



Housing Transitions, Inc.  
 PO Box 1391  
 217 E. Nittany Ave.  
 State College, PA 16804  
 www.housingtransitions.com

Non Profit Org.  
 U.S. Postage  
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 State College,  
 PA  
 Permit No. 203

Office: (814) 237-4863  
 Centre House Shelter: (814) 237-5508  
 Fax: (814) 237-7480  
 Email: myhouse@housingtransitions.com

## Shelter Wish List

- |                           |                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Quarters for</b>       | Household                         |
| <b>Laundry</b>            | Cleaners                          |
| Bus Tokens                | <b>Pillows</b>                    |
| <b>Gift Cards to Wal-</b> | Coffee                            |
| <b>Mart or Target</b>     | <b>Kitchen Garbage</b>            |
| <b>(for personal care</b> | <b>Bags</b>                       |
| <b>items)</b>             | Cooking Supplies                  |
| Gas Cards                 | (flour, sugar)                    |
| <b>Hand Soap</b>          | <b>Copy Paper</b>                 |
| Toilet Paper              | Whiteout                          |
| <b>Air Freshener</b>      | <b><u>Printer Cartridges:</u></b> |
| Ziploc Bags (all          | <b>HP Black 21, 27, 60</b>        |
| sizes)                    | <b>HP Laser 125A</b>              |
| <b>Lysol wipes</b>        | <b>(black, magenta,</b>           |
| Paper Towels              | <b>cyan, &amp;/or yellow)</b>     |

Interested in making a deferred gift?  
 Call Susanna Paul at (814) 574-6431.

### Yes, I'd like to help!



Help us to continue and enhance our work. Please consider making a donation to HTI today. Every gift makes a difference.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift to HTI's Annual Fund:

\$500  \$250  \$100  \$50  \$25 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK enclosed (payable to HTI) or

Please charge my  VISA  MASTERCARD

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (required) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

▶ You may mail this form to the address above, or donate online at  
[www.housingtransitions.com](http://www.housingtransitions.com).

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of those needing shelter!



Winter 2012



sponsored  
 this issue of  
 open house.

Thank you, Nittany Settlement!

# openhouse

A Newsletter of Housing Transitions, Inc.

## Finding a Gem, Finding a Home

Joe's Story

There are some things we all share in common. The need for food. The need for shelter. The need for meaningful connections with others. Sometimes a meaningful connection is the only thing that keeps us going. Imagine, then, the isolation of homelessness, of living as a ghost in a community that, for the most part, does not want to know about your struggles.

Last December, I had lunch with one such individual, a man who, for a long time, lived invisibly in our midst. Over Subway sandwiches and fountain soda, "Joe" reflected on his life's journey. It is a journey that took him to college, to a variety of low-paying jobs, and then to homelessness. Recently, with the assistance and encouragement of HTI case managers and staff, Joe's journey led him to home he can call his own.

For many months, Joe roamed in and around Centre County, living in his car. He lived on the margins of Happy Valley, unable to establish roots in any one place. This experience was a bitter pill to swallow for a person who felt he had worked hard all his life while relying upon his own resources, doing things right, and trying to play by the rules.

Even working full-time and living responsibly, Joe had not been financially prepared when his house mates walked out on their lease and left him to cover the full rent. Before long, he was evicted and found himself sleeping in his car. He became an expert at finding quiet, out-of-the-way places to park his car at night. He found ways to mingle among people during the day to help foster a connectedness with others that kept his memories of what "normal" life is like alive and shielded him against loneliness and despair.

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### Board of Directors & Staff

- Lam Hood** - President
- Andrew Maguire** - Vice President
- Ed Kifer** - Treasurer
- Grace Bardine** - Secretary
- Ronald Friedman**
- Ann Goeke**
- Kathy Harford**
- Benson Lichtig**
- Kathy Miglani**
- Thelma Price**
- Jane Taylor**
- Jere Willey**

- Ron Quinn** - Executive Director
- Kendra Hicks** - Centre House Manager
- Annette Ratliff** - Program Coordinator
- Colby Woodring** - Housing Case Manager
- Jan Reasinger** - Adult Services Case Manager
- Ainsley Rager** - Case Manager
- Dawn Maguire** - Case Manager
- Bobbi Bronstein** - Project Facilitator
- Susanna Jech Paul** - Development & Community Relations Coordinator

### Shelter Supervisors

- Karen Ebeling, Tracy Morgan, Trish Reed, Adrienne Robbins, Katie Roth, Faith Ryan, Bobbi Sheaffer, Adam Weaver, Danyel Woodring

## An Invitation from Our President

Housing Transitions, Inc. will hold its Annual Meeting on Monday, February 27, 2012. The Board of Directors invites the public to join us as we look back on our successes and challenges in the past year, and look ahead to the opportunities before us.

The Annual Meeting will be held at State College Presbyterian Church, 132 West Beaver Avenue, in the Martin Room. Light refreshments will accompany a meet and greet at 5:30pm and the meeting will begin at 6:00pm. Please direct any questions to Susanna Paul at (814) 574-6431 or spaul@housingtransitions.com.

*Lam Hood, President*

(Continued from page one)

Even at his lowest points, said Joe, he tried to think about others who were in need. Every day, he made an effort to count his blessings and be thankful. He had his car, and a small storage unit for things he'd moved out of his last apartment. He had his grit, and his determination to survive. For a long time, this was enough.

A couple of rough winters changed Joe's way of life. One fall, just before Thanksgiving, he came down with a nasty case of the flu, which he had to weather in his car. The next December, he developed severe abdominal pain that lasted until spring. This painful, months-long experience he also endured while living in his car. But when spring arrived, he finally decided that he needed help. He remembers thinking, "If I'm my own best friend, I'm not being very nice to myself." And so it was that he decided to seek the help of Housing Transitions.

Joe had periodically heard of Housing Transitions while trying to figure out how to improve his housing situation, and, one day, he called HTI and asked to speak to a housing case manager. This call led to meetings with housing case manager Colby Woodring and the case manager for the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP), Dawn Maguire. Both case managers worked closely with Joe to secure an apartment – one that he could afford with the modest assistance of a federally funded housing program.

Today, Joe lives in a quiet apartment that he shares with an abandoned pet he took in a few months ago. Like many of us, part of his connectedness to others comes in the form of a relationship with a cherished pet. When he rescued the animal, he saw it as an opportunity to help another living being the same way that Housing Transitions had helped him and also make his apartment feel more like a home. The pet's need for daily attention helps keep him focused on the tasks necessary to keep his apartment. It motivates him and nourishes his spirit. In return, his house pet receives the care and love that was lacking when Joe first found it.

As Joe reflected over lunch on the barriers he faced as a homeless individual, he noted that he hid his homelessness from outsiders because he didn't want them to view him as less of a person. He worked hard to maintain his dignity in the face of misconceptions and fears surrounding homelessness. And he resisted calling for help until his health was at stake.

At HTI, said Joe, he found people who treated him with respect and concern. He found the resources necessary to launch a new stage of life – one that cultivates self-determination, preserves his dignity, and fosters inclusion in our community - a stage that has all the markings of a sustainable alternative to a very dark period in his life.

As lunch ended, he offered his hand and a simple endorsement. "HTI," he said solemnly, "is a gem."

At HTI, we believe this "gem" lies in the heart of each person we encounter - mothers and fathers who reach out to us in order to protect their children from homelessness; staff who go the extra mile to help people in need; donors who support our mission; volunteers who give of their time and talents; elected officials who champion our cause.

Sometimes it takes an expression of gratitude from a man like Joe to remind us of all the reasons we at HTI have to be grateful. For all of our readers who have supported this gem glowing at the very heart of the community, we thank you. And so does Joe.

*Susanna Paul, Development and Community Relations Coordinator*

## Housing Transitions Thanks...

### ...Our Donors

It is with great appreciation that HTI acknowledges the contributions of community members who responded to our fall appeal for donations. We are deeply moved by our donors' thoughtfulness and generosity. Every gift makes a difference!

### ...The Citizens Bank Charitable Foundation

At right, Ron Quinn and Erica Anderson accept a \$5,000 check from Citizens Bank Vice President Diane Romano (center). HTI is grateful for Citizens Bank's ongoing support of our mission.



### ...Adopt-a-Family Sponsors

Numerous families and individuals served by HTI had a brighter Christmas this year thanks to the generosity of sponsors in our Adopt-a-Family Christmas program. HTI thanks Calvary Baptist Church, Mount Nittany United Methodist Church, Penn State Administrative Information Services, the Penn State J. Reuben Clark Law Society, and the State College Borough employees and their families for their caring contributions. A special thanks also goes out to Kendra Gettig, who coordinated the program this year!

### ...The Northwest Savings Bank Charitable Foundation



At left, Northwest Savings Bank Senior Vice President Ed Kifer presents HTI Executive Director Ron Quinn and Board President Lam Hood with a check for \$5,000 to support daily operations at HTI.

### ...Our MLK Day Volunteers

On Martin Luther King Day, volunteers from Calvary Baptist Church, Omega Phi Alpha sorority, and the Ladies Creamery Running Group helped paint several rooms at our facility. Thanks also to Marine Corporals John Thomas and Matt Reeber for helping us move furniture!

### ...Our Lady of Victory Church

In December, parishioners of Our Lady of Victory Church in State College contributed shelter wish list items. The OLV gifts were beautifully wrapped, just in time for the holidays!

### ...Kids Who Care

#### Griffin and Sarah, Celebrating Their Birthdays

Local brother and sister team Griffin (8) and Sarah (6) asked their birthday party guests to bring a donation for Housing Transitions in lieu of presents. Below, Griffin and Sarah pose with their gifts for HTI.



#### Marion Walker Elementary School

In what has become a tradition at the school, students from Marion Walker Elementary School held a December drive for items on our shelter wish list. Thank you, MWES!