



*A place of help, hope & healing in Philadelphia!*

*"The imitation of Christ is the imitation of one who emptied himself, who clothed himself in the likeness of others, who strove to live in the experience of those beneath him."*

—George Matheson



December 16, 2009

Dear Friends,

It is with deep, heartfelt gratitude that we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Through your care for all of our people, you have enabled us to fulfill our mission, to bring redemptive healing through faith-based trauma treatment and training focusing on urban populations and their caregivers; you have given us the power to stand in the place of another. With your financial help and prayers we have transitioned from a concept and idea to reality.

Looking back on our first 500 appointments and seeing the panorama of this past year, it is a wonder how far we have come. Here is an example....

#### The Power to Stand in Her Place

*Donna (not her real name) sat in our reception area as she waited for her therapist to see her. She typically comes in an hour before her scheduled time. In this respect, this particular day was no different. She came, early as always, but instead of relaxing with a magazine she was drawn to the door. On the street outside, lights and sirens filled the air as a parade came down 5<sup>th</sup> street. It was Puerto Rican Discovery Day. Enthusiastically, our staff stepped out of our door to wave to the passing crowds and join in the celebration. Donna joined us in celebration as well, by giving us the most beautiful radiant smile. Her smile lit our reception area with joy.*

*Later that day, I shared this moment with her therapist. It was then that I found out a little bit more about Donna. To my complete astonishment I was informed that Donna had had a bachelor's degree in nursing, and she even became a supervisor after completing her master's degree. However, things began to change for her at the outset of a debilitating mental disorder. Donna came to us at the beginning of the year via Project Home, a Philadelphia outreach to the homeless. The moment she and our staff met, there was an instant connection. As you can see through this little vignette, she has discovered a refuge, a place of comfort. She has never missed a single appointment throughout the entire year. We have every reason to hope for a better future for Donna.*

*This and other stories that we have shared throughout the year are only possible as you have joined your hearts with us, in support of our work and mission in North Philadelphia by showing sympathy for those like Donna.*

### **Wrapping up the Year – More Reasons to be Merry**

- Our staff gladly took up CBH's offer to attend their provider fair earlier this month which was a very important networking opportunity. We presented our new marketing materials, connected with ten local community providers, and established more direct contacts with CBH staff.
- A Seminar on Youth Suicide Risk Assessment & Prevention hosted by Temple University brought together 200 community leaders, students, professionals, and others, representing numerous social service organizations. Several Refuge staff members were given red T-shirts to distinguish ourselves in the crowd—acting as facilitators to anyone who felt the need to step forward and speak to a professional.
- Delta Community Supports (in particular, their Treatment Foster Care Staff) visited our center for an introductory meeting. They provide a specially developed service unique from their core foster care model to meet the needs of foster children (ages 4-19) exhibiting extensive mental health needs. We will be developing a partnership with them beginning in 2010.
- We are in-process with yet another psychiatrist from the community. So far, it seems that he has truly set his heart next to ours, on the people here in north Philadelphia.

*"It is always the tendency of love to clothe its object with permanence."*

-George Matheson

Through your faithful contributions and the miraculous support of numerous foundations, we have been able to remain open throughout this year.

We still need your support in order to end the year well and to have a basis for beginning the New Year. Currently, our budget is \$13,000 per month. A recent grant has helped to cover some of the shortfall but we are still in significant need. Prayerfully, we ask that you would please consider helping us continue to carry out our mission. We have every confidence that our collective partnership will enable us to end this year victoriously.

As we face this New Year, may the following verse be a comfort to you, our dear friends,

*"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,  
give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown,  
and he replied: Go out into the darkness,  
put your hand into the Hand of God,  
that shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."*

-Minnie Louise Haskins, 1908

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Hernandez, MA  
Executive Director