

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.



Please use
Designation Code 141
in your workplace donation.

WE'RE CELEBRATING! RELATIONSHIPS

Mary C. Slicher

As Anais Nin said "Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.."

First, I want to honor two legends—both of whom we lost in 2007.

We started the year with the January 1, 2007 loss of Ms. Miriam Wallace, one of the original founders of PLASE. An exceptionally bright and forward thinker, she and her husband came to Baltimore from New York after the McCarthy era to make a new life. She started by getting a degree, despite the fact that she was in her 40's by then. We met as fellow students. She lent her living room and incredibly deep sense of justice, for all levels of society—to the early stage of planning. Without her friendship and contributions, there would be no PLASE today! We miss her and will always send our love to her two, now adult children, Matthew and Jeannie. Thank you for sharing her with us, all these years.

The second legend and supporter we lost this year was Walter Sondheim- well known throughout Baltimore for his efforts on behalf of many! Though such a humble being, he worked endlessly on behalf of his beliefs and had a tremendous effect. He was the President of the Board of Education in 1954 and led the decision to end segregation. He became president of that same board again, years later, at the age of 90. It is said that he was Baltimore's most influential citizen in the second half of the 20th century. He founded the Greater Baltimore Committee and served on a myriad of boards, covering such diverse topics as the arts, mental health, philanthropy, education and more. We are humbled to count him a friend and supporter of PLASE! We will be inspired by his example of humility and courage, of vision and work, time and time again!

In the Memorial Tribute for Walter, Freeman A. Hrabowski, likened Walter to Tennyson Ulysses, because of the inspiration he was. For me the following words fit, both Miriam Wallace and Walter Sondheim.



From Left to Right: Mary C. Slicher, Miriam Wallace, four unknown clients, Gregory M. Hunter and Eric Bergerson.

**I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoyed greatly,
Have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone...
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, government...
I am a part of all that I have met....
Come, my friends.
'T is not too late to seek a newer world...
For my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the happy isles...
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and...
That which we are, we are-
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.**

We will imagine a better world for all- thanks to these wonderful souls.

We also celebrate the relationships between the staff and volunteers with the success story we chose to highlight in this issue. Please see Kim's story on the front page.

Also the relationships through our past and new volunteers are highlighted, particularly as we welcome our new Volunteer Maryland Coordinator and the creative work of our Art Therapist, Ms. Terry Van Tassel, see Page 3.

LOOKING FORWARD

PLASE had a wonderful 2007 and feel mightily blessed as we look forward to both renewed and new relationships and challenges in 2008. Thanks to many of you for your donations, volunteering and support!! We could not do it without you!!

ONE SUCCESS STORY “LIFE CAN HAVE JOY!”

Tobi Morris

Kim was born on August 31, 1961, a native of Baltimore and number fifteen in a family of seventeen children. She went on to have four children herself. Two of them are now deceased. The others have made her a proud grandmother of four boys.

Kim began her heroine and cocaine use at the age of 15. She had her first child at sixteen, made positive changes for awhile, including entering Job Corps. Unfortunately, she returned to using drugs.

When she came to PLASE in 1994, after years of homelessness and addiction, she was also near death-thin, covered with open sores and wounds. Though, she was also very ready to make changes in her life.

She felt the relationships of PLASE staff and residents – in her corner, enabling her to move from homelessness to permanent housing, leaving an entrenched addiction, and making a change in the focus of her life.

She eventually moved from PLASE's transitional housing to our permanent housing program called Shelter Plus Care. Kim regularly attends NA meetings, spends time with her grandsons and family, volunteers at their school, and cares for her



own health needs. From merely surviving and being entrenched in drugs, Kim now lives her priorities- education, health, relationships, family, community and God.

She states: “PLASE is a saving grace for me.” Kim thanks the staff at PLASE for the hope, help, love and presence – which helped her to re-organize her life. The people here saved me literally. Now I can take responsibility for myself. I also discovered the desire and ability to help others.”

Now fourteen years in PLASE's permanent housing program, Kim recommends that everyone give themselves a chance, no matter how low you feel. She did so by opening herself up to PLASE. “Allow others to be a helping hand. None of us can live alone.” She said all the persons here assured that I never gave up. This was true despite life-threatening and devastating obstacles.

Kim was able to transform pain and struggles into a new life, one that allows her now to support children fighting HIV/AIDS. Her own struggle with AIDS- physical, mental, emotional and spiritual has equipped her with the wisdom, compassion and commitment to understand and care. She enjoys giving back. “Life can have joy!” Kim shared.

Also the general community needs to know that “homeless men and women can rejoin society and contribute, if they are given the right support and help. I am a grateful living example. I was almost dead when I came to PLASE, but look at me now!!”

(Kim is one of the 200 persons housed and assisted by PLASE's permanent housing and support services last year.)

Welcome ABOARD

Megan Dunning comes to us from the Center on Faith and Values at Loyola College. She graduated from there in May 2007 and may be pursuing a career in social work.



She knows that when people get involved they see homeless persons as people, with the same strengths and weaknesses as all of us. It changes them and the homeless citizen as well.

To contact Ms. Dunning, or volunteer please call **410.837.1400, ext. 36** or complete an application from our website: www.projectplase.org or email Meg at mdunning@projectplase.org.

Here are Meg's written comments:

“I am so excited be on Project PLASE's team this year. I am participating in Volunteer Maryland, a year long AmeriCorps program of the Governor's Office. Volunteer Maryland creates partnerships with nonprofits across Maryland, placing a Volunteer Coordinator in each to help strengthen their volunteer base and program. As I researched the different partnerships available, Project PLASE's mission really appealed to me and throughout my application and interview process I found myself feeling even more drawn to PLASE. As the Volunteer Coordinator this year I am focusing on recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers who will help staff accomplish our mission of ending homelessness.

I chose full-time service largely due to the amazing experiences I had for three years as a Service Coordinator at Loyola's Center for Community Service and Justice. Although I had many wonderful professors and classes at Loyola, I learned by far the most from the Center staff and community members that I was privileged enough to work with in Baltimore. They challenged me and guided me outside of my comfort zone, into the tent city park where people sleep every night and meal programs that serve hundreds of hungry men, women, and children every day, and to El Salvador where I learned about economic injustices as well as immeasurable love, hope, and faith. I was given new eyes with which to see our city and the world and along this journey discovered the passion that I have for service and working to change things that are within my power. A year of full-time service really appealed to me as I hoped it

would give me a chance to really devote myself to the things I am most passionate about.”

Many of PLASE's residents have extensive histories of trauma extending back to childhood. Clients have a much better chance of healing and living life drug free if they receive counseling. In psychotherapy, an emphasis is placed on awareness and understanding of feelings. Individuals are asked to talk about painful emotions to understand the source of the conflict. Many find that the emotions generated by loss, crisis and trauma are difficult, if not impossible to put into words. Art therapy is particularly helpful in circumstances where complex and overwhelming emotions need to be expressed, but defy words. The art making process assists individuals in confronting emotions, overcoming depression, integrating traumatic experience, and resolving complex grief and loss. Sharing these experiences within a supportive group environment instills hope and decreases the feelings of depression and isolation suffered by our clients. Art making within a group provides opportunity for social interaction; clients are often surprised and pleased to discover that it is possible to have fun without drugs and alcohol. The pervasive sense of isolation that is so common among clients is decreased as individuals share the story of their art and lives and discover that they share many universal feelings and experiences.



Because of this we are very grateful to have the services on staff of **Ms. Terry Van Tassel**, talented artist as well as an art therapist. Ms. Van Tassel is a painter and registered Art Therapist. She holds a MFA degree from the Maryland Institute and a MA in Art Therapy from George Washington University. Terry has a decade of experience working at Sheppard Pratt. She has advanced post graduate training in trauma disorders, addictions and dual diagnosis.

Ms. Van Tassel joined Project PLASE this past spring. Our clients look forward to her open studio hours at the facilities. Their artwork is on display at the main office, 1814 Maryland Ave. Please come by and take a look!

Ms. Van Tassel holds art groups 5 times a week and has also discovered wonderful talent in the residents of PLASE.

To contact Terry Van Tassel, please call **410.837.1400, ext. 12** or tvantassel@projectplase.org.

write & WIN! January is National Poverty Awareness Month. Over 19.3 % of Baltimore City residents live in poverty compared to the 5.8% state wide average. At PLASE, all (but one resident) lived below the poverty level. Tell us how you would address poverty and homelessness in 600 words or less. Cash prizes. Winners will be posted on www.projectplase.org. **PLEASE SUBMIT ENTRIES BY MARCH 1, 2008**



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

Bonita Rohr
Director of Clinical Services

Tobi Morris
Director of Communications and Development

Michael La Bua
Director of Housing

Terrence Almon
Director of Programs

BOARD OFFICERS

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Betty Wilson-Jones
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Chuck Phillips

• SUCCESSES ~ ACCOMPLISHMENTS •

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING: In 2007, 257 persons were housed and assisted in PLASE's transitional housing program • 93 % of this successfully accessed community-based life-giving services • 64% received substance abuse recovery services • 61 % had a history of incarceration, though only 1 % returned to jail upon disposition for the transitional housing program

PERMANENT HOUSING: 85% of all of those ever housed in our permanent housing program have maintained themselves in such housing. This is over the 19 year history of this program.

STRATEGIC GOAL: SEEKING A NEW SITE AND FACILITY

The only goal we have not yet met in our current strategic plan – is the location of a new building, in order to consolidate our 3 older bursting at the seams temporary housing facilities! We would love to consolidate these into one larger site, not only for the economical use of resources but also because we need a health suite, a computer

lab for residents, a commercial kitchen, more space for individual and group counseling, an activity and Arts therapy room and more. We prefer to have permanent housing expanded at this site or near by as well. Ideally, we would love to have a green building or an eco-friendly building. If you know of a site or lot, or old building we could transform for

this purpose, please be in touch with George Vraney at 410.837.1400, ext. 30 or ext.11 or gvraney@projectplase.org. We are willing to renovate. Or if you would like to assist with the process, including a capital campaign, please be in touch. Your hope, help, energy- all are appreciated.

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 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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