait of Caring: *Maintenance Department*



Alphanso Green serves as the “front line” for the Maintenance Department, handling day-to-day requests from residents and staff.



UU House transports residents to and from doctor's appointments, church services, and on trips to local areas of interest.

Before UU House welcomes a new resident, the Maintenance Department does a thorough inspection of the room that the resident will occupy. The team typically paints the walls and assesses whether or not new carpeting is needed. They also make sure that all the room's essentials are in good working order—including the bathroom sink, tub, and toilet, as well as the windows and doors. And they perform any major repairs that are necessary to make the room a safe, comfortable space.

Room inspections and preparations are just part of the responsibilities of the Maintenance Department, which is led by Manager Bob Snyder. As Bob explains, he and his team personally handle about 95 percent of facility repairs and maintenance tasks, including maintaining all life safety systems, which include the fire detection system, sprinklers, fire extinguishers and nurse-call systems. They also tackle routine chores (changing light bulbs and air-conditioner filters, for instance) and emergency repairs.

As Bob explains, his assistant, Alphanso Green, is really the first line of service for residents: “He’s out there all day getting requests from residents directly or pulling them from the work request book,” says Bob, who joined the UU House team two years ago. “He handles the immediate needs and clues me in to larger issues.”

Although the department's name doesn't include “Security” or “Transportation,” those areas fall under the Maintenance team's responsibilities, as well. Bob and Alphanso provide security during the day and are supported during evenings and weekends by Mike Sawyer and Douglas Rogers. In addition to providing physical security, Mike and Douglas serve as support for monitoring maintenance issues around the facility. And they routinely pitch in and help with other tasks as needed.

Then there's transportation, which “runs very well with little interference from me,” Bob notes. For that, he credits Marquita Spraggins: “It's flawless when she's here!”

Using the UU House van, Marquita transports residents to and from doctor appointments, church services, and other errands. She also supports the Activities Department in their community-wide outings and the Outreach program in bringing clients to UU House for special events.

Having worked in healthcare maintenance departments for 15 years, Bob says he finds the UU House team atmosphere “astonishing.”

“When I first came in, I was really taken aback,” he explains. “It took some time to realize that I could rely on other people. This place is united in a way that I'd never seen before. It's a real pleasure working here.”

Continued: Celebrating 10 Years of Outreach

2007: Thanks to the Germantown Relief Society, Outreach establishes a small Client Assistance Fund that disburses donations directly to clients with no administrative overhead for UU House.

2008: Outreach launches the “Walk With Pride” program, which brings together tenth-graders from the Parkway NW High School for Peace and Social Justice and older adults from the Oxford Presbyterian Church ElderDiner program.

2009: Outreach celebrates 10th year—and looks forward to many more years of service to clients and the community.



The People of UU House: *Robert Wolfe, MD*



It's been two-and-a-half years since Robert Wolfe, MD, came to live at UU House—bringing a wealth of professional experience, as well as a long and colorful history of service to others.

Born in Michigan but raised mostly in Pennsylvania, Dr. Wolfe is a graduate of Princeton University and New York Medical College. Trained in internal medicine, Dr. Wolfe spent nearly a half-century as a primary care physician. (He says he's grateful that he was able to practice when he did—not in today's environment.)

Of course, Dr. Wolfe, now 83, has experience that extends far beyond his medical practice. For years, he was active in the youth hostel movement. Hostels, which provide very low-cost shelter for travelers, have allowed countless young people from different countries to meet, gather, and share experiences with each other.

Over the years, Dr. Wolfe organized and participated in numerous adventure trips. During these excursions, he and his fellow travelers biked to various destinations and stayed in hostels. Dr. Wolfe has personally visited 10 different countries and lists Ireland, France, and Eastern Canada as his favorites.

Staying in hostels, Dr. Wolfe befriended many fellow travelers. Among them: actor Frank Langella, who was recently nominated for an Academy Award for his work in *Frost/Nixon*, and Irish artist Cecil King, whose art has been exhibited at the Dublin airport.

Dr. Wolfe also has a keen interest in Irish storytelling. Some 60 years ago, he encountered a Gaelic storyteller by the name of Seamus McManus (1869–1960). He first heard McManus telling his stories in an Irish town and later attended an event featuring the storyteller in New York City.

www.uuhouse.org



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