



Friendship House Newsletter

www.friendship-house.org

Christian Ministry Making a Difference in the Lives of Homeless People

Finding Spring's Promise in Winter's Death

By Bill Perkins

At 7:30 PM on Veteran's Day, Dewey Lister, a formerly homeless vet and a Friendship House client for more than twenty-five years, went home to God. One of the first residents of Andrew's Place, our shelter for the elderly, Dewey was an iconic figure in the Friendship House family – famous for his quiet dignity, fierce independence and remarkable peace of spirit. Dewey's departure is also symbolic of an end of an era of Friendship House ministry. As I shared the story of Dewey's sickness and death, I was shocked by how few of the current Friendship House staff, volunteers and clients even knew his name.

Like people, non-profits have their life cycles. For most, it is about thirty years. Ministries are born in response to specific social crises. They are staffed and funded by a passionate group of people that are engaged in service to their peers. If successful, these peer ministries prosper, developing effective programs and infrastructures. Whatever their level of success, however, non-profits also inevitably age. The founding generation of servants pass off the stage. A new generation of clients with different needs and priorities come seeking help. The programs and policies that were once so effective become out of step with changing times. As they approach their thirtieth anniversary, many non-profits have lost their vitality and are struggling simply to survive. Some dissolve, clearing the way for new ministries. Some sacrifice mission for funding, abandoning their original purpose in pursuit of a balanced budget. A special few, however, have made strategic planning a part of their corporate DNA and so have the capacity to renew their ministry and effectively serve the next generation of people in need.

In 2017, Friendship House will be thirty years. Bill Perkins, its CEO since 1989, will turn seventy and be stepping down as executive di-

rector. Many of his senior staff are also in their sixties and nearing retirement age. Of the four generations of homeless clients served by Friendship House over this time, Dewey's World War II generation have almost past away and Bill Perkins' own Baby Boomer generation are mostly senior citizens. The two newest and fastest growing client populations are working class families and young adults under thirty-five. While survival needs of the homeless hasn't changed, the challenges impeding their recovery are new and diverse. They are coming of age and trying to raise their families in an environment vastly different from the world of their parents or grandparents. For Friendship House to fulfill its mission to this new generation of people in need, survival is not enough.

Four years ago the Friendship House board and staff accepted this challenge and initiated a six year strategic plan of renewal and transformation. In response to a dramatic increase in the number of suburban homeless and at risk clients, Friendship House re-engineered its programs to serve all of New Castle County. Rather than short-term crisis interventions, these modified programs emphasize empowerment and ongoing communal support. Recognizing that it needed to recruit a new, younger generation of staff and volunteers, Friendship House expanded its intern program with local colleges and introduced new volunteer opportunities for students and families. To develop the next leadership team, Friendship House recruited and hired new middle managers to understudy with the current senior staff. Internally, Friendship House dramatically upgraded its properties, equipment, infrastructure and digital footprint.

As its thirtieth anniversary approaches, Friendship House courses with new life, blessed with a new generation of passionate ministers ready to bring good news to their peers.

Regional Empowerment Centers

In response to the continued demand for its services by suburban households in need and based upon the success of the Newark Empowerment Center, Friendship House is seeking to develop a network of empowerment centers throughout New Castle County. In 2016, it intends to initiate empowerment center pilot projects in the regions of Middletown/Townsend, Millcreek/Pike Creek and Fairfax/Talleyville.

Recent demographic shifts in New Castle County have been accompanied by the rise of social problems not usually associated with suburban life:

- There are pockets of poverty in every region of New Castle County as severe as the poorest Wilmington neighborhoods.
- Epidemic drug use is a county-wide phenomenon from which no one is exempt.
- Panhandling and homeless camps are becoming part of the suburban landscape.

In addition, working class and middle class families feel economically vulnerable. The Recession of 2007 cost many home owners the equity in their houses and many wage-earners their better paying manufacturing jobs. Working part-time service economy jobs, they now struggle to maintain their hard-won standard of living.

Although it began in 1987 as primarily a ministry to the urban homeless and poor of Wilmington, Friendship House has always been open to serving any person that comes to its doors in need. As requests for its services from non-traditional clients increased, Friendship House began re-engineering its principal empowerment and housing programs to accommodate the needs of a more diversified client base.

In response to the expanding needs of clients throughout New Castle County, sponsoring faith communities began referring households that contacted them for financial assistance to Friendship House for screening and consultation. In 2014, Friendship House worked with more than 600 households and distributed nearly \$70,000 in church-funded homeless prevention grants. As needs expanded beyond the two empowerment centers in Wilmington, Friendship House opened a new empowerment center in Newark in 2007. In eight years, the Newark Center has served 4,000 unduplicated households in need. It has developed a base of local support that enables it to be virtually self-sustaining.

A Friendship House Empowerment Center is a church-based service center for people in need. Its programming is holistic, and relational. Friendship House provides professional staff and programming. Sponsoring faith communities supply donated space, volunteers and a portion of the operating funds. An Empowerment Center serves three primary purposes. It will:

- Connect people in need with existing social services.
- Create emergency assistance services where gaps exist in the local human service survival network.
- Provide strategic planning services and program support required to empower clients to break the cycle of dependency and move toward self-sufficiency and self-determination.

An Empowerment Center is volunteer intensive by design. It provides training, supervision and a broad spectrum of service opportunities to parishioners, student community organizations and former clients. It is an excellent educational forum for exploring social issues impacting the local community.

Clothing Bank of Delaware New Year, New Hours!



Beginning January 5, 2016 The Clothing Bank's new hours will be as follows:

Tuesday thru Friday—7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Saturday—8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Closed on Sundays and Mondays

With the new Saturday hours, we hope donating your gently used and new clothing will be more convenient. The new schedule also opens more hours for volunteer opportunities. Call Karen Johnson at (302) 654-1390 to schedule a volunteer event or email us at clothingbank@aol.com. If Tuesday thru Saturday does not work for your volunteer event, we are always willing to arrange a Sunday, Monday or evening event for your volunteer group.



Like Us on Facebook

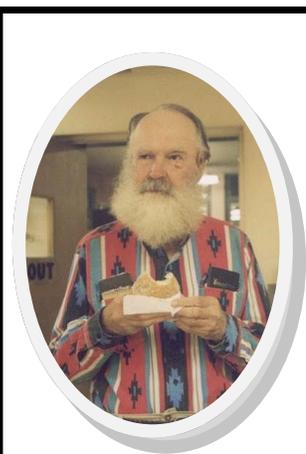
Our Facebook Tag is
Friendship House of Wilmington DE

Andrew's Place By Bill Perkins

Andrew's Place was founded in the winter of 1989 at the initiative of the vestry of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church to provide night-time winter sanctuary to homeless, elderly men. Over the years, Friendship House has gradually extended its season, increased its operating hours and expanded its services to include an evening meal, lockers, a computer lab and a second stage transitional housing program. Guests were offered shelter and sanctuary in a safe, alcohol/drug free environment. Friendship House case managers were available to work with those residents ready and willing to address the underlying causes of their homeless condition.

Since its opening, Andrew's Place has served nearly 1,200 elderly residents. For some (10%), Andrew's Place has been a loving sanctuary where they could die with dignity. For others (20%), Andrew's Place is an emergency winter haven that enables them to survive another year on the streets of Wilmington. For an increasing number (70%), however, the shelter's supportive communal atmosphere and empowerment services have served as the catalyst needed for them to re-establish themselves in independent housing. Unlike their Vietnam-era predecessors, the current population of older homeless men are healthier, less disabled and more employable.

With these patterns in mind, Friendship House has decided to take the final step of converting Andrew's Place from a seasonal emergency shelter for elderly men to an entry-level empowerment shelter for motivated homeless men of all ages. Shelter services will include more intensive case management and support services. The goal



**In Memory of
Dewey D. Lister
8/23/1939—11/11/2015**

Dewey Lister, one of our oldest clients and friends, went home to God in great peace.

Want to See More?

Are you receiving our electronic newsletters? If not, we encourage you to sign up by:

- Going to our website www.friendship-house.org and clicking on "Newsletter Sign Up."
- You can also join the list by sending a request to Kim Eppheimer at fhkime@gmail.com.
- You can also sign up by sending the phrase "friendshiphouse" (no spaces) via text message to the number 42828. When prompted, send a reply with your email address.

Our electronic newsletters are sent out more frequently and include additional stories, information, pictures and updates!

Upcoming Events!

CHRIST CHURCH GREEN SHOW

Christ Church Christiana Hundred

505 E. Buck Rd. Greenville, DE

Saturday, December 5, 2015; 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

For more information go to:

<http://www.christchurchde.org/green-show/>

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS 2015

New Castle Presbyterian Church

25 E 2nd St, New Castle, DE

Saturday, December 12, 2015; 9:30 a.m.—5:30 p.m.

For more information go to:

<http://www.newcastlepreschurch.org/spirit/>

SAVE THE DATE!

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

February 5th, 2015

Enjoy an evening with Chris and Penny Saridakis, celebrating another year of supporting the families of New Castle County, Delaware

will be a limited stay at Andrew's Place with a clear pathway to either independent housing or Friendship House transitional housing. This more rapid turnover rate will enable Friendship House to reduce the number of shelter beds for seniors from twenty-two to twelve while increasing the number of transitional housing beds for the seniors from five to twelve.

Friendship House will use the remaining twelve beds to extend Andrew's Place's empowerment services to employable, program oriented homeless men engaged in a strategic plan to rebuild their lives.

An Intern's Story By Anna Conaway

I can start by saying that I wouldn't be writing this if I never found Friendship House. God lead me to the Women's Day Center two years ago when I was homeless and living in my addiction. After recently being released from jail I had nothing to my name and nowhere to go. I wanted to live the "right way", clean and legally, but I had no idea where to start. In my past struggles with my addiction, feeling unaccepted and lacking a sense of security and support was always my downfall; I found that at the Women's Center. I was living at Hope House and every morning, going to the Women's Center was as much part of my routine as eating breakfast. I would meet up with the other clients for a cup of coffee before we all went off to an NA meeting or to apply for jobs. That is how I met my best friend and learned about all of the other agencies and programs in Wilmington that contributed to my success.



Featured in picture are our Women's Day Center interns and staff.
From left to right: Nicole, Genell, Anna (front), Patty and Maddie

Two years later, I now have a nice apartment, a car, a steady management job, financial security, my sobriety, friends', and I am about to graduate college. I wouldn't have any of this if I didn't have the other clients and case workers at the Women's Day Center to support and guide me from the beginning of my journey to independence. I chose to intern at Friendship House because I wanted to give back to the people who helped me the most and show clients that it is possible to recover from whatever situation they may be struggling with. Now, when I meet clients that don't believe that they can succeed or think it's impossible to get their life back, I can tell them my story. There is no better feeling that

Facts About Our Interns

- Friendship House has hired 4 new employees under the age of 30. 3 out of 4 interned at Friendship House last year.
- We have 6 interns this fall, totaling 1600 hours, and 2 colleges.
- We are active partners with the UOD, Del Tech, and Neumann University, and developing a relationship with Wilmington University.

We have gone Paperless!!

We have spent many hours converting our client files to PDF files and making our organization totally paperless. We have scanned 5533 Men's Center files and 5042 Women's Center Files. We hope to have the Newark Empowerment finished by the end of the year. Our goal is to be accessible by the Cloud company-wide!

to be able to help someone with what I learned from my experiences. Every day of my internship is something new and exciting; I get to meet and help new people every day and follow return clients through their journey. I am amazed about the level of dedication from every employee and volunteer at Friendship House; I can't imagine what the thousands of clients and I would have done without them.

Donate to Friendship House Online

Go to www.friendship-house.org
Online Giving Matters!

- Did you know that making your donation to us through our online giving website is fast, secure and not costly?
- Gifting through our online website allows you the option to make a financial donation by using your credit card (Visa/Master Card) or Paypal.
- You will get an instant tax receipt, and we get secure and instant information regarding your donation. You also have the option of paying the processing fee which is also tax deductible to you!
- We use an organization called Network For Good to manage our online donations and they are also a nonprofit.
- There is an option for you to make your gift in honor of someone, or you can turn your annual gift into a recurring gift.
- You can do this from any device where you have a web browser and internet connection!