

Rebuilding Lives



Stories from Caritas Communities ■ Preventing Homelessness Through Affordable Housing ■ Fall 2014

Now That You've Helped Give Them a Home, Heading Back to Work is Within Reach.

Through a recent survey, our able residents revealed how urgently they want to get back to work, to have a sense of purpose, to be independent. Re-entering the workforce requires job readiness and stability even for those residents entering low-paying, “invisible” service-sector jobs — the person who serves us coffee, makes our hotel beds or works the cash register at our local store. But it is work, and that means a chance to rebuild.

Embracing this request to get back to work, Caritas proudly hires many of our residents as site managers and cleaners for our buildings. We have added onsite case workers to assist with job readiness and placement in our two largest buildings, home to 190 formerly homeless residents. Caritas has partnered with Project Hope, which will offer onsite counseling and job training to another 40 formerly homeless residents. And The Home Depot is providing a direct line to



John Stack, resident, Marlboro Street site manager and Caritas Central House administrative assistant

employment opportunities at their stores local to Caritas residences. These partnerships help to meet a critical component of our mission of helping residents achieve self-sufficiency and a sense of self-worth. ■



Frankie, Boston resident

Rebuilding Lives. Together.

For 29 years, Caritas Communities has built on the premise that no one should be homeless. Because we can't tackle the problems associated with homelessness on our own, we proudly partner with organizations that are leaders in their field, providing quality mental health services, housing referrals, job training and medical and financial assistance. Our goal is to

provide residents with a sense of community and the assurance that whatever situation they may be facing, there is someone there to assist them.

Caritas Service Providers: Partners in Compassion

- AIDS Action Committee
- Carey Transitional Housing Program, DHS, Cambridge
- Department of Veteran Services
- Heading Home
- MHSA (Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance)
- New England Center for Homeless Veterans
- North Charles Inc., The Bridge Program
- Peabody Residential Services, Inc.
- Pine Street Inn
- Project Place
- Veterans Northeast Outreach Center (VNOC)
- Veterans Transition House (VTH)
- Vinfen

You Chose Caritas to be Your Partner in Improving Lives. Thank You!



CBA (Commercial
Brokers Association)

has chosen Caritas Communities as its charity of choice for nearly 10 years, raising more than \$175,000 in critical donations. The Future Leaders of CBA have worked hard year after year to improve the grounds of our homes. And in 2014, CBA is helping to spread the word about our work through featured advertisements and articles.



NEWIRE's
(New England

Women in Real Estate) Community Involvement Committee (CIC) is dedicated to hands-on community service to women and children in need and has selected the female residents of Caritas as recipients of their 2014 – 2015 volunteer projects. They will be beautifying several of our properties and running a holiday drive to provide basic necessities for the 150 women of Caritas.

The Power of Partnerships

Dear Friends,

Partnerships are about commitment, ownership and, for a charitable organization, the kindness of others. That kindness can be displayed through service and through financial support. From the start, Caritas has been about partnerships with you, our donors, our volunteers and other like-minded organizations that enhance the quality of life of our residents.

“Between 2010 and 2013, the bottom 20 percent of American households by net worth experienced a 7 percent decline in median income, according to the Federal Reserve.”
— ECONOMY, NYT MAGAZINE, 9/28/14

With the ebb and flow of public funding, private partnerships with generous donors is an integral part of Caritas's financial strength.

Our volunteers not only help residents, they gain important insight on how they can have a positive impact on the issues that affect our residents.

Through strong teamwork with Mass Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA), we have successfully housed many chronically homeless individuals. For most of these residents, Caritas provides the best housing that they have occupied in many, many years. And in 2007, we hired case workers from the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center (VNOCC) to care for the residents of our first homeless veterans project. From that successful relationship, we concluded that collaborating with other organizations was the solution for providing our residents with additional critical resources, including health services, food sources, and job training.

The value of these partnerships enables Caritas to combine our excellence in developing and managing affordable housing with agencies that are experts on social service supports. Together with you, we are stronger.

Mark Winkeller



A True Humanitarian

Toni LaRosa, Caritas Central House Property Manager, receives the 2014 Cambridge Human Rights Commission's "Innovations in Fair Housing Award." Excerpts from Caritas resident Bruce's nomination letter: "Toni gives us men who live here a home to feel that we belong and are a part of this community. Transition is a place in life that one feels lost, alone — an outsider looking in. I've lived here gratefully for 15 months off the streets where I was after I lost my footing in life and had no place to land. Many men that live here are in the same boat. Living here makes one feel that things are going to be OK. Toni runs this place respectful and fair to each individual. It's amazing that when someone says 'Good morning' or 'How are you?' it can maintain its effect on the self-esteem of a man who has lived on the streets. It's the little things — not the big noticeable jousts — that make this place a second chance."

Rebuilding Lives

This newsletter is published twice a year for supporters and friends of Caritas Communities. For information about Caritas or to arrange a tour of our properties, please contact Karin Cassel, Director of Fund Development and Communications at 781.843.1242 ext. 23 or kcassel@caritascommunities.org.

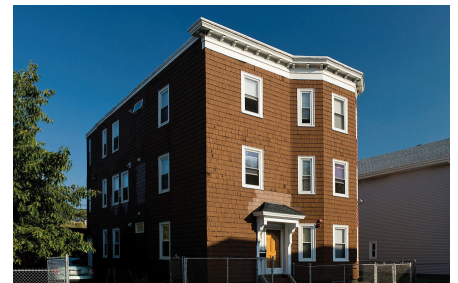
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Sydney Street – A Trifecta of Partnerships

Sydney Street is home to 12 residents, most living below the poverty level. They include an older man who is a talented artist, a middle-aged woman with a disability and a woman in her 20's working the overnight shift at a pharmacy and going to college during the day. Sydney Street means safety and relief — a place where they can exhale and find comfort. For some, it is the launch pad to the life they are trying to build with few resources. For others, it is a permanent home.

A Caritas community of donors and volunteers has come together to upgrade this home. The Home Depot's dedicated Pro Team recently re-painted



the interior of the three-story residence, and Behr Paint donated the paint. People's United Bank has graciously awarded a grant to re-side the home. And NEWiRE has adopted the women of Sydney Street as the recipients of their collection of essential items and will be landscaping the property.

Donors, volunteers, and Caritas working together. Powerful partnerships improving lives. ■

Small Gestures. Big Impact.

We believe in partnerships. We believe that if we ask, people will respond with goodness. The generosity we have found in our neighborhoods has allowed us to provide the essentials that make a house a home and that allows a person to have some of the basics and a few extras. Sincerest gratitude to:

- Linda Darman, for seeking out food sources and free entertainment options for our residents and building libraries in three buildings — and counting.
- Kevin O’Flaherty and Goulston & Storrs, for hosting a “pay \$5 to wear jeans to work day,” resulting in \$740 to help feed our veterans.
- Diane Rubin and Prince Lobel Tye, LLP, for donating 140 full Thanksgiving dinners to our formerly homeless residents.
- The Paint Bar, for the donation of whimsical, fun paintings to bring life to the walls of our residents’ rooms.
- Subway and Papa Gino’s of Bedford, for a discount on food ordered for monthly meetings for the veterans at the BVQ.

Blessed With a Key

Gwen is like a ray of sunshine. She has a beautiful smile. She has been living at Sydney Street for seven years and works a full time job helping people with mental illness. For two years she also served as the Caritas live-in site manager, taking care of the physical well-being of the building and often the emotional well-being of the residents. At times, it was difficult for her to be both manager and friend helping others work through hard times. “Everyone has something,” she says. Two years ago she passed the torch and has been a resident ever since.

Over the years, Gwen lived with her mother in different apartments while raising her son and then with a boyfriend who didn’t put her name on the lease. “When they put me out, I had no place to go.” Gwen was able to avoid going to a shelter because she had seen a Caritas banner, filled out the application and was offered a room. “I didn’t want to have to share a bathroom and kitchen, but once I moved in and lived here I knew that I could do this. God



bless the child that has a key to a door. If you have a door, no matter how big or small, you are blessed.

I have a key to a door — no one can put me out, and I love that truth.”

Gwen is a mother and grandmother. She sees her 35-year-old son and grandson every Sunday. “They are my pride and joy.”

“Caritas helped me to get on my feet. They take care of utilities, lights, gas, toilet paper and paper towels. This home has enabled me to put a little money in the bank for my future and to build good credit. Responsibility is a must in this world. I have gained so much and feel like it’s time to move on and let someone else have my room who needs it more. It’s time to spread my wings. I would suggest Caritas for anyone looking to get on their feet. Caritas is the best place to go. I know it was for me.” ■

Young Leaders. Improving Lives.

The Young Leaders of Caritas are up to a lot of good. Kicking-off their efforts with a networking event at Tia’s this past June, 170 Young Leaders raised awareness and funds for 100 welcome baskets — including essential cooking and personal care items — for Caritas residents arriving straight from homelessness. Resident Wayne Williams, 25, shared his unforgettable journey from the toughest ghetto in Detroit to his Caritas home and college.



Left to right: Kathleen Corcoran, Emily Hodge, Erin Gowdy, Jennifer Hastings

Next Up?

The 29th Annual Dinner. Young Leader Annual Dinner co-chairs Maggie Corcoran, Eric Seitz, and Jen Hastings have built a powerful Young Leaders Dinner Committee and outreach effort to provide critical operating dollars for Caritas. *Interested in getting involved? Please contact Jen Hastings at JHastings@northbridgecos.com.*

The first Annual Holiday Drive. Kathleen and Mary Corcoran, along with Board member Carol MacDonald, are launching a holiday drive for our Central House residents. Last holiday season, Property Manager Toni LaRosa used her personal money to buy toiletry items for each of the 128 formerly homeless men so “no one felt forgotten.” This year, please join Toni and the Young Leaders in fulfilling individual wish lists to provide joy during a time when too many of our residents experience feelings of sadness and isolation. *For more information about becoming a Wish Maker, please email CaritasCentralHouse@gmail.com.* ■



Caritas Communities

Preventing Homelessness with Affordable Housing

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Strength & Spirit

of women in our community

CELEBRATE WITH US!

29th Annual Dinner to benefit Caritas Communities

Thursday, November 13, 2014
Sheraton Boston Hotel ■ 5:30 p.m.

Please contact Karin Cassel at
kcassel@caritascommunities.org
or call 781.843.1242 ext. 23



HONORING

Ann Marie Connolly

Recipient of the 2014
P. Leo Corcoran
Humanitarian Award

Have a Few Minutes? Give. Do. Receive.

Young Leaders Holiday Drive. Would you like to make a Central House resident's holiday wishes come true? Help ensure all residents have a winter hat, gloves, socks, toiletries, and a personal item (or two!) from their wish list by joining the first Annual Central House Holiday Drive! For more information about becoming a Wish Maker, please email CaritasCentralHouse@gmail.com.

Imagine trying to live off of \$600 a month. Choose an item. Run a drive. Provide relief. Caritas buildings house from 12 to 128 people, almost all of whom struggle to pay rent, buy food and pay for transportation to work. Essential items are often out of reach: linens, toiletries, and cooking and cleaning supplies are in the highest demand. Please adopt a Caritas building and run a drive. Contact Wendy Price at wprice@caritascommunities.org to make a difference.

Give the Gift of a Home.

Please support Caritas Communities.

Contact Karin Cassel at
kcassel@caritascommunities.org
or visit www.caritascommunities.org





Why Caritas Communities?

Because we believe every person deserves a safe, clean place to call home.

- Established in 1985 by P. Leo Corcoran, Caritas Communities is the largest non-profit owner and manager of permanent veteran and Single Room Occupancy housing in Greater Boston.
- Caritas provides low- and extremely low-income residents safe, clean, and stable housing in its 895 rooms in 29 buildings in Greater Boston.
- Rents range from \$120 to \$145 per week and include all utilities and furnishings.

Photos on bottom front cover, pg. 3 top and pg. 4 bottom are by Romana Vysatova. Photo on pg. 2, bottom by Greig Cramna.