

A BIG CHANGE

By Johna Mailolli



I was driving through Main Street in Hackensack with Ms. Judy Duwhite, when she exclaimed, "Wow, there are so many different stores on Main St." I was surprised to hear this since Judy had been living in Hackensack for a few years. "For a long time I had been too intoxicated to notice these stores. I remember taking the bus all the way to a shoe repair store in Passaic because I had never noticed one in Hackensack".

While those days are thankfully in the past, Judy can still recall those scary and difficult days when she battled alcoholism. Although she has been sober for a long

time, Judy says everyday is another day that she must continue to be vigilant in her recovery process in order to prevent any chance of relapse.

As a child, Judy lost her father to alcoholism. Later in her life, she lost her mother to a lengthy and devastating battle with cancer. Judy felt alone and looked to alcohol as an escape route. "I had fallen into a deep depression and alcohol was my way of coping with it."

Judy divorced her husband because they grew apart. Her children stayed with their father because she knew it would be a healthier environment for them. The streets of Hackensack became her home. She would sleep either on a bench or in the park. Judy had been in and out of the hospital many times where she was happy to go since she would be given food and shelter.

Judy's life was continuing to fall apart. Judy was afraid that she would continue to drink and not live to see her children grow. This was the beginning of her recovery. It was several people and places that helped Judy on her journey to sobriety. Her faith in God was one of her greatest inspirations. "God has been instrumental in my life, before, during, and now."

Before coming to Advance Housing, Judy had been going to Peter's Place, a former homeless shelter, in Hackensack. Judy often mentions Peter's Place as one of the

first places that helped her get back on track. It wasn't long after a Peter's Place employee told Judy about Advance Housing. Judy states, "If it wasn't for God opening these doors to me, especially the Homeless Service Team (HoST) at Advance Housing, I don't think I would be alive today."

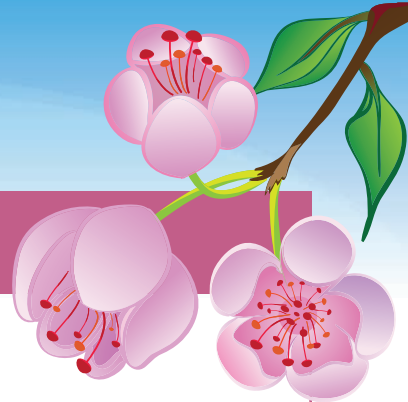
Judy continues to improve her life and she regularly visits her children. Judy is a Certified Nurse's Assistant and is also a Certified Surgical Technician. She is currently seeking employment.

It has been a long and difficult journey for Judy, but she continues to face each day with a positive, spiritual, and new attitude on life. The first time I met Judy I was not aware of her past addiction, all I could see was an enthusiastic, friendly, and motivated woman. Judy continues to share her story with others hoping it will inspire those who need help. She wants to thank her family for never being co-dependents, especially her sons, Christopher and Time, for loving and supporting her.

"Regardless of what you believe, there is a creator of the universe and of you. And I chose to call him God. I made the decision by the grace of my Heavenly Father not to allow my circumstances, my situation, a person, a place, or a thing to be able to control my emotions. No one is responsible for my life except for me and I will not allow anything to control it again and neither should you."

OUR MISSION

The mission of Advance Housing, Inc. is to expand the range and scope of supportive housing opportunities available to persons with psychiatric disabilities. In addition, we will seek to make similar options and services available to other consumers who are in need of supportive housing. Our array of outreach services are designed to help people live independently and productively in the community.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

Almost five years ago, Advance Housing's Board hired me in the position of President & CEO. Since that time, the agency has doubled in size and expanded services to all existing programs. There has been significant focus on housing for homeless individuals, people being discharged from State psychiatric hospitals, and most recently we added a program to serve youth that are aging out of the children's system.

As you will read in this issue, this amount of growth would not happen without Board support, careful planning and dedicated employees. During these five years, Advance Housing underwent a thorough strategic planning process and identified specific steps in order to continue to move forward and try to stay ahead of the need for critical services.

Unfortunately, we have not yet been successful at ending homelessness, nor have we developed sufficient housing to provide homes to all who need supportive housing. Advance Housing maintains a waiting list for housing and services in both Sussex and Bergen Counties and this will not change any time in the near future.

However, every day we provide key services to almost 200 consumers so that they can live successfully and participate as active members in their communities. In this issue, our consumers are providing you with their stories so you can see for yourself what the staff at Advance Housing gets to see...SUCCESS! Success for each person is different. For some people, success means getting a job or going to school; for others, it means losing a few pounds, exercising regularly, or following a spiritual practice. Other times, success means getting out of bed in the morning or asking for help.

While each one of us can identify our own individual measure of success, success for Advance Housing looks like the following:

- while the state cuts budgets and lay offs are occurring, Advance Housing has not needed to lay off a single employee as a result of losing funding;
- while the rates of homelessness throughout the country increase, we continue to help people by expanding our services beyond its contracted capacity;
- by working hard every day, individuals maintain their lives and their dignity in their own homes.

So while we as individuals, family members, and consumers work diligently to achieve success, you can rest assured by reading this spring's newsletter, that consumers and staff at Advance Housing are successful every single day. Enjoy this issue of our newsletter!

Mary L. Rossetini, President & CEO

Advance Housing, Inc. is striving to be an environmentally friendly organization. In an effort to reduce paper usage, and the subsequent waste it generates, we are offering to provide our newsletters in an electronic format. If you wish to receive an electronic version of our newsletter in the future, please email your name, company, and email address to Nancy Storey at nstorey@advancehousing.org.



Spotlight On: JENNIFER

Jennifer, an amazing painter and poet, is getting married to Tom, a man whom she has known for over twenty years, on October 10th, 2010. She chose this date because to her, it represents infinity and winning; apart, from being a date hard to forget. On Valentines Day, 2009, he got on one knee and asked her to marry him as he placed a beautiful and enormous diamond ring on her finger. They currently have placed a bid on a big and comfortable house in Greenwood Lake and hope to sign the papers before June. After they get married, they want to have two children, “preferably twins” says Jennifer. Jennifer says that her life is exactly where she has always wanted it to be.

Jennifer has not always been so happy. She suffers from Bipolar Disorder. Her symptoms started to appear in her late teens, but she was diagnosed in her early 30’s after having a major episode that changed her life. She was going through a painful 7 year relationship breakup and finishing school in order to get her x-ray technician license. After the break-up, she didn’t have any place to live, so she had to move in with her mother. Her mother’s apartment is very small, so neither she nor her mother, were happy about the idea of living together. At one point, she felt helpless thinking that there was nothing to do with her life. After noticing how depressed and melancholic Jennifer was, her mother told her that she must check herself into a psychiatric hospital. She was first admitted into Carrier Clinic, and after a short time she

was transferred to Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital, a place she did not want to be at all. After two months of being at the hospital, she was discharged, but had no place to go. “I was almost in a state of homelessness” says Jennifer. All of her belongings were in storage and she could not afford to get them back. Jennifer was linked to Advance Housing and Friendship House. Her case manager showed her a food bank where she could eat and Friendship House provided some clothes for her. It was a really bad time in her life, and it seemed as if nothing could make it better.

Jennifer states, “It was as if Advance Housing was waiting for me with open arms”. Advance Housing helped her find a nice apartment and the support she needed, while Friendship House helped her find a job at a Dietary Pharmaceutical Company that provided enough money for her to be able to buy food and get all of her belongings from storage. When Jennifer’s car broke down and she could not fix it due to economical problems, her case manager, Olivia, drove her to work for about six months. She was very close with her case managers, Olivia, Ken, and now Sylvana, because they have been a great emotional support to her. Jennifer says, “The Supportive Living Program at Advance Housing has made a remarkable difference in my life. If it wasn’t for you guys, I don’t know where I would be right now. I could have ended up in a shelter. You helped me get 100 percent better”



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ADVANCE HOUSING, INC. JOINS DISABILITIES NETWORK

The Northern New Jersey Disabilities Network (NNJDN), a group of over 100 members, seeks to enhance the quality of life for people dealing with disabilities through its commitment to education, employment, advocacy, and support. Bergen Community College and its partners created the NNJDN in 2005 as an advocacy, education, and support network. It was made possible by a 2-year grant awarded by the Henry H. Kessler Foundation.

This project addresses the growing need for a formalized system of communication, resource-sharing, and support. It has 3 goals:

- to build a network structure to encourage institutional connections and expand support to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities
- to increase awareness and understanding of issues concerning disabilities
- to make available an interactive knowledge base of institutions, information, resources, interventions, providers, and supportive services.

Jackie Lue Raia, Project Director of NNJDN and one of the original founder's, states: "We are

thrilled to have Advance Housing join us in this critically important initiative. Every day, our membership grows to include all sectors of employment, education, recreation, transportation and many other resources that impact the lives of our community living and dealing with disabilities. Advance Housing, with its philosophy of "making the program fit the consumer" in its delivery of supportive housing services has enabled consumers with various needs to live independently in the community. This is exactly what NNJDN strives for in identifying the needs of the community and being proactive with addressing those needs, not reactive. Northern New Jersey is a resource rich area, and we firmly believe that the more we are able to share available resources, the better off those in need will be. Housing, in particular, remains a challenge for families seeking independent living arrangements for their loved ones. Through our collaborative efforts, we are now able to share these valuable resources and achieve the goals of all our members."

We invite all individuals and organizations to join NNJDN. For more information, please visit www.nnjdn.org or call Jackie Lue Raia at 201-460-1219.

Recognizing Years of Dedication To A Cause

Employee Name	Years of Service
Mary Iacovelli	9 yrs.
Rebecca Sackowitz	7 yrs.
Nicole Cucciniello-Maharaj	7 yrs.
Brian Moriarty	7 yrs.
Alexandria Kublin	7 yrs.
Rachel Kriegel	6 yrs.
Sherrel Cooper	6 yrs.
Christopher Kent	6 yrs.
Henrielle Manapat	5 yrs.
Joann Joseph	5 yrs.
Paige Espinal	5 yrs.
Mary Rossetini	5 yrs.
Eric Arnesen	4 yrs.
Tracy Nunez	4 yrs.
Yudelka Mieses	4 yrs.
Courtney Graham	4 yrs.
Zakiyyah Bowers-Jacobson	4 yrs.
Fanny Rubio	4 yrs.
Genevieve McLean	4 yrs.
Susan Deangelo	4 yrs.
Glen Molyneaux	4 yrs.
Roger Nafash	4 yrs.
Danielle McLean	3 yrs.
Jonathan Stepansky	3 yrs.
Tracy Barnes	3 yrs.
Lisa Beaton	3 yrs.
Luz Alvarez	3 yrs.
Grazyna Gawryluk	3 yrs.
Judy Hayletts	3 yrs.
Heather Jacobson	3 yrs.
Theodora Carter	3 yrs.



THE ADVANCE HOUSING, INC. BOARD OF TRUSTEES – *A View From the Top*

Excerpts From An Interview with the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Charles Higgins.

Question: How did Advance Housing, Inc. begin?

Charles: Fifteen years ago, several mental health agencies, Care Plus NJ, Inc., Vantage Health System, Inc., Comprehensive Behavioral Health Care, Inc., North Jersey Friendship House, and the ARC of Bergen and Passaic became concerned with the challenge of supportive housing. The community need that was identified by this seminal group ultimately became the driving force which created Advance Housing. The original concept was simple: If we pool our limited resources together, we can achieve more as a group than each agency on its own and we could truly be synergistic. The value of the group was evidenced by the level of expertise that they collectively possessed in the services that each agency was already providing in the field of behavioral health. A single member of each agency was designated for Board service, and greater board diversity was added when Advance Housing applied to become a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO).

The actual person who made Advance Housing a dream come true is Nancy Willick, the first CEO of the organization and one of the most prominent public mental health advocates in Bergen County. Nancy's passion for those in need has created her sterling reputation and position of respect in the mental health community.

Question: In reference to the organization's strategic plan, what is being put into action at the present moment?

Charles: The primary mission of creating a strategic plan was to assess our strengths and weaknesses. One of the most valuable parts of the strategic planning process was mapping out the specific structure and function of designated committees. Committees are designed to meet independently and report on its activities during the monthly Board meetings instead of bogging down the Board agenda with a mountain of tasks and details. The committees which have been created to date are: Finance and Administration, Executive, Community Relations, Program, and Governance. Our continued efforts to recruit new board members with additional backgrounds and profiles will serve us well in creating a blended set of skills which will benefit Advance Housing with their widened scope.

Question: What has been the greatest challenge to the Board and agency staff?

Charles: In one word – growth. Mary Rossettini became the President of Advance Housing in 2005; in less than five years, we doubled in size and have sustained a phenomenal rate of growth. Staff size has gone from 44 in 2005 to a current head count of 75 and still growing. As the economy continues to decline, it becomes obvious that in order to survive and thrive, a structure has to be created to keep pace with growth, changes in state laws, and increased competition for funding. Our response was to commission the study for a strategic plan that would help us to be proactive in planning for the future and continued success of the agency.

Question: What will Advance Housing do in order to expand its growth?

Charles: For the first time in Advance Housing's history, as the Strategic Plan continues to unfold, we will begin to enter some new territories that will help to add valuable projects and goals. Each of the committees and their productivity will enhance the mission of the agency and help to realize the vision that all of us hold for our future. Instead of our destiny controlling us, we will be in a much better position of having the capacity and resources to help us shape and control our destiny.

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

Please join us in honoring Michael Kates of Kates Nussman Rapone Ellis & Farhi, LLP in Hackensack on Sunday, November 7. Dinner will be at Solaia Bar & Restaurant in Englewood and will be followed by a magic show by Penn and Teller at The Bergen Performing Arts Center.

Tips for a Healthy Summer

By Rebecca Sackowitz, RN, BSN



We've had a long winter, but now that spring has arrived, summer is just on the horizon. For most, summer is a carefree time with picnics, warm weather, 4th of July fireworks and long strolls outside; however, spending more time outdoors may mean taking certain precautions to ensure you have a healthy summer. Prolonged sun or heat exposure may put you at risk for specific heat-related conditions such as sunburn,

heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. A variety of medications can affect the way our bodies regulate temperature and can increase our skin's sensitivity to the sun. Some of these medications include antipsychotics, anti-diabetics, antibiotics, diuretics, antihistamines, cardiac medications, acne medications, and some pain killers, just to mention a few. Learning how to recognize, treat and prevent these heat-related conditions is the key to staying safe this summer.

Sunburn, while the least serious of the three conditions mentioned, can lead to sun poisoning if severe enough. Signs of sunburn include pain and redness of the exposed portions of the skin, with possible swelling, blisters, fever and headaches. Be sure to cover skin, wear sun block and limit sun exposure throughout the day. And remember, the sun's UV rays can still inflict damage to exposed skin on cloudy days!

Heat exhaustion is the most-common of the listed heat-related disorders. It commonly reveals itself through heavy sweating, cool, pale and clammy skin, weakness and possibly fainting and vomiting. Although symptoms may be brief, if they are experienced it is important to contact a doctor as well as to remove yourself or the victim

from the hot or sunny area, loosen clothing, apply cool wet cloths and use a fan for cooling.

Heat stroke is a severe condition requiring immediate medical attention. 911 should be contacted immediately if one's body temperature is above 102°F (and can climb to 106°F) and may be accompanied with hot dry skin, possible unconsciousness and a rapid, strong pulse. It is much more common to get heat stroke when the temperature outside is very hot, such as a heat wave, which is defined as three or more consecutive days with temperatures above 90°F.

The good news is that all heat-related disorders can be prevented! Adhering to the following precautions can help safeguard you from all heat-related conditions:

- **Wear loose, light colored clothing and sun block (SPF 30 or higher)**
- **Avoid prolonged periods outdoors when the sun's rays are the strongest (between 10am – 3pm)**
- **Stay in air-conditioned locations (if you do not have air-conditioning, go to your local library, drop-in center, mall or movies)**
- **Avoid strenuous activities outdoors**
- **And drink plenty of water!! (avoid alcohol, soda and caffeinated beverages)**

Wishing you and your loved ones a very happy and healthy summer!

ADVANCE HOUSING, INC. AND SHOP RITE GIFT CARDS

Perfect Together!



This fundraiser is convenient without any out of pocket expense. Advance Housing earns a 5% profit from the purchase of the cards and the money goes toward supportive housing for adults with disabilities, many of whom are homeless. We all need to purchase groceries, so why not help Advance Housing raise money by using and/or purchasing ShopRite gift cards? We offer \$25.00, \$50.00 and \$100.00 gift cards. If you would like to purchase any gift cards please contact Nancy Storey at 201 498-9140 ext. 241 or email Nancy at nstorey@advancehousing.org.



BOARD MEMBER PROFILE:

Charles Higgins

Charles Higgins has been part of the Board of Trustees of Advance Housing, Inc. for 8 years. After serving 3 years as a board member, he was elected as the Board Chair in 2005 due to his leadership, commitment, and support. Charles is actively working with three committees: Executive, Finance and Administration, and Governance. He is a great asset to these committees because of his extensive experience in the behavioral healthcare field and his outstanding ability to increase an organization's success.

Charles Higgins has a broad educational background; in 1972, he got a Bachelors Degree in History with a minor in Psychology at Rutgers University. In 1975, he received a Master of Divinity at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. Later, Charles decided to complete all course work for a Master's Degree in Hospital Administration at New York Medical College which provided him with the significant knowledge about hospital administration and health services that he has today.

Higgins has over twenty years of experience in the behavioral healthcare field and has

been a mental health clinician, program supervisor, department administrator, corporate director, and healthcare consultant. Charles has extensive program development and operational expertise. He is the former Corporate Director of Behavioral Health for St. Mary Hospital in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Charles is also the co-founder and senior partner within Clinical Services Management, a healthcare consulting and management firm specializing in behavioral health program development and implementation.

Charles has served on multiple statewide boards, committees and has worked closely with state, county, and local governmental officials to identify program needs, allocate funding, and establish linkages to enhance programming options for clients. He has been especially active working with acute care hospitals in development of services for the serious and persistent mentally ill in collaboration with the State Department of Human Services and community providers. Many of these programs have become models for program implementation and delivery throughout New Jersey.



Three simple ways to help us raise money without writing a check:

- 1. By searching the Internet using GoodSearch.*
- 2. By SHOPPING on line using www.GoodSearch.com, simply log into the web page listed and select Advance Housing from the list of organizations.*
- 3. By donating online using your American Express card or by donating your Rewards Points.*

Advance Housing, Inc. wishes to thank Medieval Times for their generosity of donating 23 free tickets to their dinner show. Medieval Times is celebrating its 25-year reign in North America. Their founders first launched their unique idea for an 11th century-style dinner attraction on the Spanish island of Majorca in 1973. This imaginative new entertainment spot was inspired by the true medieval tradition of royal families inviting guests to a festival and feast to watch knights compete on horseback. The consumers expressed having a great time and being treated with generosity and dignity. Medieval Times is located in Lyndhurst, NJ. You can check their website at medievaltimes.com for additional information.

Advance Housing, Inc. also wishes to thank Exxon Mobil for 20 free tickets in support of sponsoring the Adopt-A-Class program to the Liberty Science Center. The Liberty Science Center features a distinctive building with exhibitions that show science and technology as they exist, embedded in our lives. Located within the 1,200-acre Liberty State Park along the Hudson River, the LSC is a short ferry ride from the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The Liberty Science Center is located in Liberty State Park at 222 Jersey City Boulevard Jersey City, NJ 07305.



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