



Friendship House Newsletter

www.friendship-house.org

Christian Ministry Making a Difference in the Lives of Homeless People

Mansions in Our Hearts

By Bill Perkins

*"In My Father's House There Are Many Mansions.
I Go to Prepare a Place for You"*

Thirty years is not a long time in the life of a nation, but for an organization like Friendship House it is an entire era of ministry. It is also a generation of brothers and sisters gone home to their loving Father. Some were founders, co-workers and volunteers who gave years of service to homeless friends with street names like *Cochise* and *Chilly Willy*. Others were the family members and neighbors who supported those servants, supplying the love, time and treasure that made the ministry possible. Most precious of all were the thousands of homeless men, women and children who made up the Friendship House family. In life, we at Friendship House tried to make them a home; in death they still live in our hearts.

A week does not go by that one of their names doesn't appear in the obituary page. Some rebuilt their lives and passed away surrounded by family and friends. Others end up in the morgue and are buried like their Master in a potter's field. Still more slip away from a world that didn't bother to know their names.

On our website (www.friendship-house.org) we maintain a virtual cemetery that lists the names and death years of all our former clients who have passed away. At our houses for women and children in Little Italy, we have also planted memorial gardens in honor of those families of the extended Friendship House family that have gone before us in faith. Every year volunteer groups tend those gardens and plant new bulbs and plants that burst into color in the spring. Standing amidst that beauty, listening to the song of

birds and the laughter of children, you feel yourself on sacred ground and know in your heart death is only a season.

Even for we who live in hope, the loss of loved ones is bitterly real. 2015 was an especially hard year. The heroin epidemic ravaging our community has robbed us of too many beautiful and gifted young men and women taken before their time. They left behind grieving parents and abandoned children. Several were residents of our own transitional housing program. A year ago they were enjoying the gardens that now bloom in their memory.

To better preserve their memory, Friendship House has added a new feature to its memorial gardens in 2016. As part of his eagle scout project, Aaron Spock of Boy Scout Troop 99 constructed and installed four wooden pillars in the Palmer House garden on which are recorded the names of all of our deceased clients. Friendship House has also purchased memorial stones for each of its former housing residents who have died.

The death of a loved one robs us of a piece of our hearts. It is a hole that no one but they can fill. Jesus knew that on the eve of his own death. Like us, the disciples thought that he was promising them homes in heaven after their own lives had ended. Actually his promise requires no waiting period. We are God's House – the sacred temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. Easter filled that heart's hole; he made his dwelling place in their hearts and ours. In tears we mourn the flesh and blood that we can no longer touch. In joy we are united with a community of beloved friends that live in our every breath.

Mother's Day Garden Fundraiser

By Kim Eppehimer

When I think about my mother, I think about Elizabeth from the gospel of Luke at the time Mary discovers she is pregnant with Jesus. Likely weary, scared, and in need of someone who is compassionate to her situation, Mary seeks out her cousin. Elizabeth, also pregnant for the first time, likely also weary and scared, understands and takes Mary into her home. This is not unlike my own mom, who regardless of her own weariness always found room for other women in her life, and offered compassion to each one. My mom taught me through her actions that every person, male and female, deserve grace. She is one of the reasons I found a calling at Friendship House, where we have a seat for every weary traveler.

In honor of my mother I take advantage of the Friendship House Mother's Day Garden Fundraiser as an opportunity to celebrate her. We invite you to also honor the special women across the generations who have been there for you and shaped the way your life has taken form. Whether it be your biological or adopted mother, a godmother, an aunt, grandmother, or dear friend, there are countless women who

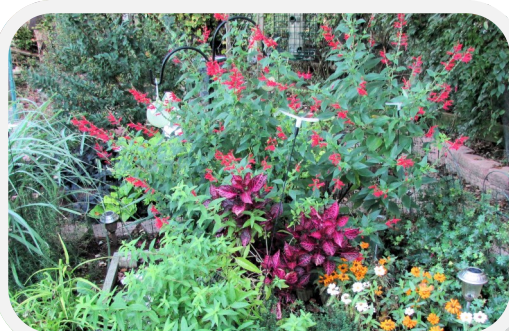
Support our Mothers Day Garden Fundraiser:

Please use the enclosed card for your donation.

Or, go online: [https://](https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/mothersdaygarden)

[donatenow.networkforgood.org/
mothersdaygarden](https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/mothersdaygarden)

Questions? 302-652-8133/ fhroxane@aol.com



You Are Invited to the Friendship House Annual Meeting and Open House Sunday, April 17th



Please join us for our annual meeting to hear about the wonderful things Friendship House has been doing. We will begin with an open house at our office where you can visit and see our Men's stage two Transitional Housing.

Open House: 1:00 PM

Friendship House Administrative Office
1503 W. 13th Street, Wilmington DE

Annual Meeting: 2:00 PM

Westminster Presbyterian Church
1502 W. 13th Street, Wilmington DE

have made a positive impact on the lives of so many. This fundraiser is a way to say *Thank You*.

With every donation to the Friendship House Mother's Day Garden fundraiser, we will mail (either regular mail or electronically) a beautiful card with your message acknowledging a donation was made with no dollar amount to the person you indicate. Please also make a donation in honor of someone who has gone on before us and we can send a card to the family. You might choose to celebrate several people. The funds are used to empower women throughout our programs, and for keeping the memorial gardens at Epiphany, Jane Ashford, Palmer, Patterson and Elizabeth houses feeling like home for our Transitional Housing residents. With your donation, you are planting a flower in the honor of someone special and making the difference in the lives of men and women at Friendship House.

Stumble, Fall, Try Again

By Marcy Perkins

A friend recently asked me, “How do you follow Jesus?” I chuckled and said, “I kind of stumble along behind Jesus.” Stumble, trip, fall, get up, try again, repeat as often as necessary.

This pattern seems to fit many of the followers of Jesus. Think of St. Peter, who has been described as having a “foot-shaped mouth.” He said and did so many things wrong and yet he had a spiritual strength and (eventually) the wisdom and faith to work miracles.

As my co-workers and I strive to give encouragement and guidance to the men and women with whom we work, I think that we all stumble, trip, fall, and repeat. Sometimes the perfect phrase comes to mind; other times we seem to trip over our tongues.

The staff need to continually assess our own motives: are we trying to work out our own issues when we are talking to the women or men? Are we letting any biases cloud our judgment? Are we being too hard on someone or are we just holding them accountable? It is a constant balancing act and we, as a staff, try to help one another stay honest.

The residents are doing similar self-discovery work each and every day. There are many temptations in this world: relationships, laziness, dishonesty; situations which seem like the “easy way out.” Calling out of work because “I just didn’t feel like going.”

Skipping a recovery meeting or counseling session because “I’m so tired.”

With our residents, the stakes are high; literally, life and death. With the heroin epidemic wreaking havoc among their peers, our residents must constantly be on their guard. A bit of dishonesty today could lead to a relapse tomorrow. Men and women in recovery must be spiritual warriors: constantly returning to the recovering community of AA and NA to be refueled and strengthened for the next day’s battle

against an addiction that is waiting in the wings for one small slip up.

It is vitally important that women and men who are facing the long odds of staying sober be reminded that they are valuable. They are beloved children of God. Yes, they have said and done things of which they are ashamed. But that does not cut them off from God who wants only the best for them. Their healing process is fraught with dangers and distractions. Every day is an opportunity for growth, tinged with the danger of temptation. They stumble some days and fall on others. It is hard to maintain hope and motivation.

At Friendship House, it is our job and our privilege to walk with these spiritual warriors. They remind us that spiritual wholeness, while unattainable, is always worth pursuing. The residents who “make it” are the ones who can believe that the Divine One is with them and loves them. They can forgive themselves for mistakes, learn from these mistakes and start again.

All of us stumble and fall along the spiritual path. The crucial question is: will we get up and try once again?



The poster for Garden Day Wilmington 2016 features a white background with a pink lotus logo at the top. Below the logo, the text reads "GARDEN DAY WILMINGTON" and "GLORIOUS GARDENS · GRACIOUS HOMES · GRAND TRADITION". The event date and time are "May 7, 2016 10 a.m. - 4 p.m." with the note "Rain or Shine". A circular badge indicates "Tickets on sale 3/23 for only \$30!". The bottom section is green with the text "CELEBRATING THE BEAUTY OF SPRING FOR 69 YEARS!" and the website "www.wilmingtongardenday.org". A vertical strip of colorful floral art is on the right side.

Wilmington Garden Day supports Friendship House with its proceeds. Take a tour of beautiful local gardens with your friends or family while supporting a great cause! Tickets on sale now!

Ties That Bind By Dede Johnston

*“O God, remind us we are not alone.
We are members of one family, growing strong by
joining hands.”*

Four and a half years ago, I received an email from Pam Ray, manager of the Friendship House Women’s Empowerment Day Center that read:

“You are cordially invited to our kickoff meeting of *The Ties That Bind*, Wednesday June 22, 2011 at 12:30. It is for us as women to come together and share our life-good, bad, happy, sad, then tie it back to scripture. The women at the center are very excited that we are all going to come together as sisters.”

The “all” are the clients, staff and volunteers of the Women’s Empowerment Center and we have been coming together the second Wednesday of each month since.

What do we do together on these Wednesdays? We listen—to each other’s stories, scripture readings, guests whose stories and teachings stir our minds and develop our understanding of biblical scripture and life’s journey. We learn—that we are not alone; we need each other; we can fall and rise again; and that God is actively with us. We grow—our wounds become signs of hope to others that it is possible to come out the other side of suffering and despair. We pray—in times of desperation and in times of delight; and in times of confusion and fear. We pray prayers of healing and prayers of thanksgiving and always Grace breaks in and our hearts are opened to tomorrow’s hope.



Genell Walls and Pam Ray with Westminster Church story teller Shelley Gnade at a recent meeting of “*The Ties That Bind*.”

Upcoming Events!

ROCK-N-BLUES FOR THE HOMELESS Featuring The Fred Miller Band and Dysrhythmics

Sunday, April 10th

3:30—7:30 PM Tickets: \$25.00

Cranston Heights Memorial Hall
Kirkwood Highway, Wilmington DE
dysrhythmics@gmail.com

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Tuesday, April 12th

4:00 PM—8:00 PM

Caffe Gelato—90 E. Main Street, Newark DE
<http://friendship-house.org/wordpress/event/caffe-gelato-ice-cream-social/>

EASTPOINT COMMUNITY CHURCH SILENT AUCTION

Saturday, May 14

Tickets are \$50

Schaefer’s Canal House
208 Bank St. Chesapeake, MD
rjenkins14@verizon.net

HIGHMARK WALK FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Bellevue State Park

Saturday, June 4th

7:30 Registration; 9:00 am walk begins.

For more information go to:
<http://hcf.convio.net/friendshiphouse>

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE ANNUAL VOLUNTEER PICNIC

Sunday, July 24th

Brandywine Springs State Park
More information to come!

Want to See More?

You can receive our electronic newsletters by signing up any of these ways!

- Go to our website www.friendship-house.org and click on “Newsletter Sign Up.”
- Send a request to Kim Eppheimer at fhkime@gmail.com
- Send the phrase “friendshiphouse” (no spaces) via text message to the number 42828. When prompted, send a reply with your email address.

Our electronic newsletters are sent out 4-6 times a year and include additional stories, information, pictures and updates!



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