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Reinventing Picasso

Marie can't remember life without art. Even when she was homeless, she found a space to create and display her paintings and poetry at the Streetlife Gallery. Now a tenant at PHG's Pacific Hotel, Marie has her own place to let her imagination run wild.

To say that Marie is creative would be an understatement. This poet, artist, parrot owner and tenant of PHG's Pacific Hotel leads an inspirational life of self-expression.

"I've been writing poetry for as long as I can remember," explains Marie, in a voice seasoned with Louisiana drawl. "I taught myself to draw when I was young and have been doing it ever since."

Marie's apartment is a testament to her talents. Hanging collages, a woven rug, a handmade blanket and colorful paintings transform her walls into a palette of color. Marie sits within this softly-lit room, twirls her flaming red hair, and reads from her many original poems.

"My poetry is not pretty," says Marie. "Most of it, I would say, is true to life. Life isn't always pretty."

Marie knows too well the aspects of life that aren't pretty. Her father was from Spain, her mother from France. Marie's European family members were Jewish and became targets during Hitler's regime.

"I had many relatives who went to concentration camps," Marie recounts with sadness.

After World War II, her parents relocated

to the United States and raised a very large family.

"I think they had so many kids to regenerate the genetic line after what happened in Europe," Marie explains.

Marie draws from



Marie poses in front of her paintings and poems at PHG's 20th Anniversary Celebration.

her personal history to create images that are both colorful and intense. She uses art as an emotional outlet.

"I don't think; I just write what I feel at the time," she says. "If I can't write it, I'll paint it."

Marie's paintings include landscapes, portraits and abstract themes. She has displayed and sold her work at the Streetlife Gallery in Belltown and recently displayed pieces at PHG's 20th Anniversary Celebration at Safeco Field. Her striking images are made with eyeshadow, nail polish, perfume, watercolor and cigarette ash.

"I paint with whatever I have around," Marie explains. "I can't use oil paints—I can't stand the smell and they make SAM sick."

SAM—"So Adorable Me"—is Marie's pride and joy. A rather picky parrot (he prefers blondes to brunettes), SAM found a home with Marie after being abused by a previous owner.

"Fate works in strange ways," says Marie. "If I hadn't found SAM when I did, he'd be dead."

SAM has served as a source of artistic inspiration—Marie's watercolor portrait of SAM was featured at PHG's 20th Celebration.

Since Marie moved off the streets and into permanent housing two years ago, her warm heart, sharp intellect and artistic talents have enhanced the community of tenants and staff at the Pacific.

As she closes the door to her colorful apartment, Marie boasts, "It might be a shoebox, but it's *my* shoebox." ■

Lupine Lullaby

*I curl up in a feather ball
And listen to the wild call
Then—with the echo—it comes back
The high shrill howling of my pack
The sound slivers into the darkening sky
As high as the strongest bird can fly
When I see the pearl pale moon
I know that I will hear it soon
I lay curled tight, nose on tail
And listen for that wild wail
I can hear it all around
How I love to hear that sound
It means food, warmth and sleep to me
And the love of my family*

—written by Marie

Building a community—learning to trust



Paul Lambros,
Executive
Director

How often have you heard this expression: “I’m only one paycheck from being homeless”? Although many of us may have felt that fear at some point in our youth, career or transitional times, the reality is that for most of us, the phrase simply does not ring true.

When visited by difficult or fearful times, most of us can seek support and resources from family, friends, neighbors, community, church groups, and the like. Most of us have the emotional resources to somehow pull ourselves through those perils. That is not so for the very poor and homeless people who find refuge with Plymouth Housing Group. We are their family. We are their friends. We are the only community that many of our tenants have ever learned to trust—very slowly with much patience by our dedicated staff.

PHG has a lofty vision—to see the elimination of homelessness in and near downtown Seattle. With the notable passage of our 20th year, we marvel at our accomplishments. Preserving, constructing and managing 10 buildings, increasing our supportive services, and housing more than 700 tenants annually whose average income is only about \$650 per month. Our 20th year has also been a time to re-group, to step back and take a closer look at our programs through several in-depth planning processes—our Board Strategic Plan, our Technology Plan and our Business Plan.

We are studying how we can improve our buildings and services, how we can better serve our growing number of aging tenants, how we can effectively manage our rapid growth and development in recent years. We are both proud and humbled by the work we have undertaken—the streets downtown have certainly changed in the past 20 years with more people in housing. We know we are making an enormous difference, housing thousands since our founding. Yet we recognize how much more work lies ahead.

With several new projects in early planning stages, 10 buildings to maintain, and 700 tenants to support and stabilize, we need your help—and not only your time and financial resources. We need your voice to help us advocate for those who are just learning to speak up for themselves. Homelessness is not going away quickly; yet at PHG we discover that hopelessness and fear are being eradicated for many of our tenants. Sometimes through quiet listening, sometimes through a kind word, sometimes through a gentle glance.

Here at PHG, our tenants have found their community, their support, their home, and we feel privileged to be here for them.

Paul Lambros
Executive Director

Q. Why should you support PHG?

A. Because homelessness in Seattle is a continuing problem, and you can be part of the solution!

Whether you are a legislator, business owner or resident of Seattle, you have an interest in ending homelessness in this community. And, as federal funds are cut, our community will need to play a greater part in our continuing effort to end homelessness and restore dignity and hope to thousands seeking shelter in Seattle each night.

Please consider carefully how you can contribute. We need your time, money and voice on behalf of Seattle's homeless and very poor. See page 4 to learn more about how you can contribute to Plymouth Housing Group. We have a solution that works—to provide housing and services to the homeless and self-sufficiency to those who have struggled. ■

PHG elects new board president



Adrienne Quinn,
Board President

In October, PHG's Board of Trustees elected **Adrienne E. Quinn** as its new president. Adrienne is an attorney with Buck & Gordon LLP in Seattle. She represents citizens, developers and municipalities in land use actions and was recently named a “Rising Star” by *Law & Politics* magazine. But Adrienne is no stranger to PHG.

“I began doing pro bono work for PHG by negotiating and drafting leases for PHG's commercial spaces,” she recalls. “I was eager to get involved because PHG provides housing for the extremely low-income individuals—the people who are the hardest to house—and

teaches them the skills they need to live in a home rather than on the streets.” Since 1998, Adrienne has served on PHG's Board of Trustees.

Adrienne is ready to deal with the challenges facing PHG. “I see the possibility of decreased federal funding and an increase in homelessness, should the economy sour, as important issues that we need to prepare for,” she explains. “But our board and staff teams are bright, energetic and committed to working through these issues.”

PHG welcomes Adrienne as its new president and looks forward to her leadership. ■

A publication of:

PLYMOUTH HOUSING GROUP
2209 First Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98121
Tel: (206) 374-9409
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Published twice per year.
Volume 5, Issue 1

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PHG PROPERTIES
St. Charles
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Pacific
Haddon Hall
Ponderosa
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David Colwell Building

College student spreads holiday cheer

Each year Plymouth Housing Group receives incredible community support to successfully facilitate holiday events in our buildings. The 2000 holiday season was no exception. During PHG's Thanksgiving events and Winter Holiday Bash, tenants were greeted by home-cooked meals and festive volunteers. Christmas Day 2000 was celebrated in several PHG buildings, thanks to hundreds of donations, more than 60 volunteers, and one incredible organizer.

Stephanie Kese might only be 19 years old, but she has already had a long history with PHG. Her father, Carl Kese, is a former president of PHG's Board of Trustees. Her family has donated and volunteered with PHG for years, and every Christmas they organize dinners in PHG buildings.

"My mom was always the powerhouse that got people together," recalls Stephanie. "She would organize all the donations and volunteers and make it happen."

This year, it was Stephanie's turn to lead. After returning from a trip to Europe in the fall, Stephanie found that her family couldn't plan the event. So she took it upon herself to organize everything.

"The holidays can be very lonely," she explains. "I got the idea to plan the dinner about a month before Christmas. I wanted a heart-felt meal tackled with acute sensitivity."

Stephanie recruited people from her life (including friends and teachers from her high school—The Bush School), gathered donations from area businesses, and successfully orchestrated a home-cooked meal for hundreds of PHG's tenants.

"My purpose was not the food, but to bring people down to the common area of the buildings for human and physical interaction on such a special day," Stephanie says.

But the food played a big part in the plan. Stephanie and her mother prepared 120 pounds of ham, 50 pounds of pasta, and 70 pounds of carrots for the meal.

"We started cooking three days before the event," recounts Stephanie.

Throughout the process, many memories were made—like when Stephanie and her mother went to Great Harvest Bakery on Sand Point Way to pick up bread donations.

"They told me to bring a truck, so we brought our Land Cruiser," explains Stephanie.

"When we got

there, they had so much bread, cookies and pastries that it filled our entire SUV. There was only enough room for my mom to drive, so I had to walk home!"

In the end, it was worth the effort. "Many of my friends told me during cleanup: 'I made a good friend at PHG today,'" Stephanie recounts. "That meant more to me than the meal."

Now a student at Whitman College, Stephanie keeps busy with classes. But she remembers Christmas 2000 at PHG with satisfaction.

"I'm pretty thankful that PHG gave me the opportunity to organize the event," she says. "I hope I'll be in town next year." ■



PHG staff and tenants enjoy a home-cooked meal during Thanksgiving at The Pacific.

Never too young to give

What a joyous way to ring in the holiday season! This past November, Plymouth Housing Group was privileged to host some exceptional (and bubbly!) volunteers and donors from Chautauqua Elementary on Vashon Island.

This unique volunteer service project and field trip was the brainchild of some of the students' parents, including a loyal and committed former Social Services staff member—

Jeanne Robinson—

who continues to support PHG with her time, talent and gifts.

"Osani's mom Kata Shapiro had the idea to have the kids design the plates, and I thought they would make great additions to the Welcome Kits given to formerly homeless tenants when they move into one of PHG's buildings," reflects Jeanne. "Once the kids made them, they were anxious to see where the plates would be going... a great reason for a field trip!"

These 4th through 6th graders, including Jeanne's daughter, Alana, designed stunning artwork, which was transferred onto gorgeous colorful plates.

"I think it's really cool how people are giving things to the Tenant Supply Closet for people who have had a hard time getting housing and are just starting out again," observed Alana. Our tenants

often move into our buildings with little more than the clothes on their backs. The Tenant Closet provides clothing and household goods to assist tenants with their transition.

The children gently wrapped and packed up over 25 beautiful plates, and made the exciting ferryboat excursion to our Tenant Supply Closet in Seattle. Staff member **Erika Schneider** gave a very informative, age-appropriate introduction to PHG's mission, purpose and programs, while the children proudly unwrapped and displayed each beautiful plate one-by-one.

For the children, this was an excellent lesson in "service-learning"—learning at an early age the value of volunteer service to our community. For our staff and tenants, this was another heartwarming example of the kind generosity of even the youngest members of our community. ■



Osani Shapiro proudly displays the plate she designed for the Tenant Supply Closet.

Inside:

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WASHINGTON MUTUAL SUPPORTS PHG

Washington Mutual

Plymouth Housing Group's programs have been successful in Seattle because of the support of neighbors and businesses in the community who understand and believe in PHG's important work. One business that clearly understands PHG's needs and impact is **Washington Mutual Bank**.

Washington Mutual has been contributing to our community for over a century. In 1889, the bank was established to help Seattle citizens recover from a devastating fire that swept through the city. Since that time, giving has been a top priority for Washington Mutual. Now the eighth largest bank in the nation, Washington Mutual remains committed to making communities a better place to live, learn and work—giving two percent of its annual pre-tax earnings to communities through grants, sponsorships and other support.

PHG has benefited immensely from Washington Mutual's commitment to the community. For many years, Washington Mutual has made financial contributions to PHG's social services programs, housing development and special events.

"Washington Mutual understands that providing affordable housing can be a complex and challenging process," explains **Tim Otani** of Washington Mutual's Public Relations Department. "That's why Washington Mutual supports local neighborhoods by actively establishing partnerships with community agencies such as Plymouth Housing Group."

PHG appreciates Washington Mutual's longstanding support of our mission to provide housing and support for formerly homeless and low-income people.

"Washington Mutual's contributions have helped our organization better serve the community," remarks Paul Lambros, PHG's executive director. Through its support of PHG, Washington Mutual is making a difference in the lives of our tenants and in our community. ■

Please support PHG's efforts

- **Donate Funds (cash, credit, stock, planned gifts)** to PHG so that we may better serve the needs of Seattle's homeless and very-low-income residents. Consider a gift to our **Tenant Endowment Fund** and **remember PHG in your will**. Send your contribution in the enclosed envelope, or contact Corinne Dodge at (206) 374-9409, ext. 104, or cdodge@plymouthhousing.org.
- **Provide household items** for the Tenant Supply Closet, such as bedding, towels, toiletries, kitchenware, books, pens, paper, board games and videos. Please contact Jan O'Malley at (206) 381-1320, or jomalley@plymouthhousing.org.
- **Serve as a volunteer** in a PHG building. PHG is now seeking volunteers to serve as Tenant Supply Closet Attendant and Coffee Hour Attendant. For details, contact Jan O'Malley at (206) 381-1320, or jomalley@plymouthhousing.org.
- **Serve as an advocate** for the homeless in your neighborhood. Share information with others who are interested in learning about housing, homelessness and poverty in Seattle. Then acquaint them with PHG and our mission.
- **Leave a legacy** to PHG! Check out www.leavelegacy.org.