Coordinated Entry and TSA Fight Homelessness

Losing the place that you call home is like looking down a long tunnel, with no light at the end.

But now, with the implementation of the Coordinated Entry program, those in danger of homelessness will not have to navigate the system alone. Third Street Alliance for Women & Children is a partner in helping to find appropriate housing solutions based on the needs of individuals and families.

The new Lehigh Valley Coordinated Entry program is a process developed to ensure that anyone experiencing homelessness has fair and equal access to assistance. As a partner in the program, TSA is the physical location site for Northampton County within the Lehigh Valley program.

“The program will help people move through the system faster and improve data collection,” said Intake Specialist Zenayda Alicea.

When a person calls or comes into TSA looking for shelter, they are interviewed using a set of specific questions. From their answers, the person’s needs are assessed as an individual or family using an analytical tool. They are prioritized according to needs, and assessed in other areas in which they are in need of support.

The program also takes all the individual agency waiting lists and merges it into one. Clients make one phone call or go to one Coordinated Entry site to receive assistance, said Janice Thomas, Director of Homeless Services.

“Coordinated Entry allows all social service agencies to be on the same page at the same time. By all of us using the same tool and the same system, we become a unified front to fight homelessness.”

In January, TSA assisted 13 individuals and 27 families were assessed. We received more than 110 calls for assistance. This is just the beginning.

As Coordinated Entry develops, placing at-risk individuals and families into appropriate services and housing will be accomplished more quickly and more efficiently.
A Note From the Executive Director’s Desk

Helping to Prevent Homelessness at TSA

If you are like me, you will be shocked to learn that according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, birth to age one is the year in an American’s life when they are most likely to experience homelessness.

In January, two women living in our homeless shelter gave birth. As we’ve worked to help these women navigate through the homeless services system we are reminded of the harmful impact that homelessness has on the health of infants and young children.

We know that children in families who experience homelessness also experience food insecurity and negative health outcomes, such as increased use of emergency rooms and hospitalizations, depression, increased rates of asthma and allergies, lower birth weights, and delayed child development, including brain development.

Here at Third Street Alliance, we are committed to eliminating infant and child homelessness. This year, with pilot funding from Two Rivers Health and Wellness Foundation, we are becoming proactive by launching a new project aimed at the prevention of homelessness among at-risk families.

Prevention and diversion services will focus on conflict mediation related to housing issues, referral to legal services for eviction prevention, counseling, and support related to job search and connections to employment.

Take Up Healthy Activities at Third Street Alliance

Did you make a resolution to be healthier? Though the first of the year has come and gone, it’s never too late to begin a new hobby or learn a new skill through community programs at Third Street Alliance.

Tae Kwon Do, a modern martial art, is a great skill for children and teens to pick up. Master Shelly approaches the sport in a non-intimidating way that is suitable for kids ages 5 and older. Classes are held weekly for beginners and advanced belts of all ages in the gym at the mansion.

Classes are divided into 8-week sessions. Cost of the session is $58. Classes run on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. Not sure if Tae Kwon Do is for you? You are welcome to sit in on a class before you sign up, too.

If you’re looking to bust a move in 2017, come out to Dancing on the Odds, held the odd Fridays of the month. Each month, learn a new style of dance. Hour-long lessons begin at 7 p.m. and general dance is held from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Cost is $10 per person and proceeds go to TSA.

The full dance schedule can be found on our website at bit.ly/classesTSA
The STEAM Lab in the mansion has one important rule for students: You must ask questions.

“We will explore as many answers as possible,” says Learning Center teacher Wendy Jamison.

She coordinates creative projects for the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) lab, where the world is opened to students.

“There is no ceiling here,” she says of the lab.

“Everything is possible.”

When she was introduced to the lab on her first day, Wendy could hardly contain herself.

“I was told they just needed someone with the ‘know how’ to get it going,” she said. “Challenge accepted. This lab is my passion.”

That passion shows as the students engage in different activities each day.

Wendy uses current events and classroom lessons to come up with topics to explore, and then finds ways to make the lesson hands-on.

“I believe in muscle memory, and having a science lab we can do that for the students,” she said.

In one recent experiment the students explored how blubber keeps animals warm in colder climates.

Crisco, representing the blubber, was applied in between two bags and students put one hand in the Crisco-lined bag and the other hand in the ice water.

For National Popcorn Day, the students learned what makes popcorn pop.

Curling their bodies tight to mimic a popcorn kernel, the students acted out how adding heat to the kernel causes the water in the kernel to steam and eventually pop.

Next, Wendy hopes to start student diaries to help them capture their achievements.

She is also planning to engage students to use the 3-D printer to engineer building a bridge.

Long term, she would like to add dedicated experiment tables, a sink and an art area to the lab.

The STEAM Lab was installed in the winter of 2016, and we thank Easton Kiwanis Foundation, the lead donor to this project and the Palmer Kiwanis Club and Air Products for their support.
Get out your fancy silk dress, silk scarf, and silk tie for the 21st Annual Bistro.

The fundraiser, set for March 4, takes on the theme “Wrapped in Silk,” which honors the Simon Silk Mills. This year, the committee is striving to raise $75,000 for the programs at TSA.

New co-chairs Leslie Alfieri and Cathy McCormick share a passion for the organization and are committed to the mission of the agency.

That passion has helped guide the planning, resulting in a few impactful changes to the annual fundraiser.

“Co-chairing this year with Cathy, we really appreciate the strong foundation past committees have provided over 20 years,” Leslie said. “Following their lead, we are adding some new touches to keep the event exciting and drawing on the history of the mansion.”

You can expect plenty of surprises the night of the event. A VIP reception in Herman Simon’s library, new this year, is planned for top sponsors.

The historic Simon mansion will serve as the background to a cocktail hour in the historic dining room, and buffet dinner served in an elegantly redesigned gym, provided by chef and caterer Elizabeth Mulrine.

Elizabeth founded the Bistro in 1996 to support programs provided through Third Street Alliance, and to share her affinity and respect for the people in our care. In 2016, TSA launched the Elizabeth Mulrine Scholarship Fund to help low income and homeless families access our child and adult day care programs.

Last year, you helped raise more than $12,700 for the Elizabeth Mulrine scholarship fund and historic preservation.

Raffles, live, silent and Fund-A-Need auctions are still on tap for this year’s event, and will include more experience packages, such as a trip to New York City with hotel stay.

You can make an impact – as a sponsor, auction item donor, or attendee. Purchase raffle tickets, $5 each or $20 for five. You do not need to be present to win prizes that include a beautiful necklace from Bixler’s jewelers, an acoustic guitar and lessons from School of Rock, and a golf package including two rounds of golf at Green Pond Country Club.

More info can be found online at bit.ly/TSA-Bistro, or by calling Kim Rose at 610-438-9423.
We’re going GREEN! Please be sure to provide us with your E-MAIL address to receive timely newsletters, program updates and event information so we can be even better stewards of your gifts. To be added to our email list, please contact krose@thirdstreetalliance.org, or visit our website.

You made a difference! Thank you to the many individuals, businesses, churches, and organizations that supported us in 2016. Your financial support, gifts of goods and services, and volunteer time helped to beautify the mansion, educate our children, entertain our adult day care clients, and enhance the lives of our shelter residents. Your kindness and generosity have a profound impact on the lives of those we serve.
Finding Joy in Volunteering

When Chris Nardone signed up to become a volunteer at Third Street Alliance, she knew she didn’t want to do office work.

The retired secretary said she didn’t even know what program she wanted to volunteer with. But she started with Sharing the Caring.

Now, she can’t imagine doing anything else. “The one requirement was to have fun,” Chris said of volunteering. “That sounded perfect to me.”

Chris has been a volunteer with Sharing the Caring for two years, spending her Friday mornings with the clients. On a weekly basis she brings articles from newspapers or magazines to share and discuss with the clients.

“I get the conversation going. I wouldn’t get that if I would be volunteering somewhere else.”

The group will discuss what they learned and trade stories of what they remember, especially when it comes to local topics.

Chris also learns new things just by talking with the clients. She said she loves hearing stories of them growing up or what they liked doing for fun through the years.

“I don’t have many talents, but I’m a good listener,” she said.

She shares with her friends the activities that she does with the clients and the joy she receives from volunteering at Sharing the Caring.

It doesn’t take much to be a good volunteer, Chris said, as long as you have fun doing it.