

July 2011

Summer

## Working to Rebuild Lives through Employment

What started out as a trickle has become a babbling stream of employment opportunities at the Rescue Mission. In the past three months, more than twelve residents have secured employment.

Though things have been tough recently, the Rescue Mission is very pleased to report that for the first time in a long time we are seeing some improvement in local employment opportunities. Those who have successfully found work are employed at companies as far north as Howell, New Jersey, and as far south as Elmer, New Jersey. These men have secured for themselves decent, entry-level jobs in a variety of fields, including at a local distribution plant, as a janitor, and as a carpenter's assistant. Another works in landscaping, and one client secured a position with a local muffler repair firm.

At the Rescue Mission, a strong focus has always been on equipping clients with the tools necessary to rebuild their lives. The Mission provides for the most basic human needs of shelter, food, and clothing, while also administering treatment for addiction and co-occurring disorders. Further, the Mission is committed to providing clients with life skills and job-readiness training through the TEACH program in order to ensure future success. Once the residents are approved for Job Search they are required to meet once a week on Monday with Damien Castagne, an employment specialist from the Fatherhood Project. The other four days of the week residents are strongly encouraged to go out and look for work, and to apply at multiple places. The theory of casting a wide net has helped residents who are seeking employment find work in record time.

Despite providing excellent training thanks to the efforts of experienced staff and volunteers, the ongoing economic downturn has been a severe hindrance to the process of connecting clients with jobs. Even for those clients who have excelled at the Mission, finding employment opportunities has been extremely difficult. With so few jobs available, employers are able to set a high bar for entry, making it even more difficult for our clients – who often have spotty work histories and poor credit – to secure employment.

When asked to talk about their work experiences several of the residents were excited about working and learning new skills. Most residents expressed that securing employment was the icing on the cake. Two of the newly employed residents shared their thoughts about working and having the opportunity to go out and get acclimated with a new daily routine. "I love everything about my job, and I enjoy the people I work with." One of the other residents stated the following: "Job Search is motivating and has helped me to rebuild my life by finding a job."

As we continue to seek outside employment opportunities for our clients, the Mission has been expanding the prospects for our clients in-house. During these difficult economic times, the Mission has been very fortunate to secure on-site work opportunities for a number of residents and alumni through Hutchinson Industries and TerraCycle Inc. "The



The Rescue Mission of Trenton is the agency in the City of Trenton that serves the truly needy men and women who have no place to turn for shelter, food, and clothing. The Mission provides a safe, clean, warm refuge for the homeless, the hungry, the transient, the addicted. The Mission provides services and counseling to encourage individuals to reach their greatest potential. The Mission creates an environment where one can live with dignity, build self-esteem, experience love, responsibility and hope.

### Services include:

**Vince's Place:** Licensed by the State of NJ, Department of Human Services, as a Residential Addictions Treatment Facility (75 beds).

**Outpatient Program:** Substance abuse care for men and women providing counseling sessions, group counseling sessions, and addiction education. Referral for medical, behavioral health care, and other services as appropriate.

**Robinson Program:** Licensed by the State of NJ, Department of Community Affairs, Class C Rooming & Boarding House (50 beds).

### Weekend Soup Kitchen

### Emergency clothing and furniture

**Emergency Shelter:** Shelter for single men and women. Licensed by the State of NJ, Department of Community Affairs.

**TEACH Program:** Individuals are provided training in GED preparation, basic literacy, reading/writing skills, job seeking skills and computer and word processing skills.

**Industrial Salvage:** Donated materials are collected by route trucks and processed and sold through the Carroll Street Store and warehouse. The Mission depends on Industrial Salvage for 40% of its operating budget.

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# The SVC Rescue Mission Book Club

## by Ogechi Oparah

Ogechi Oparah is a member of the Princeton University Class of 2013 and a Rescue Mission volunteer. This article was originally published on February 3, 2011 on Princeton University's Pace Center for Civic Involvement website ([www.princeton.edu/pace/home](http://www.princeton.edu/pace/home)) and is republished with permission.

The first time I heard about the Rescue Mission of Trenton, I was sitting on a couch surrounded by at least one hundred other Princeton student volunteers. I was participating in the Pace Center's first annual Inter-Action program. The initiative allowed students to volunteer for three days at one or a series of locations, while working with nonprofits in the Princeton/Trenton community with the goal of raising awareness about social issues and encouraging civic action. I was excited about getting started, but when I read my group assignment, I had no idea what to expect.

The Rescue Mission of Trenton is a large brick building located at the heart of the city. It serves as both a homeless shelter for men and women, and a rehabilitation and residency center for men aiming to turn around their lives. Our Inter-Action group volunteered in the Mission's store and some of us were even able to participate in the Point in Time homeless count in the city. It was a meaningful experience, not just because I felt that we made a small difference on site, but because of the people I met along the way. While tagging clothes for the store, I remember getting into a beautiful conversation with one of the residents at the time, and being inspired by his unfailing hope to succeed despite his life challenges. On another day our assigned group had the chance to share a meal with the men. We divided ourselves among the tables, and I remember feeling a unique connection with the Mission, as one resident encouraged me to always do my best no matter what the circumstances.

After Inter-Action I came away with a great sense of appreciation for my circumstances and an urge to get involved in a more lasting way. It was on our last day that the Rescue Mission coordinators encouraged us to take that next step. And I knew what I needed to do. In volunteering, I hoped to embrace the most meaningful part of the Inter-Action experience for me, the human connection, while offering something unique. And so began the Rescue Mission Book Club (RMBC). With the help of the RMT coordinators, and the Pace Center we were able to hold our first book club session only a month after that last day at Inter-Action.

I had never participated in a book club before, but there were specific reasons why it made sense. RMBC allows volunteers and residents to engage in literature in a mutually empowering way. Not only are the residents fueling the conversations with opinions and questions, but they are able to take ownership of the program because success depends on the participation of its members. Each meeting has been remarkable, and the text comes alive in exceptional ways, as people with diverse experiences come together and share questions and ideas. At its most basic level, the book club offers a stage for




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**"I will not forget the answer that tugged at me in a unique way: I want to be able to tell my family that I was in a book club."**

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conversation, a dialogue that often can continue outside of the conference room and amongst residents. By introducing a variety of texts, the book club lets both Princeton volunteers and residents step outside of their daily routine and take a journey to other places. Residents have told volunteers how they appreciate being able to step outside of their current situations and enter a space where their opinions are valued. As students will attest, the drive to and from Trenton each Sunday morning is a breath of fresh air, and the book club session only enriches an often stressful weekend.

I remember the question at our first meeting in March, 2010 that started the slew of histories and motivations for joining. "Why are we all here?" I will not forget the answer that tugged at me in a unique way: "I want to be able to tell my family that I was in a book club." It was from a resident who had seen his share of setbacks. When I reflected on the response later, it brought tears to my eyes and I remember thinking that this program might just be something worth reading about some day.







# GOODNEWS

April The Ewing Public Schools 2011

Reprinted from *The Ewing Observer*, April 2011

## Antheil's Present Day Hero

For the fourth year, Antheil Elementary School's Helping Hands Club, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., presented its own Present Day Hero Award to a person the children decided exemplifies the characteristics of a hero. Like the three previous people who were presented with this award, this year's honoree life is an example of integrity, honesty, hard work and persevering to overcome hardships. The character traits for Antheil's heroes are the traits the children work to develop in themselves during their years at Antheil.

Mrs. Mary Gay Abbott-Young, the Executive Director of the Rescue Mission of Trenton, was honored as Antheil's 2011 Hero. Mrs. Abbott-Young wears many hats as she oversees all the services that the Rescue Mission provides. May Gay strongly believes in people's ability to grow and change and learn better ways to live their lives. She accepts people for who they are so they can grow into the people they want to become. During the assembly, Mrs. Abbott-Young praised Antheil as being a model school, teaching its students to give back to the community and help those less fortunate.

While the students were all aware of what was going to happen next, it was a surprise to Mrs. Donna Steinmetz, Guidance Counselor and organizer of Antheil's Helping Hands Club, that she too was honored as a second Present Day Hero. Mrs. Steinmetz exemplifies all the qualities previously mentioned and is always available to children, families and staff. All of us face crises from time to time and all members of the Antheil family know that Mrs. Steinmetz is the person who will help them get through the tough times.

Mary Gay Abbott-Young and Donna Steinmetz are very similar people. Each felt honored to share the stage with the other. Both are heroes to the Antheil students who are learning how rewarding it is to help those in need.



## Basic Art Class Visits Grounds for Sculpture

TEACH – the Mission's Comprehensive Adult Education Program – expanded its artistic horizons with the addition of volunteer Peggy Rhoads' weekly basic art class. To date, TEACH offers GED preparation, basic literacy tutoring, computer/word processing classes as well as various enrichment classes such as the Book Club (see page 2) and the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction course (see page 6). With the introduction of Rhoads, an enthusiast of the arts, Mission clients were able to put their artistic mettle to paper.

The basic art class meets weekly and can accommodate up to 10 clients. Thus far the focus of the one-hour classes has been on teaching various watercolor styles. The classes have become a TEACH favorite with a long waiting list of clients seeking to enroll. Ida B. Malloy, the Mission's Life Skills and Vocational Counselor, indicates that she is "constantly on the lookout for volunteers with the passion and expertise to teach additional enrichment classes through TEACH."

Ida Malloy is the niece of Tom Malloy, the renowned watercolor chronicler of our capital city for more than 50 years, who recently passed away at the age of 95. Tom Malloy, who was an Artist Laureate for the City of Trenton, started painting as a child across the street from the Mission on Kossuth Street when he moved north from South Carolina. Some of the supplies used by the watercolor class actually belonged to Tom Malloy and were donated to the Mission after his passing.

According to Ida Malloy, "The students have been working on various watercolor styles, and Rhoads has talked with them about the aesthetics, color and the content of various art forms. Some of the residents show great promise, there might be a promising Van Gogh, Andrew Wyeth and Jonathan Green in the class."

As a special treat, on April 20, 2011, Peggy and Ida accompanied the Basic Art Class on a visit to Grounds for Sculpture, a sculpture garden in Hamilton Township that displays works by American and international sculptors in a variety of styles and medias.

The day at Grounds for Sculpture was spent seeing various art installations, walking through the gardens and learning about the history of the grounds when it was a fairground. It was a day of mental, physical, and spiritual rejuvenation for the residents and their leaders. The residents said that they hope to have other similar experiences in the future. Greg C summed up the day by saying that he "enjoyed the opportunity to get out and spend a beautiful day to experience the arts."

**Interested in sharing your passion?**

**Contact Ida at [idad@rescuemissionoftrenton.org](mailto:idad@rescuemissionoftrenton.org)**





## March 18th Golf The Mission

The 7th Annual Adam Shanks Mini-Mega Golf Extravaganza took place on March 18th, hosted by Borden Perlman, Hutchinson Industries, The Penguin Group USA, the Shanks Family.

The event was a tremendous success with more than \$40,000 raised for The Mission.

While there was no winner in the first-ever \$10,000 Hole-in-One Contest, there was a lot of fun and spirited bidding in the silent auction. Congratulations to Andy Rosenthal and Scooter with less than 100 miles on it, donated by Mission Board member F.

A fantastic time was had by all. Keep an eye out for yourself and your friends! (space is limited, after all)!







# Golf Tournament 's Best Ever!



March 18th at the Rescue Mission of Trenton. This year's event was hosted by the Anks Family and Wilmington Trust.

Mission's continuum of programs to reshape, remake and rebuild lives.

There were a number of holes-in-one on the two courses, lots of good-natured fun, the winner of the beautiful mint-condition Chianti wine-colored Vespa at Kidd.

See the photos selected, and be sure to sign up quickly for next year's event



*Untitled*  
 old voice still  
 calls my name,  
 still haunts  
 my dreams;  
 that scent of wisteria vines,  
 twining moonflowers  
 and morning glory,  
 honeysuckles and a  
 midsummer night's  
 sweetness float gently  
 on the lake,  
 moon-kissed  
 silver leaved trees  
 wave good bye  
 to the stars  
 as the stormclouds gather  
 and darken  
 the diamond sky.  
 - David

*Untitled*  
 In the subtlety  
 and minor  
 Shifts  
 are the unnoticeable  
 Details  
 made prominent.  
 Awestruck,  
 my Soul opens,  
 the veil falls, and  
 kneeling,  
 I kiss the  
 Hand  
 of  
 Impossibility.  
 - David



## Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Classes Proving Helpful

In September of 2009, psychologist Pat Vroom, PhD and social worker Tom Lynch, MSW began offering a Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course at the Mission. Based on ancient healing practices, MBSR brings together mindfulness meditation and yoga as a means to control anger and improve calmness, patience and open-mindedness. To date, approximately 50 Mission clients have participated in the program.

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction seeks to cultivate a different relationship between one's self and the things that challenge us, and relies completely on the tools we already possess. Specifically, MSBR helps one access the ability to be non-judgmental, compassionate, patient and aware. This program started in the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in 1979 and is now offered in over 200 medical centers, hospitals, and clinics around the world, including some of the leading integrative medical centers such as the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine, and the Duke Center for Integrative Medicine, and now at the Rescue Mission of Trenton.

David is one of seven residents who recently completed the eight-week MBSR course, now in its fourth go-round at the Mission. According to David, "the breathing and movement exercise classes were excellent." If allowed, he would love to take the class again, as "it offers another way to exam my life ... It enables you to look at your life from a different angle by encouraging you to take a step back and remove yourself from the situation."

In addition to participating in the MBSR courses, David has also explored alternative coping strategies by taking a watercolor class (mentioned on page 3) during his time at the Mission. Not limited by mediation or painting, David also expresses himself by writing poetry, some examples of which can be found in the column on the left.

Speaking about David, Dr. Vroom explains that "[he] is an extremely artistic individual who has learned to use his creativity as a coping strategy." Continuing about the program, she says such coping strategies "allow [people] to focus in the moment and increase their calmness. All anxiety is about what if this or that happens or what if this occurs in the future. Bringing one's self back to the present puts you in a being rather than a doing mode and reduces anxiety. Engaging in creative activities is one of many approaches the course suggests can be means of helping us to connect with who we are."

**Have a coping strategy you would like to share with Mission clients? Contact Jennifer Sanderson, Volunteer Coordinator, at [jennifers@rmtrenton.org](mailto:jennifers@rmtrenton.org).**



## Mission Celebrates Annual Founders Day

On April 15, 2011 the Rescue Mission of Trenton celebrated Founder's Day, marking 96 years since the Mission was founded and 94 years since it was officially incorporated. Traditionally, Founder's Day is a celebration of the Mission's long history.

To mark this occasion, about 100 people gathered together, including Mission residents, staff, and various Board Members.

As a very special surprise this year, Emergency Shelter Manager and Founder's Day emcee Joyce Williams brought in several special guests to celebrate Mary Gay's many years of service at the Rescue Mission. Surprise guests included former clients; Marygrace Billek, Mercer County Director of Human Services; Thomasina Gaines, wife of the late Furnie Gaines; and Jim and Adam Young, Mary Gay's husband and grandson. The afternoon was capped off with the Rescue

Mission's AmeriCorps volunteer Jilda Ross singing a capella in his inimitable style.

Following the guest speakers, all were invited to the dining room where a special meal awaited them. The kitchen staff outdid themselves serving a fantastic steak dinner with all the trimmings; folks were talking about this meal for weeks.

Sending out a special thank-you after the Founder's Day event, Mary Gay had the following to say: "I was both surprised and honored that the program was changed to focus on these last thirty-plus years. It is more than an honor and privilege to represent the Mission and our work. We have the opportunity every day to impact and change lives."

A special thank-you goes out again to Mary Gay for her many contributions to the Mission, Joyce for emceeing a wonderful event, and to all the Mission

staff and residents – past and present – who have represented the Mission through almost a century of service to the city of Trenton.



## Women's Shelter Common Area Gets Facelift

Sometimes the little things make all the difference in the world. The common area in the Mission's Women's Shelter got an upgrade as result of the design talents of Mission volunteer Annie Battle and a \$1,000 grant from the Trenton Chapter of Zonta International,

a worldwide organization of business executives working together to advance the status of women.

"A new coat of paint, a color seascape mural and new seating area made a real difference," indicated Joyce Williams, Emergency Shelter Manager. Joyce

added, "The women who come to the shelter have very little. Often all of their belongings are carried by them in a big plastic bag. The women of the shelter really appreciated the improvements. It brought a little beauty in what is often a bleak existence."

## Working to Rebuild Lives through Employment (cont. from pg.1)

Hutchinson Assembly Shop" has been operating at the Mission since May of 2006. Over the years dozens of residents have honed their employment skills while at the Mission by filling and packing lubrication tubes in the shop. Upon successful completion of their recovery program, residents have received monetary rewards for their hard work. Employment at the Mission through Hutchinson and TerraCycle has the added feature of indicating to employers that one has been working and performing up to stringent standards.

Our newest initiative for client employment is a pilot Urban Farming Project that the Mission has launched in cooperation with two local organizations, Prodigal Sons and Daughters and the Garden State Urban Farming. Walter Barry of Garden State Urban Farming has been a great asset, as he recently

visited the Mission to help set up 50 earth boxes and guide residents and staff in the planting of a variety of crops which include Rutgers tomatoes, plum tomatoes, cucumbers, hot and sweet peppers, yellow squash, collard greens, and lettuce.

"The viability and profitability of this project will be carefully monitored to see if this could provide another vehicle to help our residents get a head start on securing employment once they leave the Mission," indicates Barrett Young, the Mission's Director of Operations. So far the earth boxes have generated much talk among residents and staff, hopefully signaling the start to another employment opportunity at the Mission.

Here's to another fruitful summer season at the Rescue Mission of Trenton, filled with fresh produce and fresh job opportunities for our well-deserved clients!

# RESCUE MISSION OF TRENTON

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## Did You Know... *Did You Know ...*

- ✓ **Trenton Steel Provide Tickets:** Trenton's new professional indoor arena football team gave thirty tickets to the Mission for clients to attend their upcoming Southern Indoor Football League game.
- ✓ **Thanks Very Much:** We recently got a telephone call from an appreciative donor. On a recent at-home furniture pickup a Mission client noticed some money affixed to the back of a bureau that he was removing. He returned the money (a hundred dollars) to the grateful homeowner. Who says there are still not honest folks out there?
- ✓ **Mission Boasts 'Platinum Dad':** The Rescue Mission is proud to announce that UIH Family Partners and Trenton Housing Authority have bestowed upon one of our residents a Platinum Dad Ambassador Award. Zane has earned this award for his work as a role model in the community at large while working to overcome his obstacles and we are very proud of him!
- ✓ **Staff Earn Certificates:** The Rescue Mission takes great pride in the professionalism and expertise of our staff. We would like to send out special congratulations to Counselor Mary Ann Godefroy who recently earned her LCADC, and to Counselor Intern Joann Mia and Social Services Manager Sheila Scott for passing CADC examinations. Congratulations!
- ✓ **Welcome New Staff:** There are many fresh faces at the Mission this season. We welcome two new Counselor Interns, Rashaun Davis and Meredith LoBuono. New to the administrative office is Regan Mumolie who recently joined the Mission staff as administrative assistant. Two new employees have joined the staff at the Women's Shelter – Brenda Esaw-Howard and Sophonie Geffard. A warm welcome goes out to all.