

Thursday, October 25, 2007
5:30 - 8 pm

Harvest of *Hope*

Please join us to celebrate *25 years* of life-saving work, as we look to the future of housing in the Chicago landscape.

Featured Speaker: Nan Roman, President, National Alliance to End Homelessness

Simpson Center at Loyola's Lake Shore Campus, 6333 N. Winthrop Avenue, Chicago

To RSVP contact Kim Christensen at kchristensen@how-inc.org or (773) 465-5770 x253

Celebrating
25
Years!



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Please deliver to a friend of HOW at this address. Thank you.



Inside: Interview with a founding member of HOW, Sister Pat Crowley!



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HOW's mission is to provide permanent solutions to the problems of homelessness and poverty for women and children in Chicago-and to advance the goal of ending homelessness nationwide.

Housing Opportunities for Women (HOW) is a 501 (c)(3) and relies on community support to carry out our work to help women and their children.

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HOW JOURNAL Issue 1, Fall 2007

EDITORS Kim Christensen, Jen Patterson

WRITERS Ben Calvert, Kim Christensen
Jen Patterson, Britt Shawver,
Cary Smith

PHOTOGRAPHY Mike Kelly (cover)

HOW is the member journal of Housing Opportunities for Women. Membership to this publication is available with a gift of \$500 or more during a calendar year. We hope you will consider joining today to continue receiving our journal!

HOW Journal is published bi-annually.

Privacy: HOW respects our donors' and friends' confidentiality. We never release or share our mailing list.

HOW Journal is printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks.

Thank you!



Over the past 25 years, Housing Opportunities for Women (HOW) has supported thousands of women and children on the journey from homelessness to self-sufficiency; from poverty to independence. Our focus on stable, safe housing means investing in stable communities with thriving futures, and your partnership has been vital in undertaking this work.

In partnership with you, HOW is investing in the future of hundreds of families; and our investment now provides exponential returns in the future. Currently, HOW is creating access to basic solutions such as housing and comprehensive support services that will allow families to create more complex and permanent solutions over time for themselves. Resources, including physical health stabilization, personal financial management skills, parenting support and job placement services, ensure that each woman and family remain stably housed and self-sufficient long after they graduate from HOW's programs.

You have also helped us in our redevelopment efforts—two affordable housing projects are complete, and a third is on the horizon. We are managing an expanded portfolio of 200 housing subsidies scattered throughout Uptown, Edgewater and Rogers Park; and we have launched community-based programs to help individuals and families who are currently, or at risk of becoming homeless to access much needed services and affordable housing.

Gifts from individuals like you give HOW the funding to develop innovative solutions to difficult problems which we would otherwise not be able to address. These creative successes in turn allow us to build on our innovative initiatives by leveraging grants from government entities, corporations, and foundations.

To help us meet the challenges ahead, we are undergoing a new strategic planning process, we are stepping up our communications efforts, and we are reaching out to new partners in the field. With these strategies in place, combined with your continued support, we are not only breaking the cycle of poverty, we are building the cycle of progress and opportunity as otherwise homeless families reinvest in themselves and their communities.

Thank you for your partnership.

Britt Shawver,
Executive Director

Cover: Family served by HOW, picture taken two years ago. They have since graduated, successfully maintaining permanent housing.

Standing Up | After School Matters Pre-Apprentice Program Ben Calvert

Savannah is the shortest young lady in HOW's After School Matters summer program, *Exploring Theatre Arts and Performance (ExTAP) Guild*. She doesn't raise her hand too much and rarely has anything to say in front of others. In smaller groups I watched her say a few things, but mostly I registered the relief when she was picked to be in the same group as her friend Roxie, ironically the tallest person in the room.

Many of the teens didn't know each other when they signed up for the ExTAP Guild this last summer, or knew each other only a little from living in the same area or knowing a friend of a friend who went to their same school. The first week saw connections made and alliances formed around the lunch tables. The teens bonded over "choke food" – box lunches provided by the City of Chicago – and the hottest pop song on the radio – Sean Kingston's "Beautiful Girls" was everyone's song... and fortunately it was played often enough.

As an arts educator it is my philosophy to find a direct link to what a person wants to say and give them the tools to come up with a structure and technique to execute an expression. Art, be it playwriting,

"What I think worth remembering is that every human voice has thrilling potential waiting to be discovered and unleashed."

The Right to Speak by Patsy Rodenburg

Every voice, when listened to and cultivated and heard aloud, benefits every strand of our community by fulfilling the individual speaker's need to speak. For the final presentation the teens were given the task of publicizing, producing, and performing works they wrote and selected. Savannah chose a poem called "Unspoken" by her friend Roxie. The poem is about leaving issues and feelings (about love) unspoken between family, friends, anyone. The teens who performed were given time during the final week before the performance to rehearse, revise, and memorize their chosen piece.

I worked individually with the teens performing spoken word. I helped them to recognize what their visual focus would be during their performance and encouraged them to understand the words they were saying or singing. Each day Savannah set a new goal for herself on memorization and worked with Roxie, the poem's author, by running through the piece out loud.

On the day of the performance Savannah was memorized... and terrified when she saw the room she had spent four hours a day, five days a week for six weeks making her own now filled with friends and strangers. The performance started and soon Savannah was up. She made it halfway through speaking in a matter-of-fact tone, looking just above the audience members' heads. She faltered, hung up on a line she knew, but couldn't get through. Her hand went up to her head and she swayed a little. "It's all right", "Take a deep breath" the audience was coaching her. She looked out again, breathed, and found the next line and soon finished the rest of the poem.

Save the Date!

HOW Very, 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner & Auction

Saturday, May 10, 2008

Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum

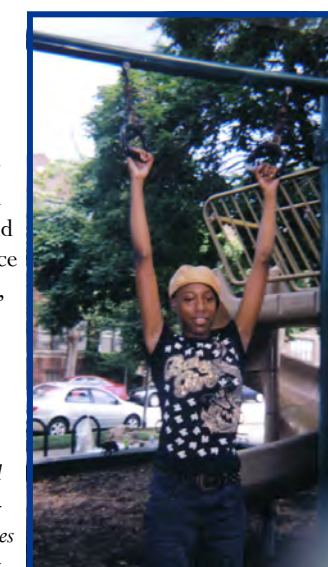


If you are interested in being a Sponsor, Table Host, donating an item, or volunteering on the event committee please contact Kim Christensen at (773) 465-5770 x253 or kchristensen@how-inc.org

Applause.

And with the applause a moment of solidarity formed between strangers and family; a show of support and acceptance between friends. Would the applause last and for how long? After the performance and a few hugs and congratulations, the program ended. The last few weeks of summer were left for Savannah and the others to spend as they wished.

The After Schools Matters ExTAP Guild program was an incredible six week success. Twenty-one teens, between the ages of 14-18 graduated, many with perfect attendance. HOW plans to offer this program next summer, and many of the students like Savannah plan to return.



Savannah and the ExTAP Guild spent an afternoon at the Howard Street Beach in Rogers Park. Savannah graduated from the program in August.



I first learned about Housing Opportunities for Women (HOW) while working at The Chicago Community Trust. HOW submitted grant proposals to the Trust, and I handled several of them including a proposal requesting support for the newly acquired Greenview Apartments—a six-flat in the Rogers Park community. I was impressed with HOW's dedication to helping homeless women. At the time, HOW was a small organization

but with big determination to make a difference. When HOW first started, it served women who did not have children in their direct care. Later, HOW expanded its efforts to include children—a crucial step that keeps families together. The Greenview site provided that first opportunity and is now home to six families. After I left the Trust, Britt Shawver and Karen Singer invited me to consider joining the Board, which I did in 2002.

HOW's mission to end homelessness deals with one of the most important problems facing our society. Homelessness is an enormous

and complicated issue involving shelter, employment, education and related support services. HOW's Housing First model recognizes that providing housing first is the top priority towards creating stability.

HOW's growth and successes are testimony of what can be accomplished and at the same time encouragement to do more and to get others involved. HOW's housing portfolio now includes more than 200 affordable apartments and more than 90% of its residents maintain permanent housing year after year. HOW has also steadily increased its community-based services to include advocacy, homeless prevention assistance and support services for those who have become, or are at risk of becoming homeless. Since its founding in 1983, HOW has helped thousands of women and their children to become successfully self-sufficient, and our work is as important as ever.

2008 will be our 25th anniversary year, and I invite you to join us in our work and celebration! You can become involved by serving on the board, contributing your time or your resources, and by sharing our work with your community. Our ability to serve those most in need depends on it—and together, we are making a difference!

HOW 25th Anniversary Challenge

Celebrating

25
years
of service.

Double Your Donation!

Double the Difference You Make in the Lives of Homeless Women and Children

HOW's Board of Directors has issued the **HOW 25th Anniversary Challenge** to celebrate our 25th anniversary and secure another 25 years of service to the community! Between now and the end of HOW's fiscal year,* HOW's Board will personally match all individual donations dollar for dollar up to \$75,000!

The Anniversary Challenge will not only **double your donation**, but will help HOW take on our largest project yet—the redevelopment of a 24 unit building in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood! With your help, HOW will add a 25th affordable apartment in the building to commemorate our 25th anniversary. With your support today, together we can make it happen!

Make a tax deductible donation today and double the dollars you give, double the difference you make in the lives of homeless women and children! Please contribute to HOW using the enclosed envelope or online at www.how-inc.org. For questions contact Jen Patterson, Director of Development and Communications at 773-465-5770, x240.

*HOW's Fiscal Year 2008 began July 1, 2007 and will end on June 30, 2008.

HOW Newsworthy!

● State Budget Crisis

HOW is happy to report that after a long fight, state funding for supportive housing has not been cut in the Illinois budget. Along with the Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA) and its 90 member organizations across Illinois, HOW established relationships with their state legislators and encouraged staff, residents, and board members to take actions again and again over a long campaign to get and keep the \$3.9 million in the budget.

Supportive housing works for its residents by ending the expensive cycle of homelessness, as well as the negative effects of homelessness on children's health and educational achievement. Supportive housing costs less than most alternatives, including prisons and state mental hospitals. In addition, this money will make 707 units of new supportive housing possible across the state and will affect the lives of 900 men, women, and children who have been homeless and/or have special needs, such as mental illness. The \$3.9 million for fiscal year 2007 will also leverage over \$50 million in federal funding for acquisition, rehabilitation or new construction, and operating costs. Of the \$50 million is federal funding, approximately \$1 million of this funding will come back to the state in the form of Medicaid reimbursement.

HOW would like to extend our gratitude to SHPA and everyone who fought on our behalf to keep the \$3.9 million in the budget. Congratulations on making a profound impact on your community!

● Workplace Giving

Community Shares of Illinois works closely with employers to help expand the choices available to employees in their charitable giving program. Collaborating with other charities in Illinois, including HOW, Community Shares has played a central role in the development of an award-winning program - the Combined Charities Campaign.

Established in 1997, the Combined Charities Campaign is an innovative program that allows employees to choose from among hundreds of charities while reducing the administrative burden on employers and the administrative costs to charities. In addition, the Combined Charities Campaign is designed to improve accountability with detailed reporting and the tracking of each donor's contribution.

Over the years, Community Shares of Illinois has received national recognition for its efforts in revamping and revitalizing employee charitable giving programs. Today, Community Shares of Illinois manages charitable giving programs for more than 40 employers with over 170,000 employees processing nearly \$6 million annually in pledges from 43,000 donors. Community Shares has established itself as one of the national leaders in managing expanded charitable giving campaigns in the workplace.

If you would like to learn more about how to add Community Shares of Illinois to the charitable giving program at your workplace contact Mike Doyle at mduoye@cs-il.org and mention that you learned about this great opportunity from your friends at HOW!

Volunteer Spotlight: Wendy Palmer

Wendy Palmer is the kind of volunteer who always arrives with a smile and a willingness to do whatever project that is needed. For the past three months, HOW has been lucky enough to have an extra pair of helping hands!

Wendy moved to Chicago in 1988 from Portland Oregon where she had just graduated from Lewis & Clark College. She majored in Communications with a minor in Cognitive Psychology and currently plans to return to school to study either History or Philosophy.

Wendy was attracted to HOW's mission because it empowers women by helping them become self-sustained through affordable housing and support. She felt that she had come to a point in her life that she felt ready to take on volunteer work and HOW's mission and location was just the right fit.

Her favorite thing about Chicago is its diversity that is reflected in the food, culture, and perspectives. She loves to eat ethnic food and walk her bulldog Sedgwick in her free time. Wendy's hobby is collecting vintage clothing and dreams of creating her own vintage augmented line of clothing, purses, and pillows for the home.

Thank you for our first 25 years!

Making History...

Since its founding in 1983, HOW has been at the leading edge of a number of service advances and innovations. HOW created the city's first transitional housing program for women, continued to advance homelessness prevention strategies, and expanded the provision of affordable, supportive housing to help the growing number of homeless families overcome homelessness and poverty.

Today, HOW is at the forefront of a continuing national movement to end homelessness in Chicago and increasingly across the nation by implementing the "Housing First" model. This model ensures that homeless individuals are housed as quickly as possible, and then subsequently provided with an array of support services, including case management, recovery support, employment and health services, and more. While rooted in Rogers Park, HOW continues to create and share program models that draw national attention through its success (more than 90% of HOW's graduates maintain permanent housing). HOW's Housing First and prevention efforts address root causes and create permanent solutions to the previously unyielding problem of homelessness.

In the last four years, HOW has grown significantly, increasing its services in the Rogers Park community and beyond. HOW went from serving 293 women and children in 2003 to nearly 450 households, or 744 individuals in 2007. The housing department, in response, grew dramatically to meet this demand, from 50 managed apartments in 2003 with a budget size of \$1,976,218 to over 200 apartments with a budget size of \$3,592,144. At the same time, our staff has also increased from 16 members in 2003 to its current size of nearly 40 employees. With our third property acquisition on the horizon, HOW is dynamically meeting the housing needs in the Chicago community!

One might say that Sister Pat Crowley's heart has always been with the Rogers Park community. Although originally from Wilmette, she attended St. Scholastica, a private school for girls run by the Benedictine Sisters of Chicago; in the 70's and early 80's, she served as Executive Director for the Howard Area Community Center (HACC); and she now serves as Prioress for the Benedictine Sisters—dedicating herself to the principles of service and justice.

Sister Pat was also an original founder of Housing Opportunities for Women.

"HOW grew out of our awareness of more and more homeless women who needed services in Rogers Park. As Executive Director for HACC, I knew we were already at capacity and could not serve the increasing demand," she recalls. "One day, I received a call from someone who wanted to see a woman's shelter in the community. Shortly after there were several people—with different backgrounds and various resources—all coming together to make it happen."

Another call from Alderman Stone literally put HOW on the map. "Alderman Stone, also serving as a lawyer at the time, had a client who wanted to donate a building on Jonquil Terrace to a non-profit organization. HACC had just decided to purchase the two buildings it still occupies on Paulina Avenue, so my thoughts immediately turned to HOW. The rest is history," she says. The building, now home to seven families, then served as HOW's transitional shelter for women—the first of its kind in the city of Chicago.

Sister Pat served on HOW's initial board for three years, and has stayed involved through friendships with Kathy St. Clair and Karen Singer—HOW's current Executive Director Britt Shawver's predecessors. She also served as Executive Director for the Chicago Continuum of Care which created and implement Chicago's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Although her full-time duties as Prioress and her newly created workshops for women who are in recovery preclude her from serving with the Continuum these days (now, the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness), Sister Pat remains dedicated to HOW's vision, and the vision of those who continue to work for those in need. "I receive tremendous inspiration from people who have experienced homelessness—they are terrifically persistent, and they don't lose hope in their inner core" She continues, "I see insight in the Gospels—that we must care for those who are at the margins of our society, and work for just systems in that society. And I truly believe that one person can make a difference—that each person's energy and insights create small, but powerful steps."

Tremendous thanks to Sister Pat and all whose energy and insights made HOW—and the positive change HOW has made in the Rogers Park community—possible.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Jonquil Apartments.



Ruby Konopka, HOW Recovery Specialist, reads a story about homelessness to a class on a field trip to Jonquil, 2002.



Volunteers from Baird & Warner paint the Health Activities Room, 2006.



Safiya and her mom, Felicia, HOW Receptionist, at Annual Holiday Party, 2006.



Left to right: Sister Pat Crowley and Britt Shawver, Executive Director of HOW.



HOW served 310 children in fiscal year 2007 (July 1st - June 30th).



Client of HOW proudly display's her certificate of achievement, 2006.

