

# PLASE & POINT

SUMMER 2010

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## We Love Our Volunteers!

Mary C. Slicher, Executive Director

Summertime marks the end of our fiscal year as well as the end of service for many of our full-time volunteers. This year, 139 persons moved out of homelessness, and 176 households and 58 children grew in stability as they maintained their homes, continued to meet personal goals and contributed to the community. PLASE owes a great deal of this success to the value, talent, hard work and passion of our full-time volunteers during this most incredible year! I dedicate this space to our deep gratitude for their selfless and effective service.

Two AmeriCorps\*VISTA volunteers brought innovative hard work to our Communications and Development Team. Hanna Mast served PLASE writing funding appeals with extraordinary talent. She organized PLASE's 35th Anniversary Gala and events like "Purses for PLASE" at Flowermart. Andrea Sledd capably represented PLASE throughout Baltimore on many diverse coalitions and committees and organized PLASE's Client Advisory Board. Thanks to Andrea's dedication and vision, a colleague said: "PLASE is everywhere!"

Three young men—one Lutheran volunteer and two Brethren volunteers—came all the way from Germany to serve at PLASE: David Rybakowski, Chris Kollhed, and Matthias Furis. David and Chris served as case

managers in our Transitional Housing Program, actively connecting homeless persons with medical care and compassionate treatment for trauma and substance abuse. Matthias worked hard in the maintenance department: assisting with the upkeep of PLASE's facilities and delivering much-needed furniture to clients moving into permanent housing.

Kristin Yoder and Melissa Neiderhiser

came to PLASE as dedicated Mennonite Volunteers. Kristin compassionately served in the critical role of Central Intake Coordinator and assisted with access to permanent housing through Shelter + Care applications. Melissa brought optimism and patience to her variety of roles, including GED Tutor and Teaching Assistant, Shelter + Care Interviewer, and more!

Julia Scott from Public Allies acted as our Volunteer Coordinator. She maintained PLASE's spirit of service

by attracting diverse volunteers and creating a Volunteer E-Newsletter to keep in touch with our growing network of volunteers.

The excellence of these volunteers resides in their intelligence, inspiring dedication, and especially in their compassion. Their good works will live on after they leave PLASE, rippling outward to positively touch many lives and inspire others. We thank you!!!



PLASE volunteers: standing from left, Julia, Kristin, Matthias, Melissa and seated from left, David, Chris, Andrea and Hanna

## DONOR & VOLUNTEER THANK YOU EVENT

"When I first came to Project PLASE, I weighed about 42lbs and wasn't expected to live" Kim, a now-healthy, robust and thriving client of Project PLASE, explained. She was speaking to a group of donors, volunteers and fellow clients at Project PLASE's first annual Donor & Volunteer Thank You Event on Thursday, May 13th.

The two-hour event featured great food, amazing speakers and a short awards ceremony to honor three key PLASE supporters: Donor, Mary Ellen Jernigan from the National Federation for the Blind; Volunteer, Christopher Fritz from Ballard Spahr; and Corporate Partner, BD Diagnostic Systems, accepted by VP Michael Towns.

These three award recipients represent not only the enthusiasm, encouragement and generosity they themselves bring to Project PLASE, but also that of the entire PLASE family, comprised of all of our volunteers and donors over the past 36 years. Donors and volunteers at PLASE have expanded our quality of service and our capacity to serve people like Kim immeasurably.

In the past six months, over 200 volunteers have donated their time and talent to Project PLASE, contributing 6,000+ service hours and representing over 50 community organizations and businesses. Our volunteers span the gamut including small children, college students, adults with developmental disabilities, and seniors. *(Continued on Page 2)*



BD Diagnostics VP Michael Towns, PLASE Executive Director Mary C. Slicher, PLASE Board VP Betty Wilson-Jones, PLASE Board member Betty Caret



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### 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.

We treat, restore and rehabilitate the whole person. We empower each individual to function at the highest level possible.

### Our Vision

To eliminate homelessness.



United Way  
of Central Maryland

Please use the following designation codes to donate to PLASE via your employer:

United Way of Central Maryland

141

Combined Charity Campaign

8141

Maryland Charity Campaign

8141

Combined Federal Campaign

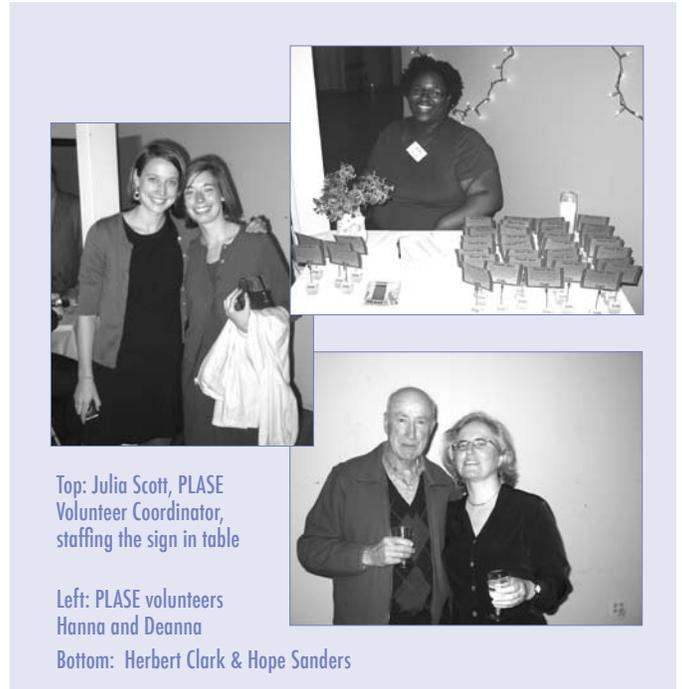
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## DONOR & VOLUNTEER THANK YOU EVENT *(Continued from Cover Page)*

The projects made possible by PLASE volunteers and donors are just as varied, including:

- Providing fresh produce for our clients through Garden Harvest work;
- Sprucing up our facilities through painting and maintenance days;
- Providing GED classes to previously illiterate women;
- Creating a Speakers' Bureau to raise awareness about homelessness in the community;
- Teaching yoga classes to staff, volunteers and clients;
- Participating in a community Resource Walk to meet PLASE neighbors;
- Organizing office purse collections for PLASE's booth at Flowermart;
- Contributing graphic design expertise to help with our website and brochure;
- Hosting fundraisers like New Year's day brunch for PLASE;
- And the list goes on and on.

In bringing the Thank You Event program to a close, Dr. Gregg Branch, Chairman of the Board, reminded our guests that everything in life boils down to relationships; homelessness is a testament to failed or absent relationships, and at Project PLASE, our donors and volunteers enable us to create new relationships, new support systems and new opportunities for those who need them most.



Top: Julia Scott, PLASE Volunteer Coordinator, staffing the sign in table

Left: PLASE volunteers Hanna and Deanna

Bottom: Herbert Clark & Hope Sanders

## IS HOMELESSNESS FOREVER?



Kim, a client and Client Advisory Board member, speaking to a group

Does your class or religious group ever wonder why so many people are homeless in Baltimore, and what's being done to combat it? Project PLASE has a Homeless Speakers' Bureau to educate our community about the realities of homelessness. Our engaging band of staff, volunteers, and formerly homeless clients provide a riveting and valuable perspective

on the state of being homeless and what PLASE is doing to end homelessness in our city. One of our speakers, Kim, says that speaking gives her "an opportunity to educate the community and express my gratitude for being granted a second chance."

We invite you to give Project PLASE the opportunity to speak to your organization. Contact our Community Projects Coordinator at [Community@projectplase.org](mailto:Community@projectplase.org) or 410-837-1400 x36 for details.

## ENGAGING COMMUNITY

### PLASE Is More Approachable Than Ever

Project PLASE has moved online! This year has seen our first forays into social media with the launching of our own nonprofit group Facebook page, a blog, and a grassroots-style Causes Campaign. These endeavors are all about meeting our supporters and community where they are: online.

Our blog, "Greening with Project PLASE," chronicles our efforts to incorporate green projects into our work and to raise awareness about issues of health, food, & nutrition facing homeless people in Baltimore. If there is a related topic you would like to write about, contact us about becoming a guest blogger!

In May, we ran our first ever Facebook online fundraising campaign, Help Project PLASE Support Homeless Vets. Causes is a Facebook application that facilitates individuals and organizations to promote issues that are close to their hearts. Our campaign was to raise awareness and funds for housing for homeless veterans. In a single month, we attracted 225 members to support our cause, and in a true grassroots fashion, our members donated over \$300 in increments of \$10 or \$25.

Social media allows you to be involved with PLASE on your own terms whether you want to learn about new volunteer opportunities, find out more about our green initiatives, leave us a message, or are looking for a new approach to donating. For more information about ways to connect, visit our website's new "Get Involved" page or email our Volunteer Coordinator at [Volunteer@projectplase.org](mailto:Volunteer@projectplase.org).



Kristin Yoder, our Intake Officer and a volunteer through the Mennonite Volunteer Corps, online

# EVENTS AT PLASE

## Top PLASE for Purses



This is Purses for PLASE!

On May 7th and 8th, Project PLASE took part in a great Baltimore tradition—Flowermart. The two-day fair is the city’s unofficial kick-off to spring with folks walking in the shadow of the Washington Monument with big hats, flowers, and lemon sticks.

This year marked the 93rd anniversary of Flowermart and was Project PLASE’s fourth year selling donated purses at our Purses for PLASE booth. Between the sunny weather, our amazing selection of purses and our low prices, Purses for PLASE was one popular booth! Both Friday and Saturday we had a steady flow of excited shoppers and return customers who were eager to partake in good deals for a great cause!

Thanks to the generosity of numerous community groups and individuals, especially the Bryn Mawr Alumnae Association and many departments at Johns Hopkins Medicine, shoppers snapped up over 600 purses and PLASE raised over \$2,700 in donations. As always, the money raised will go directly to our programs to help Baltimore’s homeless citizens.

Due to the overwhelming success of our booth this year, we will begin collecting new and gently used purses year round. We are also looking forward to participating in the Fell’s Point Fun Festival on October 2nd and 3rd for the first time! To donate a purse or volunteer, please contact our Development Associate at 410-837-1400 x33 or email [Donate@projectplase.org](mailto:Donate@projectplase.org).



Our littlest customer at Flowermart 2010

### GIFTS THAT KEEP GIVING

Consider making a recurring gift to PLASE. With one click of the mouse, your support will sustain both our work and mission to serve Baltimore’s most vulnerable homeless citizens.

Just visit our website and click **DONATE NOW!**

Thank you.

### EXECUTIVE STAFF

Mary C. Slicher  
Executive Director

Robert Ovesen  
Controller

Dr. Nancy Connor  
Director of Programs

Andy Dubosky  
Director of Communications and Development

### BOARD OFFICERS

Gregory W. Branch, M.D.  
President

Betty Wilson-Jones  
Vice-President

Chuck Phillips  
Secretary

## Peek Inside - Open House



Main entrance to Project PLASE at 1814 Maryland Avenue

On the evening of May 6th, Project PLASE opened our doors to the community for a Community Open House. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness about Project PLASE, our mission and our services. The event was held in the lobby of our multi-purpose Transitional and Permanent Housing

Facility at 1814 Maryland Avenue. Attendees pored over Project PLASE materials, mingled and shared resources

amongst themselves, nibbled on refreshments, and took guided tours of the facility. Over a dozen organizations were represented including Beans & Bread, Michele’s Haven, Guadenzia, and Health Care for the Homeless.

Project PLASE is planning to make this an annual event in order to foster better relationships with neighbors and partners in the community. Don’t want to have to wait until next year for the Community Open House? We would be happy to give you or your group a guided tour and information session. For more information, contact our Community Projects Coordinator at [Community@projectplase.org](mailto:Community@projectplase.org) or 410-837-1400 x36.

## PLASE IN-DEPTH

### Calverton Apartments – A Place to Dream

Calverton Apartments is just one of the permanent, supportive housing options Project PLASE provides. If you drive by the facility, you would immediately notice a large, well kept front yard with flowers and a mid-sized, freshly painted apartment building. There is nothing “institutional” about the place! You can credit this in large part to Rita Williams, the live-in Residential Manager (RM) of Calverton Apartments.

Since she became RM of the 4-unit, 8-person building, Rita has focused her energy on making it a clean, peaceful setting conducive to recovery and dreaming. “If you have dreams, you can come here and make them happen”, she said in a recent interview; “permanent residence like Calverton Apartments gives a person a sense of purpose, direction and security—people can grow here and move on with their lives.”

Rita speaks from experience when she talks about dreaming. Rita was a Project PLASE client at Calverton for three and a half years before becoming RM. As a resident, Rita thrived in the program: she went to school, became active in her Narcotics Anonymous group and was a model resident.

But Rita did not just want to move on from Project PLASE once she felt stable—she had a vision of giving back and promoting a cleaner block and apartment building. *(continued on Back Page)*



Rita works hard to maintain a tidy, clean and well-kept yard at Calverton Apartments



Project PLASE is a nonprofit you can trust

# CALVERTON APARTMENTS – A PLACE TO DREAM *(Continued from Page 3)*



32 South Calverton

In the past couple of years, Calverton has undergone positive changes. Rita personally sweeps the block around the building and attends the community association meetings. Many of Calverton's improvement projects such as painting and yard maintenance have been made possible through the support

of Chris Littlefield, the new Calverton Property Manager, and community volunteers. "Since I have been at PLASE, I have gotten to know Rita. She is a true example of the benefits of hard work and how it's never too late to change" says Chris.

Rita's constant vigilance since becoming RM has earned her much respect from the community and her beautification efforts have positively impacted the neighborhood. Through her work, she has created a recognized and respected safety zone on a block with a history of drug trafficking and crime. A safe haven like Calverton helps PLASE clients to feel secure, stable, and better insulated from the easily accessible drugs that may otherwise hinder their addiction recovery. In fact, one of the residents at the Calverton Apartments said that she would have not moved into the permanent housing facility had it not been for the safety and pride-of-place created by Ms. Williams. When listening to Rita talk about the residents

who have moved on from Calverton to greater successes like homeownership, rewarding work, and volunteer positions, you can tell how much this place means to her.

## Greening at Calverton

This spring, the Parks and People Foundation awarded PLASE a Neighborhood Greening Grant to fund our Calverton Road Greening Project (also made possible by Cleaner Greener Baltimore Initiative, Baltimore Community Foundation, and the TKF Foundation). The project brought greening and gardening to the block through the installation of a new flower garden and series of flower-filled planters along the property line.

Through the beautification of Calverton, PLASE's goal is to continue Rita's efforts to clean up the block. In turn, our hope is that the project will help to foster a greater sense of community and pride in the residents of Calverton Apartments.

There was a lot of work necessary to the successful implementation of the project: the Shipley-Hill Community Association was supportive, Parks & People's Community Greening Resource Network (CGRN) provided free tools and some plants, Johns Hopkins University graduate students volunteered in the garden as an Alternative Spring Break project, and PLASE staff have provided on-going support and maintenance.



Volunteer from Johns Hopkins planting flowers in Calverton's garden

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**PLASE**  
PROJECT

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