

# MY PLACE GERMANTOWN

A MODEL PERMANENT HOME FOR FORMERLY HOMELESS

## History

My Place Germantown (MPG) was founded in 2007 to provide community-based permanent housing for twelve disabled men in Germantown.

After three years of planning and construction, MPG opened its doors in November 2010.

## Facilities

The housing consists of 12 efficiency apartments with kitchenettes, full closets, and private baths in a newly renovated historic building.

Two units are wheelchair-accessible and a third is accessible for the hearing and/or visually impaired.

Features include a spacious community room, laundry facilities, an exercise room, a front and a rear porch, and a large yard.

## Professional Support Services

A program director/case manager and three full-time and one part-time resident advocates provide on-site 24 hours a day seven days a week support for residents.

Staff assists residents in making connections with resources of the Germantown neighborhood.

## Neighborhood Resources

Face to Face: Dining Room, Health Clinic, Legal Services

St. Vincent's: Learning Lab Literacy Program and Food Pantry

First Presbyterian Church of Germantown: Crisis Ministry

Faith Chapel: Food Program

## Contact Executive Director

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## Homelessness in Philadelphia

- National Alliance to End Homelessness and Homelessness Research Institute reported 11,757 homeless people in and around Philadelphia.
- Philly.com reported quoting city officials, "On any given day, Philadelphia has more than 5,000 homeless people."

**Did you Know? MPG is a model for permanent housing for men with special needs in the City of Philadelphia. Because of its small scale and integration into the surrounding neighborhood, MPG serves as a model in permanent housing.**

## You can Help

**Support My Place Germantown by volunteering and donations. With your support, we can improve and extend our services to serve the needs of the less fortunate around us, guiding them to a new life.**

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### **Board Member Interview: Mr. Tom Volkert**

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Mr. Tom Volkert has been working with My Place Germantown since 2010. He has been part of the board since the beginning, and has been involved in the formation of the board. He has a background in social work and has worked with homeless people, which inspired him to be a part of MPG, realizing the great need for permanent placement for homeless people.

Early on, the neighborhood was not receptive, but Mr. Volkert worked on creating a neighborhood advisory committee. MPG is established and accepted by the neighborhood today, and is looking forward to the future. MPG model could be replicated throughout the city to support homelessness. MPG has a good reputation in terms of programming. Mr. Volkert hopes that more institutions will adapt the MPG philosophy and join hands to move forward in tackling homelessness in Philadelphia.

### **Board Member Interview: Ms. Lisa Feix**

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Ms. Lisa Feix joined MPG as a board member recently in August 2013. She learned of MPG through her affiliation with St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Germantown. She met MPG's Executive Director Mary Ellen Graham through St. Vincent's. She volunteers at the Catholic Worker Clinic/St. Francis Inn in Kensington and has listened to the stories of individuals who have been (or currently are) homeless. This experience inspired her to consider serving on the board of MPG.

As a relatively new board member, Lisa believes MPG continues to create an awareness of homeless men in Philadelphia. She thinks MPG's model of community involvement, resident participation, in conjunction with the services and hard work provided by MPG's staff, has made a significant impact on homelessness in the Germantown community. If the model employed by MPG were replicated throughout the city, huge strides could be made in creating adequate housing for the homeless population of Philadelphia.

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### **Pictures from MPG fundraising event at Carmen Ezzo and Rosemary Duffey's home on October 16, 2013**



## Finding Their Voices: Finding Community

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In recent weeks, the men of My Place Germantown, supported and encouraged by the staff, have made remarkable progress in identifying not only their own needs, but also those of the residence as a whole. Growing in confidence and self-awareness the residents have become actively involved in organizations that provide opportunities for problem solving, effective communication, and the exercise of leadership skills.

Presently one resident serves on the Neighborhood Advisory Committee, which consists of staff, neighbors and now a resident. This group addresses house and local concerns as well as event planning. Another resident serves on the Policy Committee, one of the standing committees of the Board of Directors. Three additional residents, who are elected by the residents, serve on the Tenant Committee, which addresses a range of house issues, from pest control to planning holiday celebrations. Lastly, one resident who volunteers attends the Board of Directors' meetings to provide a summary of current life in the house.

All of these opportunities to participate in governance have been embraced by the residents. For some it means overcoming social anxiety, for others learning to be flexible and willing to compromise. But all welcome the forums for impacting the life of the house and the community where they live.

Mary Ellen Graham

Executive Director

### **Pictures from MPG fundraising event at Oaks Cloister on April 27, 2014**

