

# 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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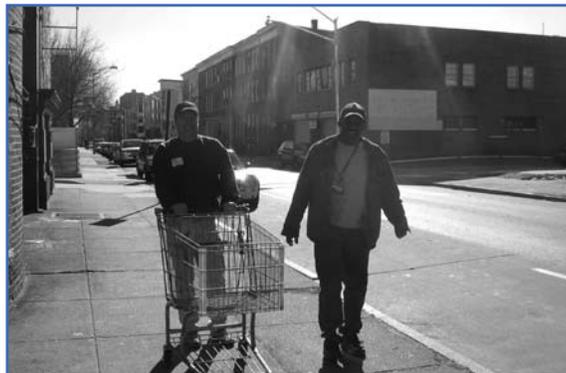
## WE LOVE VOLUNTEERS !!!

MEG DUNNING

*"The thing that lies at the foundation of positive change, the way I see it, is service to a fellow human being."* - Lech Walesa

During the last couple of months Project PLASE has been fortunate enough to have had the time, love, and hard work of many volunteers make small and large impacts on our staff, clients, and overall organization. No matter how much thanks we give it is impossible to convey the amount of gratitude we have for the individuals, students groups, and corporate volunteers who have given their time to work toward positive change.

In January we were fortunate enough to have sixteen employees from **PHH Corporation**, a fleet management and worldwide leasing service business, volunteer at Project PLASE for an entire



A volunteer from PHH and PLASE staff member Malcolm Coley go to clean the basement of 201 North Avenue

work day. The dedicated volunteers donated the paint and supplies which they used to makeover the living room/common area of our women's facility. It took a couple of coats of primer and

paint but they were able to totally transform the space into a room that feels more spacious and soothing. Meanwhile another group of volunteers from PHH painted the entryway and reception walls in 1814. The PHH employees also tackled the cleaning of the men's facility's kitchen, scrubbing

and scouring the countertops, floors, and windows. Billy Mosley our Maintenance Manager was also finally able to get the help he needed to clean out and organize the basement of the men's facility, no small task! Their ability to accomplish so much in just one work day was greatly appreciated and very impressive. (continued on Page 2)

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

Dear Friends of PLASE,

It is with great joy that PLASE announces that it has begun a capital campaign.

For many years now, PLASE has had the dream of consolidating its 3 older sites.

This single consolidated site will offer the advantages of a better space and the ability to improve program services. It will allow for a health suite for our nurse, a computer lab for our residents, and more.

To this end we have searched high and low, seen many, many vacant sites and lots in Baltimore. Until now we have not found a site that meets our needs as well as the community's needs.

Finally, effective May 1, 2008, PLASE signed a letter of intent to purchase and renovate a 33,000 square foot facility in mid-town Baltimore that would allow us to meet this need. We would be able to provide both transitional and permanent housing at this facility, along with many supports and services.

But this is just the beginning!

PLASE will need to raise \$ 6 million dollars to make this facility a reality.

We invite you to look at the pictures on the web site ([www.projectplase.org](http://www.projectplase.org)). We ask for your good thoughts and energy and any thoughts of groups or individuals who may want to help us make this dream a reality!

It will be the first 100% handicap accessible transitional housing facility for homeless citizens in Baltimore City – serving a great need.

We also hope to include as many green principles as this already built site will permit.

This dream is to serve our residents better. It will come through hard work and persistence!!!

We invite your help, your interest, your good energy, and of course your donations.

Mary C Slicher  
Executive Director

# WE LOVE VOLUNTEERS!!! (CONTINUED FROM COVER PAGE)

There have also been a number of student groups that made their mark on Project PLASE this season. **Salisbury University's** Spring Break Alternative group traveled to Baltimore this March for a taste of service work in an urban setting. The group of fifteen students collected in-kind donations of bread, ham, and cheese and made sandwiches for all of our clients. They also got a chance to tour all of our facilities and that evening they prepared a pork chop dinner for our Medically Fragile Facility residents and one of spaghetti and meatballs for the residents in our Co-Ed facility. The students had the opportunity to share these meals with our clients and were able to come away with new eyes from their experience. "I was pretty nervous when we first got to PLASE, but then once we started cooking everyone seemed really happy to have us there. I never realized how much there would be to talk about with people who I thought were going to be so different from me," reflected one of the students. Even though the long term effect of cooking a meal and sharing it with our clients might not be apparent at first glance, the impact that this experience had on a group of students is one that has transformed them and that they will hopefully carry with them to make positive changes & images of homeless citizens.

Project PLASE is also happy to honor some of our regular volunteers who give a great deal of their time to our clients and staff. **Margaret Hull**, a student from **Maryland Institute College of Art** runs a weekly embroidery group at our women's facility, where she shares conversation and teaches our clients the fine art of embroidery. We also have some "behind the scenes" volunteers, **Hope Sanders, Robin Thompson, and Regina Chandler** who provide invaluable

administrative support to our staff all during their own free time. **Sharese Knight**, a community college student, had a required five hours of service that she needed to fulfill for a course. After completing her hours she decided to continue volunteering with us and has done everything from helping to clean and sort bags for Purses for PLASE to running a "spa day" at our women's facility, giving the clients beautiful manicures. "I get my nails done all the time and it was astonishing to me how so many of the women had never gotten to experience any kind of pampering at all. It was really nice to be able to do something so simple to brighten up their day."

More exciting news: Project PLASE and **Saints Philip and James Roman Catholic Parish** at 2801 N. Charles Street created



Volunteers from PHH participate in a web activity during their orientation to Project PLASE

a partnership this winter. We invite the parish members to join us in our work towards our vision for the future and in turn hope that we can help to give them an understanding of a full range of the issues within our community. SS Philip and James is exploring ways of volunteering. They have already made

a generous contribution to our Purses for PLASE booth at the Flowermart and they plan on supporting us during the holiday season with our Thanksgiving turkey drive and our Giving Tree. We thank them for their support thus far and look forward to all of the wonderful things that their contributions of time and funds will help us to achieve.

Another wonderful already existing partnership is with the **Baltimore Chapter of the Girl Friends, Inc.** They jumped in to the fullest this spring in preparation and implementation of our second annual "Purses for PLASE" booth at the Flowermart in Mt. Vernon. The Girl Friends were essential in the planning portion of the event and they

were able to donate over 250 new and gently used bags and purses that they cleaned and prepared for sale. Members of the group also gave many hours of their time helping to set up and work all day at the "Purses for PLASE" booth. The event was a huge success and we were able to raise over \$1,350 in one day! A huge heartfelt thank you to all of the Girl Friends for everything they did to make this wonderful event possible.



A volunteer from PHH gives the front entranceway of 1814 Maryland Avenue a fresh coat of paint.

While this article is meant as an update it is also more importantly a huge thank you to all of our volunteers. We hope you know how much your time, work, and love means to everyone here at Project PLASE!

## VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Special appreciation goes to Ms. Jenna Colagiacomini. Jenna came to PLASE through her Johns Hopkins University Community Health Class.

Doing her internship wasn't enough for this tenacious junior!

She wrote a proposal to the Urban Institute and attracted a \$5,000.00 grant to purchase computers and provide training to PLASE residents. She will meet with residents this summer. Her training will help address the technology gap, increase knowledge and abilities, and marketability for PLASE's residents – both male and female. Several residents are lined up and ready for this hands-on training.

Jenna also is working with the University, PLASE and the residents to develop clear measures of growth and increased abilities.

Jenna, we all look forward to your classes and are so impressed with your initiative and caring!

## FROM HOMELESS TO HEALTHCARE: JENNIFER AMONICA'S SUCCESS STORY with Hope Sanders



Jennifer is a young woman living in PLASE's permanent housing program and pursuing her goals toward a new quality of life, but as she puts it, "It was not always this way—homelessness and drug addiction were bad company." She was homeless for almost two years. Though she was diagnosed as having Bipolar with Major Depression, she could not get treatment. Jennifer also comes from a background of frequent and intense substance abuse. During an incarceration she went through withdrawal. When she got out she was still in withdrawal to the point where she was sick and running a fever caused by the need for the drugs, so she thought. She says, "I thought if I got high I would feel better – and I did – for a second, then I went right back to feeling bad." Luckily a friend took her to Johns Hopkins Hospital.

After months of no contact with her mother, Jennifer called her to say she was no longer incarcerated, and at the hospital in withdrawal with a fever. Fortunately, her mother told her to call back when she had some news. The doctor gave her the news. She had not "just a fever." She had endocarditis. This is a serious infection of the valves of the heart. There are only two treatments available: a high dose of intravenous antibiotics and if that doesn't work, then surgery to have a pig heart valve replacement. Jennifer's Mom visited her. This was a major development in her emotional and social recovery. Thankfully the treatment for the endocarditis worked.

Now on the way to a recovery of her physical self, Jennifer had two choices: go to a nursing home for

purely maintenance treatment or go to First Step in-patient drug treatment. Jennifer states, "I knew what I went through. I was done and wanted the help I needed." When she was down to only one month more of available time in First Step housing she didn't know what to do. She had nowhere else to go. Her best friend told her about Project PLASE. She called and Melissa put her on our waiting list. She waited. Finally Melissa called to say we had a mental health funded bed for her. Jennifer says, "I told her YES I will be there, and I went."

Jennifer recently celebrated her third year of clean time. Diane Gervasio, Jennifer's outreach counselor says that, "Jennifer worked to set goals and grabbed onto the support we could give her to meet one goal and then go on to the next." She began by leading a weekly NA meeting at Bayview Hospital. She earned her high school diploma, then her Certified Nursing Assistant certificate. Her divorce came through. In the process of her life transformation she met a man who "loves me for me." She received her own Shelter Plus Care apartment through PLASE and lives successfully in this permanent housing program. She now attends BCCC on her way to becoming a Registered Nurse. Her goal is to work in the intensive care unit for babies born addicted to drugs. Ms. Gervasio explains that Jennifer "wants to have a lucrative career helping others as well as independently maintaining a home for herself and her child. I am very proud of her." Jennifer has built a good relationship with her mom, her son, and with herself. We at Project PLASE are happy for her and grateful that she allowed us to help her build a new life. We gave her the direction and the support. She took the steps.

## STAFF PROFILE • MS. JULIA SARGEANT • CENTRAL INTAKE COORDINATOR

Before coming to Project PLASE, in September, 2007, Julia Sargeant worked at a residential psychiatric rehabilitation program in Annapolis. Most of the clients who lived there had mental health histories and had been homeless for some period of time. She saw first hand how having a stable place to live allowed persons to change their lives and to address their mental and physical health needs.

Julia has always been interested in assisting disenfranchised persons gain access to resources. Working at Project PLASE has only increased her passion for the focus. Persons become homeless because they are not able to obtain living wages or affordable housing. Ms. Sargeant stated that being the Central Intake Coordinator at Project PLASE "has opened my eyes to the depth and complexity of the homeless population and the need in Baltimore City and has also helped me to feel like I am a part of the solution."

Executive Director, Mary C. Slicher stated that "Ms. Sargeant is a very talented and deeply compassionate and effective counselor. She is a very hard worker and has successfully connected homeless persons with our services. Her energy and humor also are god-sent to staff and residents alike. We are grateful for her and to her!! Indeed she is a wonderful part of the solution."



**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**  
Eliminate homelessness.

### KEY STAFF

Mary C. Slicher  
**Executive Director**

Scott Wolgamuth  
**Controller**

Michael La Bua  
**Director of Housing**

Bonita Rohr  
**Director of Transitional Housing**

### BOARD OFFICERS

Gregory W. Branch, M.D.  
**President**

Betty Wilson-Jones  
**Vice-President**

**Secretary**

Chuck Phillips

## EXCELLENCE • AGAIN

PLASE was one of 68 non-profits in the state to receive the Standards of Excellence award in November 2005! Now a quick 3 years latter, PLASE submitted materials for recertification on June 2, 2008. Our 700 page submission covers all 8 areas of the organization: Mission and Program Evaluation, Governing Board, Conflict of Interest, Human Resources, Financial and Legal, Transparency and Openness, Fundraising, and Public Affairs and Public Policy.

# Your gift to PLASE will MAKEOVER someone's life!

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:

\$

(\$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 call me about volunteer opportunities.

I would like to make a legacy gift in my will to Project PLASE, please call me with more information.

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.

MARYLAND  
NONPROFITS



STANDARDS FOR  
EXCELLENCE

**PLASE** bears the Standards of Excellence award. Go to [www.nonprofitsyoucantrust.org](http://www.nonprofitsyoucantrust.org) to learn about the Standards of Excellence and see reasons [Project PLASE, Inc. \(People lacking Ample Shelter and Employment\)](#) is a non-profit you can trust.

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