



# Health Care Matters

A publication of Health Care for the Homeless, Inc.

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## MISSION STATEMENT

*Health Care for the Homeless provides health-related services, education, and advocacy to reduce the incidence and burdens of homelessness.*

## If Not Now, When?

By Jeff Singer, President & CEO

Recently a former client dropped by HCH to thank us. Through our partnership with the Maryland Society for Sight, he had been seen by an ophthalmologist on the Vision Van that regularly parks in the alley next to our Park Avenue clinic. During the exam, glaucoma was discovered in both eyes; without rapid intervention, he likely would have lost all sight.

The client explained that his eyes had been bothering him for several years, but without health insurance he was unable to secure an exam. Now he worried that he wouldn't be able to afford the treatment he needed to preserve his vision. Fortunately, treatment was arranged and this gentleman also was provided with the assistance he needed to move from the street into housing and employment. He returned to see us because he felt compelled to express his gratitude for reclaiming his health AND his hope.

HCH is privileged to serve thousands of our vulnerable neighbors each year. For many individuals, the HCH nurse, doctor, or counselor is the first health professional they have seen in years. Often this is the case because most of our clients have no health insurance. In Maryland, as in the majority of States, impoverished individuals are not eligible for Medicaid unless they have dependent children, are in a nursing home, or meet stringent disability standards. Thus preventive care is unavailable, diagnoses are delayed, and treatment - when available - is more expensive and less effective.

We are in the midst of a national debate on health care reform. The U.S. spends far more on health care than does any other nation; yet, among the 191 members of the World Health Organization, we rank 37th in health. In the December 2009 edition of the American Journal of Public Health, there are estimates that annually nearly 45,000 premature deaths are attributable to a lack of health insurance, a condition suffered by 50 million Americans.

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HCH does our best to provide health services to men, women, and children living on the streets and in shelters from Montgomery County to Harford County. Our work would be much more effective if our clients had comprehensive health insurance. Yet individuals experiencing homelessness comprise a small subset of our neighbors who have no health insurance.

By the beginning of the 20th Century our nation realized that all of us should be responsible for public goods such as education, fire protection, and water purification. Unfortunately we have been unable to see that health care is the same sort of public good. We were fortunate to avert the blindness of one client; perhaps soon we will be as fortunate in overcoming our blindness to the public nature of health care. When the people living in the park have the same health insurance as the people living on Park Avenue, we all will have high quality health care. ■



## Visit the New & Improved HCH Website

- More information about HCH Services
- Dynamic content about the people served by our programs
- Connections to our mission through Facebook, Twitter, and more
- All you need to know about *The Chocolate Affair*
- Take action to end homelessness

# New Health Care for the Homeless Building Nearing Completion

Travel the Jones Fall Expressway, look eastward as you near the Orleans Street viaduct, and see a new Baltimore landmark – Health Care for the Homeless. Located at 421 Fallsway, the almost completed 56,000 square foot building adds a unique architectural feature to the Baltimore skyline and ushers in a new era of service to the more than 7,000 individuals we see in Baltimore every year.



New features of the clinic and headquarters building, scheduled for occupancy in January 2010, include:

- Enhanced medical treatment capability, as well as expanded facilities for mental health, addictions, and housing programs

- Additional conference rooms for group meetings, including acupuncture, yoga, art, and writers' groups
- Maryland's first ever dental clinic for homeless adults and children
- An on-site pharmacy open to the general public
- Our first pediatric clinic for homeless children and families, with separately designed waiting areas
- Sustainable elements toward gold-level certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating system, including a planted roof designed for storm water management, paints and flooring free from volatile organic compounds, and a clerestory window to bring natural light into the building's interior
- A 25' x 124' mural, to be installed in late-spring 2010, designed to tell the HCH story to the Baltimore community



We reached our goal of a new facility only by virtue of tremendous support from all levels of government, numerous foundations and corporations, and many generous individuals. Together, we are assisting our neighbors to move from the streets to the mainstream.

To be part of this historic project, please contact HCH Development Director Peggy Cronyn at 443-703-1310 or by email at [pcronyn@hchmd.org](mailto:pcronyn@hchmd.org). ■

## National HCH Council Awards

National recognition was given to two outstanding individuals from Baltimore's Health Care for the Homeless at the National Health Care for the Homeless Conference and Symposium held in Washington, D.C. on July 24-27, 2009.



James Crawford Jr., a Navy veteran and an HCH consumer who has become a noted advocate and leader in his community, received the Ellen Dailey Consumer Advocate Award in recognition for his good works. The Ellen Dailey Consumer Advocate Award honors the memory of the founding mother of the National

Consumer Advisory Board, Ellen Dailey, who was a powerful and articulate advocate for homeless people's access to health care.



Kelvin Silver, MEd, LCADC, CRC, LPC, Director of Addiction Services at HCH, received the Health Care for the Homeless Clinician's Network Award for Outstanding Service. The Clinician's Network connects more than 700 hands-on providers from across the country who are committed to improving the health and quality of life of our homeless neighbors. ■

## "Heroes in Our Midst"

HCH artwork to be displayed at the Walter's Art Museum this fall

Art on Purpose, a community arts organization dedicated to using art to bring people together around social issues, presents "Heroes in our Midst," a community event to be held at the Walters Art Museum. This exhibition will focus on personal stories of heroism inspired by the epic Greek poem *The Odyssey* and will feature artists from the homeless and immigrant communities and the Baltimore City public schools.

*The Odyssey*, Homer's epic poem, tells the story of Odysseus's 20 year journey home, filled with challenges and temptations. Without enormous courage, strength, and resilience, Odysseus would not have survived. So, too, it is with the "ordinary" people we meet on the streets everyday.

HCH artists involved in this project reflected upon their own personal journeys and created visual interpretations of the obstacles, temptations, and pain and loss they've endured. This self-exploration and artistic expression has truly been a



journey unto itself as we watched it build self-esteem and patience among the artists. This journey also has helped the artists establish trust in others, themselves, and in the process of life. It is through this sharing of personal stories that we often begin to see healing.

Please join HCH artists and staff for the opening night celebration on Sunday, December 13, 2009, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Walters Art Museum. HCH client art work will be on display for two weeks from Decemer 13 – 27. ■

*Save The Date*



**February 4, 2010**

**6:00 - 9:30 pm**

**M&T Bank Stadium**

***Presented by CareFirst  
BlueCross BlueShield***

### ***Featuring:***

Sweet and savory treats from more than 50 of Baltimore's best restaurants, caterers, and chocolatiers.

### ***Plus***

*Auctions, live music, cooking demonstrations, magic, spa treatments, our Golden Ticket Contest and more!*

*Business or cocktail attire appropriate*

[www.chocolateaffair.org](http://www.chocolateaffair.org)



## **Why Do You Work Here?**

Michele Martin-Jones is the Program Assistant for the HCH Housing First Project. Her compassion, resourcefulness, and great work ethic earned her the Health Care for the Homeless 2009 "Beyond the Call of Duty" award, given annually to the HCH staff member whose work during the previous year best exemplifies the mission of the agency.

Of the award, Michelle observed, "I work here because Health Care for the Homeless provides services to the most vulnerable and needy people who are sometimes turned away from services by other agencies due to lack of insurance, mental illness, and active drug use. One great thing about HCH is that we meet each client where they are. Everyone here does a great job in what they do and our clients benefit from the remarkable and genuine concern by the staff for their overall health and well-being."

Michelle is well-known for displaying her terrific smile, even in the face of the greatest stress. ■

## **Workplace Giving Helps HCH**

*Please consider designating HCH as the beneficiary of your giving at work. Just write our name along with the appropriate campaign number listed below. Your support means so much to people experiencing homelessness!*

Combined Charities Campaign: #6322

Maryland Charity Campaign: #6322

Combined Federal Campaign of Maryland: #7757

Combined Federal Campaign

of the National Capital Area: #7757

United Way of Central Maryland and the National Area Chapter: Write our name and address on your pledge card.

Health Care for the Homeless, Inc.  
111 Park Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21201

# New Physicians Join Health Care for the Homeless



From left, Drs. Johnston, Robertshaw, Robinson, and Sofranco

**Dr. Danielle Robertshaw** recently joined HCH as Medical Officer. With a strong background in meeting the needs of homeless men and women, Dr. Robertshaw is committed to providing quality care to underserved residents of Baltimore. In her previous role as Medical Director of Homeless Outreach Services at Unity Health Care, Inc., her duties included clinical care, outreach, and administration.

**Dr. Quinton Robinson**, Staff Physician, graduated from Moorehouse School of Medicine, has experience working with vulnerable populations, and has completed residencies in Internal Medicine from Morehouse College and Infectious Diseases at the University of Maryland.

**Dr. Meredith Johnston**, Staff Psychiatrist, will divide her time between the clinic and our Housing First program. Dr. Johnston

completed her post-graduate residency at the University of Maryland (where HCH Director of Psychiatry Dr. Monica Cotelingam was her Chief Resident) and previously served on the staff of the Walter P. Carter Center.

**Dr. Alan Sofranco**, Staff Psychiatrist, joins HCH after completing his post-graduate residency at the University of Maryland, serving as Chief Resident during his fourth year. He previously served on the staff of the Walter P. Carter Center and currently is a Voluntary Faculty member of the University of Maryland. ■

*HCH is delighted to welcome these dedicated physicians to the HCH family.*

*The first day of winter...  
The longest night of the year...  
Homeless Persons Memorial Day  
December 21, 2009, 5 p.m.  
Inner Harbor Amphitheater*



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**Health Care for the Homeless, Inc.**

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