

Winter 2010

Holiday Issue



COVENANT HOUSE PENNSYLVANIA NEWSLETTER

The Cov

## Message from Cordella

**Dear CHPA's Friends and Supporters,**

Here we are at the holidays, once again. This is always one of the hardest times of the year for our young people. We are all too aware that this wonderful time of year can also be an incredibly difficult time for homeless youth. Imagine the holidays bringing up thoughts of family that has abandoned you, or struggling to find a hot meal and a warm bed either of these painful realities could destroy even the toughest adult. While at Covenant House's Candle Light Vigil this past week, I noticed one of the signs held by our youth stated, "Homeless for the Holidays". This breaks my heart and challenges me to do more. In response,

each year we host a huge holiday party for our young people. We try to help our kids make new, happy memories about the holidays with their "Cov" family.

The Cov Family makes me think not only about our staff and the young people we serve, but all of YOU, our most caring friends and most generous supporters. In this newsletter, I wanted to highlight a few of the folks within our Cov family who have made a wonderful difference in the lives of these young people over the last few months. Please take a look at our "Cov Family Spotlight" on page 3. You are all amazing, and so essential to what we do, especially at this time of year. We continue to need your

help.

As always, I want to invite you to come and visit us. Set up a time to come to our shelter and see what we are accomplishing first-hand. You will certainly be inspired by what you see.

Thank you so very much for all of your continued support. I wish you all the best this holiday season.

**Cordella Hill,  
Executive Director**



## Holiday Season at Covenant House

The winter months are always a hard time for the youth we serve at Covenant House. For a population that may not have had great memories of Christmas mornings and holiday dinners, even holiday images

can be a constant reminder of the past. Here at Covenant House, we have started our own Cov family traditions for the many we serve and love. This Tuesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> we will hold our annual Thanksgiving

Dinner. Any youth who have once stayed at Covenant House are invited to come. Our Christmas Dinner will be held on Tuesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> where Santa Claus will make his yearly visit to the kids.

The Phillies Wives have released a cookbook called "**From Our Home to Yours, A Collection of Phillies Recipes,**" all proceeds benefitting **Covenant House PA!**

Featuring over 30 traditional recipes and anecdotes directly from the Phillies players, coaching staff and their families, this will make a great holiday gift for all your favorite Phillies Phans!

ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!

[www.phillies.com/cookbook](http://www.phillies.com/cookbook)

### Upcoming Events:

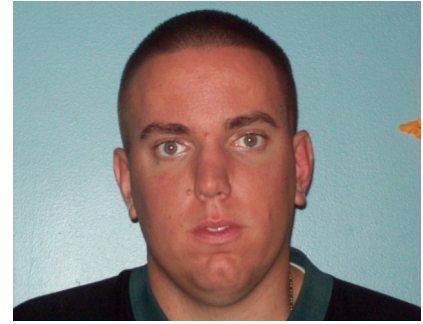
- *Thanksgiving Dinner—November 23*
- *Young Professionals Event—December 9*
- *Christmas Dinner—December 21*
- *Night of Broadway Stars—May 9, 2011*

## Covenant House Success Story: Meet Pat

Every youth who comes to Covenant House has their own unique story – their own past, their own personality, their own passion for their lives in the future. But each youth comes to Covenant House for the same reason – they have no other place to go. Pat was always extremely independent growing up. His mother having serious health issues and a father who he did not see eye-to-eye with, Pat made some big decisions on his own. As a junior in high school, he enrolled in the National Guard and completed the boot camp training over his summer vacation. Pat did not see it as an option to go back to his father's house when

***“At Covenant House, the door is always open. They took me back without a question and welcome me back now, even as a visitor.”***

he returned from boot camp since his father did not agree with his decision to join the service. Pat found Covenant House through an online Google search as a safe and welcoming home for youth in need of shelter. After Pat came to Covenant House, he immediately fit in with the mission and goals in place. He respected the rules and structure of the program, but enjoyed the freedoms of making his own choices. Pat is still working on his relationship with his father, but considers Covenant House his home when returning on breaks from the National Guard. “At Covenant House, the door is always open. They welcome me back without



question and even now, as a visitor. You build relationships with the staff here... they really care about you and love you like a family.” Pat is now attending college for his degree in Criminal Justice, where he will graduate in 2013 in conjunction with the ROTC Program. He remains active in the National Guard and will attain his rank as 2nd Lieutenant the same year.

## 20th Annual Candlelight Vigil

On Tuesday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, Covenant House Pennsylvania staff, residents and friends gathered in LOVE Park for the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Candlelight Vigil. Hugh Organ, Associate Executive Director, read 14 names of youth we have known, loved, and lost to the dangers of the street. The vigil began in front of the LOVE statue and ended with a rainy candlelit march to the New College Building at Drexel University College of

Medicine. Guests, youth, and staff enjoyed a light reception with cookies and cupcakes donated by students at Saint Joseph's University. While the vigil was a time to mourn, it was also a chance to inspire hope. Stephen, one of our current youth in the Rights of Passage Program, expressed this hope and optimism when he shared his story with those at the vigil.



“I can't change my past, but I am putting my full effort into changing my future.” Since opening our doors in 1999, CHPA has served over 18,000 youth and we are proudly able to offer services to more homeless and at-risk youth than any other shelter in Philadelphia.

## Cov Cares: Soup Kitchen at the Happy Hollow Rec Center

Young residents of Covenant House PA are realizing their potential by volunteering to help at the Happy Hollow Recreation Center soup kitchen in Germantown. Once a week they set up the tables and chairs, prepare and serve the food, and interact with others not unlike them. Pastor Dave Maddox, Staff Pastoral Minister, remarks: “Just hearing the residents talk about giving

back to their community has been a joy.” Through the process of giving back they have shown compassion to others in their community. The soup kitchen effort is part of an ongoing volunteer initiative at Covenant House PA called “Cov Cares,”

***“Just hearing the residents talk about giving back to their community has been a joy.”***

inspired by residents choosing in their free time to volunteer at local organizations of their choice. The Cov has committed to clocking 1,000 volunteer hours by the end of Spring 2011. As of October 31<sup>st</sup> there were 200 hours clocked.

# Covenant House Taking the Lead on Human Trafficking

Covenant House Pennsylvania (CHPA) is a key organization in the Philadelphia community combating human trafficking by providing emergency assistance, legal aid, shelter, and advocacy. At the forefront of this issue is the push to pass Pennsylvania's Anti-Trafficking Bill 1227, which will require placement of the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline number in key locations that would provide assistance for possible victims of human trafficking. CHPA leads the Philadelphia Anti-Trafficking Coalition (PATC) which has taken active in-

volvement in combating human trafficking in the region. Leading by example, Associate Executive Director, Hugh Organ, has been invited to speak to students at a number of local colleges, including Temple University, Bryn Mawr College, and Widener University, about the dire situation of human trafficking in the Philadelphia area. Organ was also a guest speaker at ARTREACH's workshop called "Human Trafficking: Prevention Through Art," which seeks to build programs using theater and art to educate middle and high school students

about the issue of human trafficking. January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month and Covenant House Pennsylvania will be planning public events to spread more awareness about this issue. Be sure to stay tuned to our website, [www.coveanthousepa.org](http://www.coveanthousepa.org), as more work is done to fight human trafficking in our area. If you have an interest in the issue of human trafficking and believe you have a skill or service that would be of use in victim assistance, outreach, or advocacy, please contact us at 215-951-5411.

## ☞ Cov Family Spotlight ☜

### 60th Birthday Benefit

**Mary Griesser** was first introduced to Covenant House Pennsylvania as a guest of a friend to last year's *Night of Broadway Stars*. She was so moved by the event that she immediately wanted to get involved and help our kids. Mary thought she knew nothing about fundraising, but graciously held her 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party as an event to raise money for Covenant House. She invited all of her friends, and instead of gifts, asked all of her guests to donate to Covenant House. This event raised over \$12,000! We are so thankful for Mary and her amazing support; all from someone who thought she didn't know anything about raising money.



### Golf Outing

The Henkels Family has been incredible supporters of Covenant House almost since the beginning in New York in the 1970s, always caring about the young people on the street who have nowhere else to go. A few years ago, **Henkels and McCoy** decided to have a golf outing at the Philadelphia Cricket Club to benefit C o v e n a n t House, and they have been hosting this event for us ever since. On October 11<sup>th</sup> of this year, the amazing people at Henkels and McCoy, along with all of their guests, presented a check for \$100,000 to Covenant House for this year's event! We are so thankful for our friends at Henkels and McCoy and the Henkels family for their undying support of these kids.



Cordella Hill, Bianca, and Joe Swift at the 2010 Henkels and McCoy Golf Outing

### Gift of Technology

**Adam Schran** is a young, successful entrepreneur with his own business, which he developed with his brother when he was the same age as most of our kids. He was introduced to Covenant House Pennsylvania through a mutual friend, and attended last year's *Night of Broadway Stars*. Adam was blown away by the event and set up a time to tour our Crisis Center soon after. During the tour, Adam was struck by the need to upgrade the computer lab that our youth use for educational and vocational purposes, so his company donated enough computers and software for a brand new computer lab! Since then, Adam has been coming in to the shelter weekly to work with our kids about running a business, and practical ways that they, too, can work towards their dreams. Adam is incredibly gifted, and shares those gifts with our kids to help them succeed. Adam's energy has brought so much excitement to our kids about the possibilities that exist for them. He is an amazing friend.

Got your own great idea to help Covenant House PA? Contact Zach Wood at [zwood@coveanthousepa.org](mailto:zwood@coveanthousepa.org) or 215-951-5411.



#### COVENANT HOUSE PENNSYLVANIA

31 East Armat Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
[www.covenanthousepa.org](http://www.covenanthousepa.org)

Zachary Wood, Director of Development  
Phone: 215-951-5411  
Fax: 215-951-5412  
E-mail: [zwood@covenanthousepa.org](mailto:zwood@covenanthousepa.org)

*Opening Doors for Homeless Youth.*

Sign up for the E-Newsletter! Send your email:  
[development@covenanthousepa.org](mailto:development@covenanthousepa.org)



We are now on Facebook! "Like" us:  
<http://www.facebook.com/covenanthousepa>



## Young Professionals of Covenant House

Covenant House Young Professionals held their Third Annual Texas Hold'Em Poker Tournament this past October at the Urban Saloon in Fairmount. This was our most successful one yet! We had a great turnout and rose over \$3,500 for the at-risk and homeless youth at Covenant House. We owe a special thank you to our title sponsor, TrackPackPA.com, and our many other sponsors for all of their help

in making this event such a big hit. Congratulations to all of our prize winners and we hope to see you all back next year!

Please join us for our upcoming holiday event on Thursday, December 9 at Liberties, where we will be collecting new toys for the youth at our Crisis Center. Call Aileen Callahan with any questions at 215-951-5411 ext. 1119.

## Rights of Passage Campaign Update

After our groundbreaking event on June 23rd, this new Rights of Passage facility quickly began to take shape. For a project that started as a dream 8 years ago, and took a lot of hard work to come to fruition, the actual building has come out of the ground very fast!

During July and August, excavation and clean-up of the site occurred, as well as the prep-work for the building's foundation. By the first week of September, foundation walls and the elevator shaft began to go into the ground, quickly followed by trusses and framing. By the end of September, the entire first floor was framed, and by the end of October, the entire building was completely framed, including the roof!

Since November first, work has

primarily been on waterproofing the building and installing the windows. The hope is to have the entire facility closed in before the temperature gets too cold. If you pass by the building right now, you will see that the entire building is wrapped in Tyvek and other waterproofing materials, and all



*Progress of Rights of Passage Building Construction, taken November 3.*

windows have been installed. Our building has truly taken shape!

Our projected completion date is March 31, 2011, and we are confident that we will make that date, but we still need your help! Our team is hard at work to find individuals, corporations and foundations who will partner with us to help pay for furnishings, such as beds, desks, and even blinds. There are still so many ways for you to help, so that by Spring, we will be providing 20 more beds for our region's homeless youth.

Please contact our Development Director, Zachary D. Wood, at 215-951-5411 x1107 or [zwood@covenanthousepa.org](mailto:zwood@covenanthousepa.org) to discuss ways that we can partner on this project.