

Meet our Newest Housing Development Staff

Awilda Perez Director of Asset Management

Awilda comes to us with 20 years of multifamily property management experience. She started her affordable housing career in the non-profit sector while working at La Casa de Don Pedro Inc., a non-profit agency in Newark, NJ. We are excited to have her on board to oversee HSI's 74 apartments and the HD team.

Awilda shared, "My first week on the job a resident told me HSI saved her life! I'm excited to be part of an organization whose purpose is to provide a much needed service to the community."



David Lenar Property Manager

David brings years of experience from managing affordable housing in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. He works directly with our tenants, that's 160 adults and children! He is a great addition to the team. In the few months that David has been here, he has been part of helping 7 families move from our shelter into permanent housing.



David says, "It's an honor to be part of an organization with a stellar reputation and work with a staff that genuinely cares about helping people."



PANTRY ITEMS
5 oz. Dixie (or other brand) paper cups
Antibacterial Wipes
Dinner Napkins
Hand Soap
Paper Plates
Paper Towels
Toilet Paper

CLOTHING & LINENS
Men's & Women's Underwear (New)
Men's flip flops
Pillows (new)
Towels
Twin sized sheets
(in new or excellent condition)
Twin sized blankets
(in new or excellent condition)

If you are able to help provide any of these items please contact TamalaReynolds@hsinj.org

You can also check our Amazon Wish List for up-to-date needs by searching for the list "Homeless Solutions" on www.amazon.com

SUMMER 2020



NEWSLETTER

A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT

COVID-19: Pulling Together During a Crisis

At Homeless Solutions, we have prided ourselves on housing the homeless and working poor of Morris County for over 35 years, operating under our motto of "a hand up, not a handout." Our goal is to not only provide a meal or a warm place to sleep, but give our shelter guests the tools needed to rebuild their lives and become self-sufficient. The health crisis has made this difficult.

The Impact

Our shelter normally operates with a full staff and a network of volunteers. Recent events have not only reduced our staff numbers, but limited our ability to utilize our dedicated volunteers. We are challenged with children needing to learn virtually and a lack of childcare for those parents that are essential and can still work. Many of our guests have lost their jobs due to coronavirus, which has given our smaller team even more work to do in the form of serving three meals a day, monitoring social distancing throughout the shelter, and supporting their mental health as they face this frightening unprecedented time while already dealing with the trauma of homelessness.



Morris County Human Services Director Sharon Yoo, Homeless Solutions CEO Dan McGuire, and John Castiglioni and Mike Van Ness of Morris Habitat for Humanity Restore.

Our Approach

We knew that we had to do whatever possible to remain open 24/7 during the pandemic. We acted quickly and took extreme measures to ensure the safety of our frontline staff and shelter guests. We started by immediately introducing new policies to check guests who were not symptomatic. We added sneeze guards to our reception desks and provided PPE equipment. We secured alternate spaces with the help of the County and relocated 33% of our shelter guests to provide social distancing.

Our Community

We have been awestruck by the support from our network. Right when the pandemic began, many individuals banded together to provide PPE equipment donations to our staff. This was crucial. We continue to receive meal donations from many different local restaurants and families of Morris County. A very special thank you to the Rotary Club of Morristown for financing Operation Hunger and providing 3,140 meals! The support of our Amazon Urgent Needs List has been of critical impact to the families in our shelter. Amazingly, the kindness didn't end there! From virtual funds raised through a Girl Scout Cookie drive, to digital tablet donations to aide in virtual learning, and even handmade masks – our donors have been relentlessly creative and supportive during this time – THANK YOU ALL!



Volunteers Michelle Jarvis and Anneliese Staiger served lunch on a daily basis despite the crisis.

Tribute Gifts January 1, 2020 - May 26, 2020

IN HONOR OF

Meg Bennett
Kathleen Caccavale

Sarah Canberg
Jennifer & Brandon Bush
Erica Chapman & Steven Kaell
Dion Johnson

Danny Donofrio
Donald & Marjorie Ganz

George Goldman & Family
Linda & Norman Idleberg
Dr. Marc Rubman

My Grandfather & Grandmother
Salone Shahi

Guerriero's Ristorante
Rich & Norrie Oelkers

Jaimie Hendrix
Gayle Hendrix

Homeless Solutions, Inc. Staff
Carole & Stephen Brady
Laura Lannin
Becky & Andy Moody

Adam Idleberg
Linda & Norman Idleberg

Anna, Charlotte & Emily Kiczek
Rafael Cervantes
Avery Roth

Janice Koch
Jennifer Koch
Sarah Koch

Mary LeBlanc
Kristen Lamoreaux

Vic Lupi
Lorelei Kelly

Nancy Magee
Darla & Fred Wilkinson

Susan Rennie
Steve Goscinski

Tamala Reynolds
Liz & John Burger
Susan Oxman
Chris & Matthew Schuette

Robert R. Santangelo
S&P Global

Brett Shuster
Dustin Eisenstat

Judy Slegona
Dawn McDonald

Will Sokol
Gay & Mel Host
Matthew & Ashley Sokol

William A. Stevens
Dan & Mary Ellen Teshima

Renee Taylor
Karen Grexa & Gerard DeVeaux

Tom Uhlman
Kim & Finn Wentworth

Jennifer Wawerczak
David Wawerczak

Kathy Wemer
Catherine & Mark Lewus

IN MEMORY OF

Jack K. Ayre
Cliff Lee

Doris Daugherty
Bill & Eileen Levine

Ruth Frost
Joannah & Christopher Pickett

Nancy Galbraith
John & Jeanne Galbraith

Jesse Everett Jackson
Bill & Eileen Levine

Eileen Kennedy Tonsmeire
Ellen & Byron Collins

Peter Muratore
Candace & Richard Weeks

Leni Muscarella
Fran Henig

Barbara Newman
Veronica & Walter Lacz

Rafeal
Allyson Bush

Radha Gundu Rao
Krishnamurthy Sreenath

Linda Rausch
Michele DeDea
Taryn Jones
Maureen Kuhn
Mary Glynn
Karinna Guillen-Acosta

Marjorie Reinhard
Joan & Jean Allatta
Melva Cummings
Frank & Kay Failla
Lois Guttadora
Valerie & Patrick Lally
Diane Pivarnik
Lisa Schmucki
William & Margarit Spichiger
Katie & Paul Laud

Neal Sandford Weitzman
Ellie Weitzman

Ruth Shymko
Lois Guttadora

Martin Weiss
Rori Benson

Amy Yapaola
Elissa & Mahmut Guner
Kipp & Danny Yapaola



Darla Wilkinson
Chair

Colleen Bondy
Sarah Canberg
Warren Estey
Mike Gayda
George Goldman

Jim Nason
Vice Chair

Mary LeBlanc
Diane Mann
Ed Moriarty
Georgia Papatomas
Rob Schmitt

Dan McGuire
CEO

George Scott
Lee Taurman
Steve Trozinski
Tom Uhlman
Megan Young



A Surprise Guest Makes the Night



HSI's Stephanie Cicale with Officer Birch of Morristown after he surprised our Program Graduate Julia.

2020 was the year of our epic Black & White Dream Builders' Bash - and just before lockdown! The festive night was filled with fun raffles, a spirited live auction, a wine pull, live music, and dancing. We heard from Dream Builder Honorees Vince and Tony Lia of Lia Construction and Hand Up Award recipient Tamala Reynolds. The most moving speech of the night was from our program graduate, Julia. With great poise, she shared her story of putting her three children in the car and bravely driving for 18 hours to flee from domestic violence. She explained that it was possibly her broken tail light that saved her life. The police officer who pulled her over intently listened to her story and immediately led her and her family to safety.

At the end of Julia's speech, amidst the tears and applause, she was surprised with a visit from Officer Birch, the very man who helped get her life back on track. The reaction from Julia and the attendees was extraordinary.

We are so grateful to everyone that helped us raise record setting proceeds that night allowing us to continue helping others like Julia.

The Frantz Family Pays It Forward



Jennifer and Tom Frantz pay it forward as monthly donors.

After a tour of our Transitional Housing Program eight years ago, Jen and Tom Frantz were inspired to get more involved. Soon after, their daughter Leah became a regular volunteer babysitter.

As parents and Morristown residents, it was important to them to connect with an organization in their community where their children could see that giving truly makes a difference. Jen said, "We watch

Virtual Wine Tasting With Chris Cannon



Jockey Hollow Bar & Kitchen owner Chris Cannon shares his wine knowledge and stories during our sold out virtual wine tasting event.

Our first ever virtual event was a sold-out success! Some of our lucky supporters got the chance to hang out virtually with Jockey Hollow Bar & Kitchen owner Chris Cannon in his backyard as he shared his immense wine knowledge and personal stories.

The event was presented by the Young Professionals Advisory Council (YPAC) and our engaging co-hosts Wendi Zimmerman of HSI and Andrew Lewis, Associate Principal at NK Architects and YPAC member.

Thank you to everyone who raised a glass with us to raise funds to keep our shelter guests and staff safe and supported during this health crisis.

the buildings on MLK and Abbett Ave. go from construction sites to homes. Seeing the holiday lights, and toys in the yard reminds us that our contributions are making a difference to real families, who live among us."

Jen also shared, "Our son has autism and we have been so blessed with the people who have helped him over the years. We will never be able to thank them enough, so helping out where we can is our way of paying their kindness forward."

To show their support they made a choice to become monthly donors. We are grateful to be able to rely on their loyal support throughout the year. Jen says, "It is very easy and having a little bit taken out of your check every month really adds up." A bonus is that they are able to supersize their gift through corporate matching with Johnson & Johnson, where Tom works.

Thank you Frantz Family!

Doing Good During Retirement

When Jim Skiff retired from a 45-year career in college admissions he knew he wanted to devote his new-found time combining his professional skills with his desire to "do good." Volunteering as the Coordinator for the Buddies Mentoring Program was the perfect fit.

Jim first learned of HSI through his mother in law, Ginny Moriarty's involvement. She spoke passionately about the important work of HSI. Her stories inspired him and others in their family to become and remain involved.

The Buddies Mentoring Program is making an impact. Jim shares, "the children are often the unsuspecting victim of circumstances—economic hardship, family dysfunction, etc. A mentor often gives them hope that a better future life exists for them."

We are fortunate that Jim is not only in this important volunteer role, but also a generous donor. He shares why he has made HSI a philanthropic priority, "because I believe in its mission; I've seen first-hand that it lives its mission every day, and I am confident that every dollar is utilized in the most impactful and fiscally prudent way."



Coordinator of the Buddies Mentoring Program, Jim Skiff.

If you have an interest in making a meaningful difference in a young person's life and are willing to devote an afternoon/evening once a month to an activity—a meal, amusement park, athletic event, please reach out to Jim!

Questions? Contact Jim at Mentor@hsinj.org

(Note: We are in great need of male mentors as we have several boys waiting to be matched. All eligible girls have been matched.)

HSI Frontline Staff Shares Their #MyWhyStory

Giving Tuesday Now occurred on May 5th, a national day in response to the unprecedented need caused by COVID-19. We set a goal to raise \$7,000 in 7 days to provide PPE for our shelter guests and frontline staff. We reached half of our goal on the first day! As we continued to showcase our hard-working frontline staff and their "My Why" stories –



Shannon Muti was one of many frontline staff members that shared why they come to work during a pandemic for our Giving Tuesday Now campaign.

detailing why they risk their lives every day to ensure our shelter stays open 24/7 – the support continued.

Shannon Muti, Women and Family Services Manager shared her #MyWhyStory, "Everyone that lives here is counting on us and we are not going to let them down. They can know that no matter what is going on in the world we are here for them." Visit our social media to watch their inspiring videos.

Thanks to the kindness of our supporters and our community we were able to more than double our goal and raise \$16,700. THANK YOU!

A Fresh Start After Losing It All

October 15, 2019 is a day Shadé will never forget. As part of her usual routine she was bathing her kids at night. A strange beeping noise from her neighbor's apartment caused her to check on things. She opened the bathroom door to an apartment filled with smoke. She couldn't see or breathe.

When she safely arrived to the street with her children they looked up and saw their apartment floor in a blaze. They lost everything. All they had was the clothes on their backs.

Shadé struggled to get help. She was turned away from many agencies because she was employed and didn't qualify for assistance. Ultimately she found HSI, "They treated us like family and made us feel safe and gave us the help we needed. It was easy to give them 5 stars in my exit survey," said Shadé.



Shadé with her children smiling and happy in their new home.

Today she and her family are slowly beginning to recover from their trauma. They are overjoyed to live in one of our affordable apartments. Thanks to our partners at The Warehouse NJ it was fully furnished. Shadé shares her gratitude for the new start, "Our home is beautiful and it felt good to see my kids smile again."

If you have furniture to donate contact www.thewarehousenj.org