



Going Places Winter 2017

New Leaders Hired For Key Roles

Jeffrey Stokoe and Janet Johnston joined PLACES in key leadership roles in November.

As the new Residential Services Coordinator, Jeff Stokoe is responsible for leading 18 staff and 12 substitutes in the provision of effective, high quality services to residents at four adult care facilities and four PSH facilities.

With a long career in behavioral health-care, Jeff was drawn to a job that focuses on hands-on service to a vulnerable segment of the population. "I'm excited about helping staff members build their capabilities to provide service that is second to none," he said.

Before joining PLACES, Jeff served as a pastoral counselor at SouthBrook Christian Church in Miamisburg and director of operations and quality improvement for GLAD House in Cincinnati. GLAD House is a certified mental health and prevention agency that works with high-risk youth who have been impacted emotionally and behaviorally by a family member with an addiction.

Prior to that time, Jeff served nearly nine years as chief operating officer for the Alcoholism Council of the Cincinnati Area, which he joined as director of quality assurance in 2003.

Jeff earned a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies and Psychology and a Masters of Divinity degree in Pastoral Care and New Testament from Anderson University in Indianapolis.

Jeff's wife, Barb, also works for PLACES as accounting clerk and program manager. In his spare time, Jeff is a Little League® baseball umpire. He will officiate the World Series for 15 and 16 year olds in Easley, S.C., this year.



Jeff Stokoe and Janet Johnston

As the new Director of Client Services, Janet Johnston is responsible for clinical oversight of service delivery. This includes reviewing clinical services at the group homes and overseeing case managers at Housing First properties and the Opening Doors and Supporting Living Programs.

Janet has a breadth of experience in behavioral health, starting in case management and therapy, then progressing into direct service and private practice.

"Throughout my career, I've wanted to work for organizations that emphasized compassion and respect for the individual, both the clients and staff," Janet said. "I found what I was finally looking for at PLACES."

Before joining PLACES, she worked four years for Butler Behavioral Health Services as a crisis counselor and program manager. She has also served as a therapist at Beckett Springs, an emergency room counselor for Miami Valley Hospital, an adjunct instructor for Cincinnati State, and a supervisor of Masters-level counseling students at Xavier

continued »

Upcoming Dates

Resident, Client & Tenant Recognition Event

March 17, 2017, from 1:30 to 3:30 pm
Washington Room,
Kohler Banquet Hall,
Kettering, Ohio

PLACES, Inc.

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University. She started her career with Community First Solutions in Middletown, where she spent four years in various clinical counseling roles.

Janet received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Miami University in 2006 and her Master of Arts in Community

Counseling from Xavier in 2009. She is a supervising licensed professional clinical counselor and supervising independent chemical dependency counselor.

Janet is married and has four children ages 11 to 20 and one granddaughter. □

PLACES Fills Unique Role in Web of Behavioral Health Services

Since 1988 PLACES has worked in partnership with other behavioral health agencies in Montgomery County to deliver services to the mentally ill, homeless and recovering substance abusers.

"We're impressed and appreciative of the role that PLACES plays. They do an outstanding job of the work they do, and in a very non-judgmental way. From the case workers to the executive director, they believe it. They've seen what a difference it can make."

*– Kathleen Shanahan,
Homeless Solutions Policy
Board*

Serving the most vulnerable among us with dignity, respect and compassion requires a complex web of public and private support. We thought it would be interesting to hear from some of PLACES' key partners about the unique role our organization has in this web.

ADAMHS (Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services)

ADAMHS boards are mandated by the state of Ohio in a model that's different from many states. They have legal responsibility and authority to provide all mental health and substance abuse services, eliminating the fragmentation of service delivery and multiple levies that other states face.

"When you have a mental health disorder, you need a place that understands," said Ann Stevens of Montgomery County's ADAMHS board. "That's key in helping people manage their disorder or securing life skills so they can live in their home and function in society. Housing is critical."

"PLACES is unique in what it does," she said. "That's why ADAMHS contracts with them. They do an excellent job in helping the most vulnerable of citizens in Montgomery County."

ADAMHS contracts with PLACES to provide programs and services to individuals with mental illness and addiction. With the heroin epidemic, Stevens says there is burgeoning demand for such services. "Dayton has become a hot bed for the heroin trade, partly due to the accessibility of I-75, I-70 and I-675," Stevens said. "It's costing

millions of dollars locally." The county has a continuum of care system to fight the epidemic, but it's still putting pressure on other behavioral health demands.

"We are seeing multiple diagnoses," she added. "People get addicted to opiates because they can't cope, are in pain, or need to find an escape. Sometimes there is a substance abuse disorder in addition to opiates or mental health issues."

According to Stevens, PLACES meets a definite need in the community. "What it does is unique and progressive, and it offers compassion and respect to the clients," she said. "Those are things people should be entitled to when they seek services. We're so glad that PLACES is a partner with ADAMHS to help the citizens of Montgomery County."

Homeless Solutions Policy Board

The Homeless Solutions Policy Board (HSPB) facilitates HUD's continuum of care in Montgomery County, which encompasses a set of services and housing ranging from prevention to street outreach and shelters to permanent or temporary housing. HSPB grew out of an effort begun in 2004 to end chronic homelessness and reduce overall homelessness. That initiative culminated in the 10-year Homeless Solutions Plan.

"The plan's goal was to create 750 supportive housing units, and we've surpassed that," said Kathleen Shanahan of HSPB. This includes the Housing First units for which PLACES provides on-site supportive services.

“PLACES meets a definite need in Montgomery County. What it does is unique and progressive, and it offers compassion and respect to the clients. Those are things people should be entitled to when they seek services.”

– Ann Stevens, Montgomery County Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services

The concept of providing people with stable housing as a first step, then services and support to keep them there, was an idea that originally came from New York. Up to that time, if people with mental illness were not already connected with the proper medications and treatment, they were not considered housing-ready. Unfortunately, some homeless people never made it through the steps to qualify for housing.

Prior to HSPB, a collection of agencies and faith-based groups in Montgomery County received money to attack the homeless problem, but with little coordination among themselves. That changed 15 years ago when HSPB pulled the various groups together into a collective response to this urgent community issue.

“Housing First was a paradigm shift, and PLACES helped implement that for us,” Shanahan said. In fact, PLACES opened the initial Housing First project for the board. “I can’t imagine where we would be without their commitment to that type of housing,”

she said. “They do a fabulous job of meeting people where they are and figuring out what it takes to keep them there. It requires a lot of flexibility and commitment.”

In the 10 years since the Homeless Solutions Plan was put into place, there has been a significant reduction in the number of chronic homeless. “We’ve made some great progress, but there are areas where we need to make more,” Shanahan said. HSPB is currently looking at key strategies for the next 5 to 7 years.

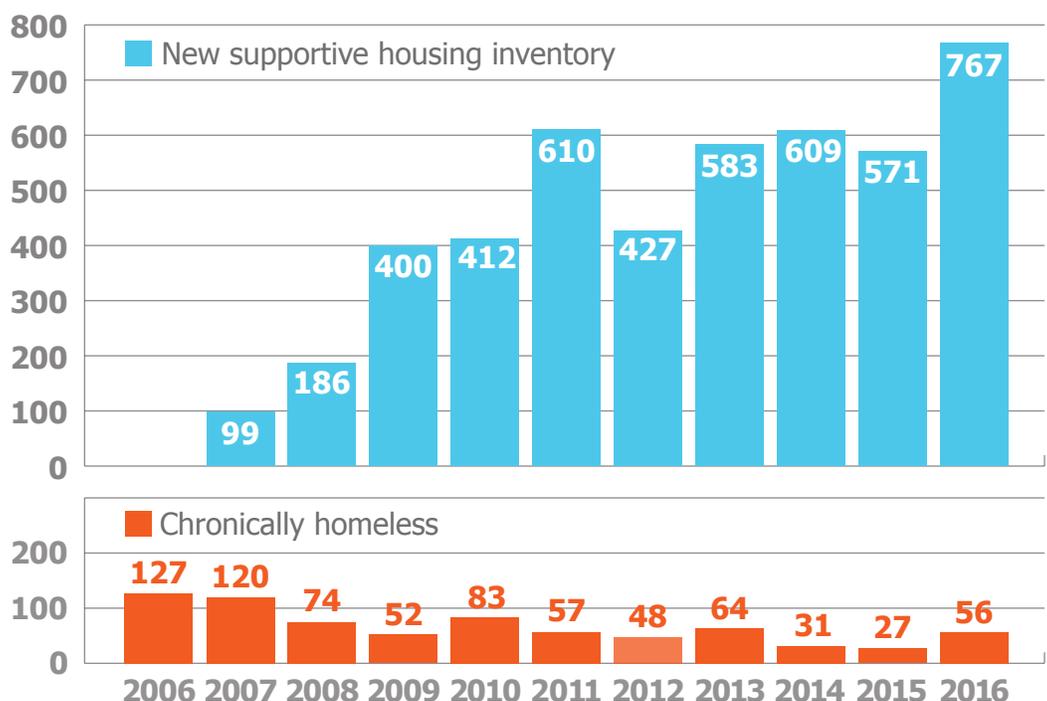
“We’ve seen tremendous improvement in people’s lives when they moved from the street into stable housing. We’ve seen improvement in physical issues, too, that were not being met until they were in stable housing,” Shanahan said. “Some people were living outside for 7 to 12 years; agencies never thought they could be housed. We successfully got them into housing and PLACES has kept them there.” □

» *Next issue we’ll show how Miami Valley Housing Opportunities works with PLACES.*

Excellent Progress over Past 10 Years

Two main goals of the Homeless Solutions Policy Board’s 10-Year Plan are to produce 750 units of permanent supportive housing and to end chronic homelessness. Significant progress has been made on both of these goals.

- » Chronic homelessness declined 56% from 2006 to 2016
- » New supportive housing units created or under development surpassed the 750-unit goal by the end of 2016



Party Brings Holiday Joy to PLACES Crowd

Kohler Banquet Center was hopping on Thursday evening, December 8, when PLACES' annual Holiday Party gathered 142 clients, residents, tenants, friends and family to celebrate the season.



Our Hearty Thanks to Our 2016 Holiday Party Sponsors

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Guests were greeted by executive director Roy Craig and Board of Trustees president Bill Schuerman before the fashion show kicked off as a fun prelude to dinner. Fourteen residents and clients proudly strutted their new outfits, which they had selected themselves, before a crowd of admirers.

"This was a new venue for our holiday party," said Kathy Nickell, who organized the event. "We've had lots of comments about the great food and wonderful atmosphere."

A delicious dinner was followed by dancing with a guest DJ and socializing among the attendees. "We thank our generous sponsors for making this evening a highlight of 2016," said Roy Craig. "As good financial stewards of the government funds we receive to run our operations, we ask sponsors to support extras like this holiday party that make life special for the people we serve." □



Guests mingle as the evening begins.



A delicious dinner was followed by dancing, hosted by a guest DJ.



Sponsors enjoy seeing clients and residents have fun.



(L to R) Andria Farnham from Linden, Marsha Russell from Trotwood, and Julie Caskey and Christine Escibano from Linden enjoy fun and fellowship with the people they serve.