

Urgent Message from the Board of The Place of Refuge

April 14, 2010

“In the beginning, God created...and darkness was over the face of the deep...”
(Gen.1:1-2)

Dearest Friends,

The above Scripture reflects the reality of our experience in the manifestation of *The Place of Refuge*. Six years ago, we began looking at several locations, exploring possible sites for our center. Time-and-again we found doors closed to our vision. But in spring 2008, we were finally led to North 5th Street, the heart of the Barrio, in the inner-city of Philadelphia.

The building was long since vacant. No gas, or electricity—an empty place, a forsaken place last occupied by a “Boys and Girls Club” five years before. With no running water, the place felt desolate, lifeless, and dark. The building was an empty shell, a reflection of the community outside. Many people would never even feel comfortable driving down the street where our outreach is located. Understandably, it does not appeal to most outsiders, except those seeking illegal drugs or the occult.

The One Lover of people’s souls had plans of His own though, for His light shines in the darkness. If you could only see what He has done! Life, beauty, and His Light are the only words that come to mind. Your partnership has made this vision a reality, and will continue to be a prophetic word for the future: Creation and Joy.



You have been faithful partners with Refuge for some time now and we are so grateful. As the Board of Directors, working side by side with our Executive Director, we want to thank God for

your heart for the poor and oppressed in the city of Philadelphia. Refuge has been born and is growing in large part due to your partnership both in prayer and your willingness to share financially in helping establish this work.

This is a most critical year for the ministry. We have built an infrastructure from nothing. We have a beautiful place in the heart of North Philadelphia – a true sanctuary for all who enter. We are beginning to build up the solid caseload of clients that will be the key to reaching our goal of self-sustaining viability. Our projections show that if we continue on our current pace and continue to grow, we will reach that goal by this coming November. Once that happens we can begin to branch out and bring much-needed training to the churches in the city. They are starved for expertise and wisdom in the face of their many daily challenges. Every month that passes, we move closer to this goal. Truly, the work has taken on a life of its own.

But right now we urgently need your help to meet our expenses. Since February 2010 our two full-time salaried staff members, Executive Director Elizabeth Hernandez and Office Manager Bryan Dickey, have been working without pay to keep the doors open and the lights on at The Place of Refuge.

As members of the board, we feel a tremendous responsibility for their well being. Your support will enable us to guarantee that their basic needs are met as they, day-after-day, continue to pour themselves out tending the hurt of our community.

Our challenge is to make certain that we can meet all our expenses until we are fully up-and-running in November. We cannot do this without you!

We have vigorously applied for a number of grants from local foundations since the beginning of the year to help us meet our monthly budget of \$14,000 (\$170,000 annually). We are pursuing more funds from diverse sources, yet it is you, our grassroots supporters, who have truly kept us alive and going during this embryonic time of growth.



We are asking you our faithful supporters to prayerfully consider our urgent need. For the first time in our history, a large percentage of our budget will be covered by revenue from direct services—a large

percentage, but not all. In the time that it will take us to reach complete viability, we will continue to need your support.

Signs of great hope: **Moving Forward!**

- In October, 2009 we completed all of the requirements for becoming a fully accredited community counseling center. **The final pieces** came after we credentialed our first psychiatrist.

- We have reached that marvelous place** where we can now go out into the community, and tell the people, “We are here!”
- We have a **strong marketing plan and are nourishing new partnerships** with other local agencies that will assure more people will be coming into our center.
- We completed our Financial Projections for years 2010 and 2011. We are on the move!
- J. Job Lin, M.D. is in-process, and will add to the number of psychiatrists.
- Nisy Philip, L.C.S.W. our first licensed clinical social worker will has begun!

For the past six years we have been plowing and sowing and waiting. But, now the fields are waiting for us.

Your donation will help the Place of Refuge remain a beacon of hope in a place that was once forsaken.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.”
(John 1:1 and 1:5)

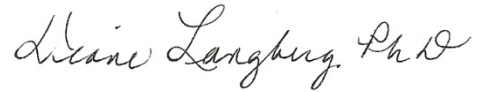
Sincerely,



Elizabeth Hernandez, M.A.
Executive Director



Reverend Luis Centeno
Chair



Diane Langberg, Ph.D.
Co-Chair

NAME: _____

The Place of Refuge
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THE PLACE OF REFUGE
**Putting your concern and compassion into
ACTION!**

- Yes, Elizabeth! I want to help *The Place of Refuge* take action to heal the hurting people of Philadelphia through professional, Christian counseling.

I have enclosed my gift of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$_____

- Sign me up to receive the eNewsletter!
My email address is: _____