



# Solutions TO HOMELESSNESS



SUMMER 2014

## From Steve Schooler, Executive Director

As we celebrate 30 years of providing shelter, housing and services to those community members with the greatest need, it would be remiss of us not to lift up the countless volunteers who are indispensable to the accomplishment of our mission. The thousands of Drop-In Shelter volunteers who prepare and serve over 60,000 meals each year are critical to the operation of the shelter. Many University of Wisconsin-Madison students help with our Porchlight Products kitchen, and student athletes have adopted our resident families for various activities such as going to the Vilas Zoo. Numerous faith community and other social service organizations assist with the maintenance and upkeep of our properties. The University of Wisconsin Extension Financial Education Center provides on-site budget counseling sessions for several of our residential programs. Our Porchlight Partners program provides an opportunity for companionship for many of our residents who would otherwise be very isolated. CUNA Mutual continues to assist Porchlight with strategic planning initiatives including the further development of Porchlight Products. All of these are important volunteer activities for Porchlight and those we serve. However, one group that deserves special recognition are those who volunteer their professional services.

Dr. Ron Diamond recently received United Way of Dane County's Volunteer of the Year award. Dr. Diamond has been unrelenting in providing volunteer psychiatric services to our residents and program participants who



VA Law Clinic student & professor review case notes.

have nowhere else to turn. Dr. Diamond started the Volunteer Psychiatric Clinic at Safe Haven, Porchlight's facility providing housing and daytime services, including meals, showers, laundry facilities and services, to homeless adults suffering from serious mental illness, almost 20 years ago. He has been the managing physician ever since. Many psychiatrists work with Dr. Diamond to provide professional services to patients of this clinic as well

as much needed donated medications. The clinic serves the most challenged and challenging patients suffering from serious mental illness and for years has provided them with assistance in obtaining essential medications so critical for stability. This clinic has served thousands of patients through Safe Haven over the years.

The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine, through its MEDiC program, provides students to help staff the Volunteer Psychiatric Clinic, along with two other clinics, one located at the men's Drop-In Shelter at Grace Episcopal Church and another located at Porchlight's largest housing facility, 306 North Brooks Street. Several times a month, medical student volunteers supervised by volunteer physicians provide a fundamental level of medical care and basic assistance to residents to help them better care for themselves. Porchlight has also partnered with Meriter through the years to provide volunteer street medicine services both at the Drop-In Shelter, Hospitality House, and the Health Hut off of Fish Hatchery Road.

Recently, Porchlight began a partnership with the University of Wisconsin Law School to provide a law clinic especially for veterans. Porchlight has a number of housing programs that assist veterans, but for years there was a gap in needed legal services. In 2012, the Veterans Law Center began providing services to veterans at both the City-County Building and at Porchlight's Brooks Street facility. The clinic meets monthly at both locations, and over the past two years, over 60 attorneys and UW law students provided pro bono services to over 150 veterans and their families. They provide assistance with legal issues ranging from family law, to employment, housing, and consumer debt. The State Bar of Wisconsin recently recognized the Veterans Law Center as the Pro Bono Organization of the Year.

An example of the impact of this clinic is the assistance it provided to JC, a resident of Porchlight's Veterans Transitional Housing Program located on Spring Street.

JC was disabled and unable to work as a result of a back injury suffered while he was in the military. Despite his disability, JC continued to be pressured for child support, including threats to put him in jail. The Veterans Law Center met with JC, developed the pertinent medical information and persuaded the child support agency to lift a warrant for his arrest. JC ultimately obtained Social Security due to his disability and received benefits for his children. JC is now living in permanent stable supportive housing.

Professional services often are the greatest need but the hardest to obtain. Porchlight has been very fortunate to be part of a community with so many committed professionals. We hope to continue to expand our services through all of these clinics to help our residents and program participants overcome the challenges of homelessness.

## Jeff Nordeng: "The Comeback Kid"

Two years ago, Jeff found himself at rock bottom. He was unemployed and had nowhere to go. He lived out of his car and then a storage unit, and finally, when it became too cold, a pay-as-you-go motel, until he ran out of his savings. But Jeff didn't give up. He searched for a safe place and found a shelter in Janesville to stay for the winter. Familiar feelings of anxiety and fear set in as he searched endlessly for employment and educational opportunities.

Throughout the region, new jobs were hard to find and living costs continued to increase dramatically. Finally, he found Porchlight's Veteran's Housing Program, created to assist homeless veterans with gaining the hope, support, and stability they need to regain independence. In this program, staff assist the 24 veteran residents in accessing the tools and resources they need to reach stability again in their lives. For many veterans, they are unaware of what is available to them, and how to start and continue their climb up. Meals, personal and household essentials, health care, and ongoing support are all provided. These are essential to instilling the confidence and motivation that is vital for



Case manager Kathy Bouton with Jeff Nordeng.

each veteran resident to reach beyond setbacks and fear and to establish resiliency. Kathy Bouton, Jeff's Case Manager, helped Jeff access GI Bill funding to allow Jeff to return to graduate school. Over the next 18 months, Jeff completed his Capstone Certificate in Actuarial Science. Jeff found a secure job, and despite many unexpected obstacles along the way, including a cancer diagnosis and two major invasive surgeries, he reached another major milestone in

his journey back to independence when he moved into his own apartment in July. Jeff knows that it was the support of Porchlight and VA staff that allowed him to have faith in himself again. "If you're ever wondering what you can do to help someone who is struggling in life, do or say something that gives them reason to believe in themselves." Jeff is glad he had a place to call home, a support network in which to turn, and the faith and motivation he needed to get back to leading a full and healthy life.

## ***Wines for Humanity:***

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You and great wine ... enjoying good conversation with friends, food, and lots of fun. Have fun, sample delicious wines, and benefit the community from the comfort of your living room! Wines for Humanity offers private wine tastings to benefit DIGS, Porchlight's emergency eviction prevention program. In just two years, Wines for Humanity has raised more than \$5,500 to help Porchlight keep vulnerable households at risk of becoming homeless in their homes! To schedule your own private wine tasting, contact Lisa at: [lkromanaker@winesforhumanity.com](mailto:lkromanaker@winesforhumanity.com)

## **2013 Annual Report Correction:**

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Porchlight failed to recognize J. P. Cullen & Sons for a generous donation made in 2013. Their continued support and kindness is deeply appreciated!

## ***Vroom Vroom!***

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The Porchlight maintenance team would greatly appreciate the donation of used vehicles for use in the support of housing service and repair. It is not usually necessary to have a heavy work truck to perform routine maintenance. Any of the following types of vehicles would be very helpful: Mini-van, light truck, hatchback sedan, sport utility vehicle, cargo van. Donations or affordable offers welcome; please contact Brad Hinkfuss at (608) 257-2534 ext. 18. *Thank you!*

## **Volunteer with Porchlight!**

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Is your group looking for a volunteer service project? Make an impact with Porchlight with only a couple hours of your time! For more information, contact Beatrice Hadidian at [bhadidian@porchlightinc.org](mailto:bhadidian@porchlightinc.org) or (608) 257-2534 ext. 20.

- **Serve a Meal at Porchlight's Emergency Drop-In Shelter:** Starting in 2015, volunteer groups are needed to prepare and serve dinner on the 5th Saturday of the month and breakfast on the following Sunday. Volunteers would serve in January, May, August, and October. This is a great way to make a direct impact in the lives of those we serve! Training and orientation, and a group shadow are all provided.
- **Create "Welcome Home" Baskets:** Many of Porchlight's new residents move directly from the streets or shelters. They bring with them only what they've been able to carry on their backs for months or even years. With just a few hours of your time, you can help families and individuals feel welcome and comfortable in their new homes by creating a "Welcome Home" basket! "Welcome Home" baskets should include the following new items. If you cannot provide all

of these items, the bolded items are the most in need. We've found the simplest way to group these items is by using a laundry basket.

- **Full-size sheet set**
- **1 pillow**
- **Toilet paper**
- **Dish soap & sponges**
- **Kitchenware**
- **Pots & pans**
- Full-size blanket
- 2 full-size bath towels
- Trash bags
- Laundry detergent
- Can opener
- Alarm clock

- **Provide "Soap & Hope" Bundles:** Many of Porchlight's shelter guests and affordable housing residents have no or very little income. It can be a constant challenge to keep themselves, their clothing, bedding and towels clean. Help increase the confidence and well-being of our shelter guests and residents by assembling a small kit full of personal care essentials:

- Laundry soap - fragrance free is best to avoid possible allergies
- \$10 roll of quarters - extremely important for those who have no income
- Stain-remover spray or stick
- Bath towel
- Body wash or bar of soap



306 N. Brooks Street  
Madison, WI 53715

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## Porchlight Wish List

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Can you imagine moving into a new home with nothing but the clothes on your back? Help others feel secure and comfortable to begin their new lives with new and gently-used in-kind donations!

- Bath towels
- Twin & full size sheets
- Kitchenware
- Household cleaners
- Brooms & mops
- Pots & pans



*Porchlight strives to decrease the Dane County homeless population by providing shelter, housing, supportive services, and a sense of community in ways that empower residents and program participants to positively shape their lives.*

