

PLASE & POINT

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Project PLASE has been serving homeless men and women in Baltimore for more than thirty years. We help our city's most needy citizens move out of homelessness through a comprehensive program based on true caring and respect.

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Johnson & Johnson's Vision A Reality

Mary C. Slicher

The theme of this year's Spring/Summer newsletter is partnership. For Project PLASE, collaborations with partner organizations not only make our (and our residents') work successful, they make it possible!

In my article, I choose to highlight and celebrate the unique partnership PLASE has with Johnson & Johnson through its Community Health Care Program. We now begin the second of a two-year collaboration with them. Johnson & Johnson's reputation is well earned as a value-driven and community-focused company. Their integrity and vision includes a longtime dedication to the health needs of those outside of medical systems and in great need.

Johnson & Johnson's values and PLASE's growing needs intersected a year ago. We sought funding from them to help us serve persons who are homeless and have various levels of disabilities and physical health problems. This population lives outside the health care network,



Dorothy Critcher and Mary Slicher of Project PLASE celebrate the Project PLASE - Johnson & Johnson partnership with J&J's Nick Valleriani.

but in the larger community. Their particular health concerns include major diseases that often have been left untreated. PLASE designed a program for members of this population that includes housing as well as active case management, medication monitoring, health education and a focus on the whole person.

PLASE was honored to be one of six grantees awarded support from Johnson & Johnson out

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Project PLASE and The Connect Project

Sarah Waters Zic

Project PLASE and Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) have served the same population for years. In the last four years, we have been able to join forces and win two

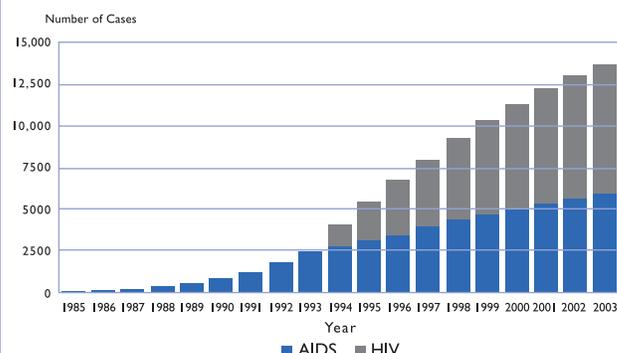
nationally competitive grants to support an effort called The Connect Project. "Connect," as it's commonly known, provides intensive case management to homeless people in Baltimore

living with HIV/AIDS. And since Baltimore ranks fifth among major US cities for annual rates of AIDS cases, projects like Connect fill an important need.

Here's how The Connect Project works: a dedicated team consisting of two case managers, a nurse and a patient advocate at Health Care for the Homeless goes to great lengths to find, contact, build trust with and help people in the community with HIV/AIDS. Connect Project clients must

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Baltimore City HIV/AIDS Epidemiological Profile - December 31, 2004
Section II - Baltimore City HIV and AIDS Case Prevalence Trends. Prevalent (Living) HIV and AIDS Cases on December 31st of Each Year as Reported through 12/31/04.



Source: The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, AIDS Administration

Becton Dickinson: Longtime Friends

None of the success Project PLASE has helping homeless men and women regain hope, stability and housing would be possible without the support we have from the Baltimore community and the hard work of our volunteers.



George Vransky, Project PLASE's Plant Manager (left) stands with Loren Western, former PLASE Board member and retired BD employee. PLASE is lucky to have George, a retired BD electrical engineer, who came to work for Project PLASE at Loren's urging.

Becton Dickinson (BD), an international medical technology firm with a local office in Baltimore, has been supporting Project PLASE in a variety of ways for a decade. BD employees have had a constant presence on the Project PLASE Board since 1995, for example. One BD

employee, Loren Western, stands out as a particularly dedicated, hard-working volunteer. His values are such that beyond the significant "behind the scenes" work he has done to support Project PLASE, he was also committed to working directly with our clients, and did so weekly for years.

So Project PLASE nominated Loren Western for the 2005 BD Henry Becton Community Service Award and he won! In the next few months, Becton Dickinson will donate \$3,000 to Project PLASE in Loren Western's honor. Thanks Loren!

PLASE Staff in the Community

Sarah Waters Zic

It's always amazing to hear about a Project PLASE counselor who shows commitment to the community in ways beyond just working with homeless men and women every day "down at the office." Barbara

Watkins is one of these. She's our Overnight Counselor in the Project PLASE Facility for the Medically Fragile. Even so, Barbara spends most of her daytime hours talking with clients and often helping in our busy front office. She also manages to work with kids back in her old neighborhood, Reservoir Hill, through a program called the Change & Growth Enrichment Program.

The program was established by Dr. Rodell Bailey-El in 2003. "I'm honored to be a part of it," says Barbara,



Dr. Rodell Bailey-El of The Change & Growth Enrichment Program, presents Project PLASE Counselor, Barbara Watkins, with an appreciation award.

PLASE Chosen for New Mental-Health Program

Project PLASE just received a grant from the AIDS Administration to provide on-site mental health services to our clients. The new program will begin in July, 2005, and will serve 45 men and women with HIV/AIDS who also live with mental-health problems.

Mental illness can negatively affect the progression of a person's HIV disease. Depression can impact medication compliance and overall health. Medications for depression and other mental illnesses can also interact with HIV medications. Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between mental illness and substance abuse, which can also have debilitating effects on a person's health and their ability to thrive in a community setting.

The program will provide psychiatric treatment through a psychiatrist from the North Baltimore Mental Health Systems. The psychiatrist will come on site to evaluate clients and perform diagnostic screening using DSM IV. In case of serious problems the psychiatrist can hospitalize the patient. He/she will also be able to prescribe medication for the mental illness. Individual therapy and behavior management will be provided on a regular basis at Project PLASE by a mental health licensed social worker.

Providing mental health services on-site in a nonthreatening environment will, we hope, lead to better adherence to and acceptance of mental health therapeutic interventions among our clients.

whose main motivation is to "give back" because, she says, "God has blessed me. I've come a long way."

Held after school and on weekends, the program takes boys ages 4-11 and girls 5-13. The 100 or so boys in the program meet at the John Eager Howard Elementary School. Program leaders found space for their girls' program at St. Frances Church, thanks to Fr. Tom Compasto. The kids get mentors and tutors, they play sports, take classes, and go on field trips. Most importantly, however, they're given companionship and attention from caring adults.

Barbara's commitment to the children from her old neighborhood is strong. "I want keep these kids from witnessing the kind of drug activity they would be exposed to if they didn't have a place to go like the Change & Growth Enrichment Program," she says. Barbara's dedication is making that dream come true.

Living the Good Life, a Day at a Time

Sarah Waters Zic

Many of us probably have a friend or two just like Dorothy—a lovely woman with a good-natured smile who is dedicated to volunteer work, is close to her brothers and sisters and calls her mom her “best friend.” She’s committed to her church; she has affectionate names for her closest friends; and you can count on seeing her at the AIDS walk every year.

Sound like your average next-door neighbor? Sure. But if you hadn’t known Dorothy for a long time, it might be impossible to imagine the hard road she’s traveled to reach the place of peace and happiness that she now has.

For two years, Dorothy lived in the Facility for Medically Fragile Homeless Men and Women at Project PLASE. Before she walked through our door, Dorothy had been homeless for nine years. She stayed with friends, lived in abandoned houses or slept on Baltimore’s streets. She had been using drugs for 15 years and living with HIV/AIDS for nearly 20. She couldn’t read or write and, like many who live on the streets, Dorothy had engaged in some dangerous survival behaviors whose emotional scars can make reaching stability an even greater challenge.

“I needed to learn to love myself,” says Dorothy. At PLASE, Dorothy found a sense of belonging and acceptance, a place to foster her growing sense of self-esteem. Dorothy had managed to become clean and sober before she reached Project PLASE, but since she was still homeless, she found herself too often in the company of others who were still using. And she didn’t like it. So she found her way to us.

During her time at PLASE, Dorothy not only maintained her sobriety, she also lays claim to having had “the most beautiful room in the facility— Room 119,” she says, “that was my room and I kept my window sill full of flowers and plants, kept it clean and

beautiful.” Dorothy says she knew she had something good when she was admitted to Project PLASE, and she didn’t want to lose it. “I did everything my counselor suggested,” says Dorothy, “I’d come too far to go back.”

Beyond finding the strength to stay clean and sober, Dorothy also learned how to manage her money at PLASE which, she says, is helping her tremendously now. She also gained vital information about her illness including how important it is to take her medications faithfully, what the terms “CD and viral loads” mean and why safe sex is necessary even with a partner who has also been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Now Dorothy “gives back” to the



community by passing on all she’s learned to others who are living with HIV/AIDS. She earned a certificate from Associated Black Charities (ABC) and, through one of their outreach programs, she shares her experience and knowledge, and tries to encourage others in their pursuit of healthy lifestyles as much as she can.

“I have a lot to live for now,” says Dorothy, and she does. On January 31, 2005, Dorothy celebrated four years clean and sober. On April 14th, she started classes at The Learning Bank to learn to read and write. Her nieces and nephews say that she’s the one they can talk to about “serious” things. Her mom says “I feel like I got my daughter back.” “Project PLASE,” says Dorothy, “helped me get my life back.”



Our Mission

Project PLASE, Inc. addresses homelessness by providing transitional housing, permanent housing and supportive services to homeless adults. We serve the most vulnerable and underserved, including persons with mental illness, HIV/AIDS, addiction, developmental disabilities and ex-offenders, etc. We treat, restore and rehabilitate the whole person. We empower each individual to function at the highest level possible.

Our Vision

To eliminate homelessness.

KEY STAFF

Mary C. Slicher
Executive Director

Bonita Rohr
Director of Clinical Services

Sarah Waters Zic
Dir. of Communications and Development

Piper-Leigh Daniels
**Volunteer Coordinator/
Arts and Activities Director**

BOARD OFFICERS
Gregory W. Branch, M.D.
President

Betty Wilson-Jones
Vice-President

Lesley Giles
Secretary

Scott Wolgamuth
Treasurer

Chuck Phillips
At-Large Committee Member

United Work and Travel: Faithful Volunteers' Bingo Bash

Piper-Leigh Daniels

It was yet another December day packed with volunteers coming to help out at Project PLASE. It would be a day of fun and excitement and then an evening of dining and enjoyment. Kasey Simon, the Executive Director of United Work and Travel, regular volunteers for Project PLASE, had planned a “Bingo Bash” for us that evening—Dinner for our residents and Bingo with great prizes. Our partnership with The Associated, another “true blue” PLASE Volunteer group, led us to our partnership with United Work and Travel—I was introduced to Kasey Simon by the Associated’s Ashley Klapper. United Work and Travel did a wonderful job with the “Bash.” They made their mark and made some happy memories for our clients.

Take the dinner they prepared, for example. We have food for dinner every night in all of our facilities. But the United Work and Travel folks took it upon themselves to gather the money to treat our clients to a feast. As soon as the group arrived, they sent a posse out to Safeway, which returned with more than ever expected: Fresh salads, veggies, potatoes, steak and ice cream. Before dinner we played Bingo, laughed and joked and put our worries aside for a while.

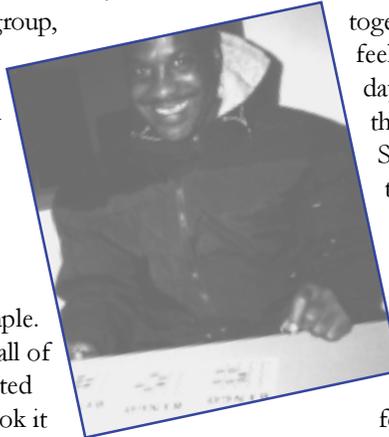
It was interesting to see the social, economic and cultural lines cross and make their own designs. Everyone was different but not clashing; different and yet the same. I see that our differences work



together. But I feel even more strongly after that volunteer day, that our differences cannot stand up to the spirit of love, giving and receiving. Some things cannot be overpowered. And that evening in December is testimony. I give thanks for such giving.

The “Bingo Bash” evening was just the beginning of the joy I witnessed because of United Work and Travel’s efforts. The day after the “Bash,” and for days following, clients seemed to be gleaming with joy. United Work and Travel exemplified the true meaning of community service and giving. They shared the spark of their own joy in life with our clients and treated them like royalty.

May we all work and travel within ourselves—to give to others as United Work and Travel did. May we all, at some point, take that time. Thanks!



Let Your Spring Cleaning Benefit PLASE

Emily T. Finton

Project PLASE is partnering with an organization called MissionFish to provide a new way for our generous donors to offer financial support. Now you can sell an item on eBay and donate from 10% to 100% of the final sale price to help provide housing and services to homeless men and women in Baltimore City.

For those who are experienced online sellers, this will be a breeze. For others, it could provide new motivation to clean out some closets this spring.

How Does It Work?

MissionFish, a nonprofit organization specializing in online charitable auctions, developed Giving Works for eBay. Although items will be posted through MissionFish, they will appear with all other listings on eBay. Giving Works items are marked with a charity ribbon icon so buyers

know they are supporting a good cause. Buyers tend to trust charity sellers more and these items often sell for more than non-charity listings. In addition, Giving Works items appear in three categories for the price of one: the category you select, the eBay Giving Works category and on the MissionFish nonprofit home page.

Would you like to try it?

Here's How To Start:

1. Visit www.MissionFish.org.
2. Get registered.
3. Choose an item to sell.
4. Write an item title and description.
5. List your item through MissionFish and indicate that

it will benefit Project PLASE.

6. Complete your transaction—MissionFish collects your donation and passes it on to us!



Johnson & Johnson Continued from page 1.

of 200 applicants nationally. We celebrate the commitment of Johnson & Johnson to put support and action where their beliefs are. We celebrate those persons housed and now better served through access to key health care and information. We appreciate Johnson & Johnson's support of Project PLASE.

The Johnson & Johnson partnership has allowed us to house and assist nine men and women during the last year. Of these, five have moved into permanent housing and two have been approved for permanent housing and will access it shortly. Two are still struggling with their chemical dependencies and, we hope, will climb and conquer that mountain.

Last year, the individuals served by PLASE under the Johnson & Johnson grant ranged in age from 39-71! Six were African American and three were Caucasian. These courageous men and women coped with a wide range of health issues: cancer, chronic anemia, cirrhosis, class A staph infection, heart disease, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, diabetes, peptic ulcers and peripheral vascular disease. Through this program, all nine clients receive regular medical attention at area clinics and hospitals.

This partnership has made us all better. Thank you, Johnson & Johnson. In the words of Tim, one of the clients assisted by this program, "You have been a miracle to me." In the words of another, "PLASE helped me when I did not have a place to stay... You helped me restructure my life. I am grateful and blessed to have been part of the PLASE experience."

Got an Extra Baseball Mitt?

Every year, Project PLASE organizes a picnic for the homeless men and women we serve—a day at the beach, away from the city. This year's picnic will be on June 24th.

But this year we need to ask for your help. Would you be willing to sponsor a park entrance fee or two (\$4 each)? Could you donate some sports equipment? How about some picnic food? A baseball mitt, two bags of chips or chicken wings to feed an army—anything you might be able to donate to the event will make the day special for someone in need.

Please see www.projectplase.org for more info or contact Sarah at 410-837-1400 x15.

Connect Project Continued from page 1.

be living with HIV/AIDS and have substance abuse and/or mental health problems. Most of the project's clients are housed; the goal is to keep them that way. Connect serves about 60 clients at any one time. The project gets referrals from a number of local organizations that work with the underserved in Baltimore. They also seek out clients themselves. Then they link these men and women with health care, education about their disease, benefits and housing. Connect relies in part on five beds at Project PLASE to provide housing for the clients.

Many of the people Connect reaches out to are reluctant to get help and might remain untreated without the hard work of Connect staff. Take the case of a 41-year old man who came to Connect's attention when referred from a case manager at HCH. The first contact staff was able to make with him came after many phone calls. "We really had to be persistent with him," says Vicki Dailey, Special Initiatives Coordinator for HCH. After winning his trust and coaching him through the hard work of coming to terms with his disease and his addiction, he is now clean and sober and taking his HIV/AIDS medications religiously. He also got married. He and his wife have their own apartment now. "We didn't give up on him," says Dailey.

Some might ask: Aren't social workers all over Baltimore already helping people with HIV/AIDS get the services they need? The answer is yes and no. Most social workers can't undertake the active—and exhaustive—outreach that Connect Project staff can. "Usually social workers can't get around. They can't go out and find the people who need their help and then continue to visit them," says Dailey. "Once a client is on board, we make frequent visits, we take them to appointments, take them to the Department of Social Services, for example. Connect staff have the time to be very persistent."

That's why Project PLASE helps provide housing for the project. PLASE already serves about 250 homeless men and women with HIV/AIDS per year. Our counselors have the depth of experience necessary to store and administer meds to this population, counsel them, find them the right services and educate them about their disease. All PLASE residents receive exactly what The Connect Project aims to provide. More importantly, however, the project PLASE philosophy of caring for people living with multiple disabilities and/or major diseases aligns perfectly with the philosophy and goals of The Connect Project.

Dailey says: "Most of the folks we work with are already housed or staying with friends, family or in programs. But they need these specialized services." Connect staff still needs to check in with them and help them stay on top of their HIV/AIDS. "But when we place folks at Project PLASE," says Dailey, "we know the counselors there already do just what we want the program to do. We stay in contact with them, but we don't have to worry about the care they're getting."

The primary goal of The Connect Project is prevent homelessness in the HIV/AIDS infected population. Connect staff is working to make sure people with HIV/AIDS stay connected, that they understand their condition and that they keep getting critical services. It's work that values the individual, no matter how sick, how addicted or reluctant to get help. But it also goes a long way toward preventing further transmission of the HIV virus for the whole Baltimore community. "When you're working in a program that's as badly needed as this one, you see the results all the time. It can be very rewarding," says Dailey.

Windfall Funds Bring Many in From the Cold

Sarah Waters Zic

Much of the money that goes to helping people with HIV/AIDS in Baltimore, comes from a federal government program that awards what are commonly known as “Ryan White grants.” The official name of the program that awards the grants is The Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act, named for an Indiana boy whose brave struggle against the disease—and the discrimination that comes with it—helped open the eyes of many Americans about the importance of compassion for those among us living with HIV/AIDS.

Sometimes, when an organization that cares for people with HIV/AIDS wins a Ryan White grant, they cannot use all of the money. In these cases, the money goes back to a kind of clearing house so that another agency can make use of it. This winter, Project PLASE was chosen to make use of some of this “carryover money.” It allowed us to do some important work: getting homeless men and women with HIV/AIDS inside and into emergency housing during some of the coldest months of the year. Our first order of business, after we received the funds, was to alert local agencies that we had extra housing to offer. We called our short-term program Emergency Housing for People With AIDS.

Housing is a high priority for people with HIV/AIDS since they are extremely vulnerable to secondary infections, their medication regimes are nearly impossible to maintain without consistent housing and homeless men and women often don’t get good nutrition or manage to make and keep medical appointments.

Typical of Project PLASE, the people who came to us for help through this program were given more than just a warm, safe place to stay for a while. They were offered counseling, help with medications, links to benefits, referrals to health clinics and exposure to addictions treatment.

All told, PLASE placed 57 men and women in emergency shelter through the program. Many were discharged to us from local hospitals with no place to go. This group was often physically very fragile, so it was important that they had a warm and secure place to go. Others were referred to us by local organizations or found their way to us themselves.

Project PLASE is happy to report that no one with HIV/AIDS who was in need of emergency housing was turned away from PLASE this winter and many were provided services they might not have been able to find elsewhere.



Diana Hood, Manager of two of PLASE's Transitional Housing Facilities (top photo), and Katie Allston, Senior HIV Outreach Counselor (bottom photo), ran this winter's Emergency Housing for People with AIDS program.

In Memory

During the past year, Project PLASE had the privilege of working with 500 or so homeless men and women, most of whom were suffering from multiple disabilities, addictions and/or major diseases such as cancer, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

Each year, we honor those we've served who have passed away. After our annual memorial service this year, Project PLASE will plant a hydrangea in the garden behind our Facility for the Medically Fragile, and place a plaque before it reading: “In loving memory of those who have been with us and passed on. May their spirit help us grow.”

The following members of our community passed away this year:

Tracy Bost

Maria Gee

William Gibson

Shavonne Henry

Terry Malone

Gloria McBride

Ronald McCoy

Pasquale Mitchell

Wade Moses

Roosevelt Munson

Anthony Redd

Cheerese Suber

Michael Thomas

Sharon Thompson

Angela Townes

Diana Washington

Jeanette Watkins-Bey

Frederick Williams

Bobby Wilson

Andre Wright

Give the Gift of Hope and Stability

You can support Project PLASE's continuing efforts to meet the needs of Baltimore's most vulnerable homeless adults in a variety of ways.

Financial Support

We always welcome your financial support.

- ▶ Do you know someone celebrating a birthday or anniversary? Instead of buying that person a gift, make a cash contribution in his/her honor to Project PLASE. We will send a card notifying the honoree that a gift has been given in their name.
- ▶ Memorial gifts are another way of honoring someone who was important to you, your family or the community. Send a cash contribution in honor of that person and we will send a card to the family notifying them of the memorial gift.
- ▶ Make a financial contribution to Project PLASE. You can designate the particular program or building you would like your donation to fund. Or you can mark your contribution as unrestricted and let us allocate it appropriately.
- ▶ Does your employer have a matching gift program? If so, you can contact your human resources department and they will give you the paperwork. Send the paperwork to us with your contribution and we will do the rest. Your employer will match your donation at a designated level. What better way to make your contribution to a great cause go even further?

- ▶ Designate Project PLASE as a recipient in the United Way of Central Maryland giving campaign. Our United Way number is 0141.

For further information, contact Project PLASE at 410.837.1400 or visit our web site at www.projectplase.org to donate through Network for Good.

In-Kind Donations

We gladly accept household items and furniture in good condition based on our current needs.

We always accept clothing and accessories, food, personal hygiene items (soap, razors, shampoo, shaving cream, toothpaste, toothbrushes), DVDs, exercise equipment, sports equipment and Christmas gifts.

For more information, contact Sarah Waters Zic at 410.837.1400 x15.

Volunteer

We need you and all of your talents! Here are some ways you can volunteer at Project PLASE: Help us with repairs or oil changes to the vans, cook a meal, teach computer skills, resume writing or art classes. See more in the volunteer section of our web site at www.projectplase.org, or contact Piper Leigh-Daniels at 410.837.1400 x36 or pdaniels@projectplase.org.



Outreach Counselor Roz Russell with one of her clients.

A Gift of PLASE

- (\$1,000 & above) Hope Society
- (\$500 - \$999) Kinship Circle
- (\$250 - \$499) Circle of New Life
- (\$100 - \$249) Friend of PLASE
- (\$1 - \$99) PLASE Supporter
- I would like to give my time. Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.
- I would like to donate goods and/or services. Please contact me with more information.

Name:

Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phone #1: Phone #2:

Email:

Gift given in memory/honor of:

Card to:

Address:

City: State: Zip:

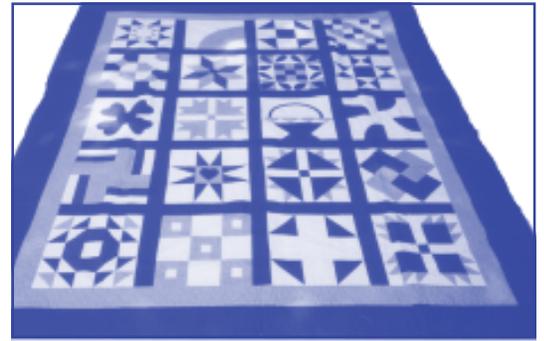
To support the food, shelter and services Project PLASE provides for homeless men and women, I am enclosing a gift of:

Project PLASE, Inc. is a 501(C)(3) not-for-profit organization, contributions to which are tax-deductible in accordance with the law. A copy of our latest financial statement is available upon request by contacting Project PLASE at 1814 Maryland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21201. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.

TECH Talk

- ▶ Staff members are continuing to master the use of PLASEPOINT, our internal client database. Recently PLASEPOINT's medication-monitoring component was implemented agencywide. This is good news. Here's why:
 - ◆ Electronic medication monitoring will allow residents' prescription information to be securely accessed over the Internet from anywhere (which will help our nurse, who gives care at all four of our facilities)
 - ◆ it will better protect the privacy of our residents,
 - ◆ it will save time and reduce the possibility of error.
- ▶ PLASE hopes to receive funding for a future "Women's Tech Advancement Program." This opportunity will provide computer training for female PLASE residents, giving them valuable computer knowledge and job skills.
- ▶ We are exploring the possibility of implementing e-signature technology, creating a higher level of security for client data and further eliminating the need for paper files.
- ▶ PLASE has acquired a new LCD projector. It was first put to use in January when staff gathered for a seminar on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- ▶ Thanks for the donation of a computer system by Nancy Sewell. The machine is in use in our administrative offices.

Quilt to be Auctioned!



Bid on this beautiful, hand-made quilt when we put it up for auction on eBay from June 10 to June 22 to support Project PLASE! Actual colors are red, white, French blue, navy blue and pink. Call Sarah Waters Zic for more details at 410-837-1400 x 15.

Thanks & Anniversaries

Project PLASE thanks its dedicated staff for their time, effort and expertise. Here's to two employees who recently celebrated their five-year anniversaries at Project PLASE!

Five-Year Anniversaries

James Wells, Advocacy Counselor, celebrated five years at PLASE on April 6, 2005.

Barbara Terry, Advocacy Counselor, celebrated five years at PLASE on May 12, 2005.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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