

November 2015

the CROSSWALK



Golfing for Dollars!

“Thank you” seems so inadequate. Really good friends of Benilde Hall, and of the homeless and veterans showed up on two September mornings to have fun and play golf. Two glorious Fridays! The results were a full measure of donation dollars for the benefit of the Hall’s clients. Here are some of the details – Re/Max Innovations’ “Red, White & Blue” tournament first:

Re/Max Innovations really knows how to run a great golfing event. The organization’s second annual tournament on September 11 was a great success. Overall, it generated more than twice as much as was raised the year before. The Staley Farms course had been pounded the night before with more than five inches of rain, but it stood up to the challenge of 33 four-person teams. After golf, the golfers ate perfectly grilled Kansas City strip steaks donated by a tournament sponsor. All proceeds – a pretty big check – were delivered to Benilde Hall to support service to military veterans. Thank you, Eddy Saylor; you and your staff are Aces in our books!

Two weeks later, on September 25, Benilde Hall’s own golf event, the Sixth Annual, was held at Blue Springs Country Club. Fifteen teams played on a gorgeous day and then met for a Zarda Barbeque lunch. Our special thanks go to board member “Doc” Golden and to Sylvia Hoover from the Benilde Hall staff. Those two worked tirelessly to make the event fun and profitable. Money was raised, and everyone had a good time too.

The bottom line was two good events that raised \$30,000 for Benilde Hall! That’s not quite enough to cover five days’ operating expense here, but it is \$30,000 more than the Hall had before the golf committees worked their magic. Much obliged to all participants and volunteers. See you next year.

Christmas Season Open House

This year’s Holiday Open House will be held on Friday, December 4, 2015. Come join in the fun. We promise lots of good food and great conversations – with friends of the Program, staff, and clients. Based on past years parties, you can expect everyone to be in a good mood for the Open House. As always, we gather on the main campus. Our doors are open most of the day. We serve food from 11:00 until 2:00.

No charge; instead, a bucket will be available for free will offerings.

Mark your calendar, please. Your presence means a lot to us and to the clients too. You have the opportunity to meet others who are doing something about homelessness in the richest country on earth. (Lots of people talk about homelessness and addictions, but you actually do something about those issues.) While you are here, you will have the opportunity to wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to others who support recovery.



*Holiday Open
House
December 4th
11am-2pm*



Kent Jewell Open Letter

Dear Friends of Benilde Hall:

Let's get the asking out of the way and then talk about the future. There are hundreds of worthy causes, and dozens of them probably know your name and address and email contact information. Well, Benilde Hall is one of those worthy causes. The purpose of this letter is to thank you for your past support and to urge you to give this place special consideration as 2015 draws to a close.

The Hall's clients are needy. We do for them what you allow us to do. We try to feed them as we feed ourselves, to house them as we would like to be housed, and to counsel them in the manner we know leads to sobriety and stability. The men we serve depend on the goodness of strangers. Many of them flourish in the good news we provide: "There is an answer; a new day is dawning; now is the time; this is the place!"

Visit our website, www.benildehall.org. Donation information is on page one. Follow the simple instructions or call me or D'Ann Clark. Whatever way you choose to give, be part of the solution.

The year to come is going to be good. We are going to be more focused and intentional in all we do. We are going to continue growing in wisdom and vision and in the number of men and women we serve. Specific plans are in the works! Walk with us. Work with us. I am always interested in hearing from Benilde Hall's friends, even from the Hall's detractors! Call me, and thank you for your support.

Kent Jewell, Executive Director

Do You Remember?

At the end of this year approaches, some of us turn nostalgic. How about you?

Do you remember Linus Benoit, the short of stature, former executive director of Benilde Hall? He was not the first director for the Hall, but he had a huge impact. Linus had a great smile and a huge heart. He knew every client by name, and he used his affability to get around, over, and under client masks and barriers and barricades. He was perceptive and outgoing. He umpired kids' baseball games to relieve the anxieties of his Benilde Hall duties. He was a great mentor.

Do you remember former board chair Bernie Sullivan? Do you remember his smile and his optimism? How about his conviction that Benilde Hall was the Lord's work? How about some of the other former members of the board of directors? You know, don't you, that Godfrey Kobets personally recruited all of the original directors for the Hall? Kobets did not spend a lot of time looking for people to assemble for a diverse board. Instead, he recruited from the roster of former football players that he had coached at De LaSalle High School. One of the requirements for board service back then was willingness to show up for weekly lunch meetings with Kobets! Those were the days.

Back in the day, board membership involved hands on efforts. The Hall was less sophisticated than it is now. Board service today requires a spirit of wanting to help the truly needy combined with knowledge of how "things" get done in this day and age. If this sounds like something you might enjoy, call Kent Jewell or Chaplain Stephen to talk about your interest. You just might start a new tradition as you find your place for service at Benilde Hall.

"The year to come is going to be good."



JoAnn Stovall interview

Note: JoAnn Stovall is the newly-installed Clinical Director for Benilde Hall. She brings a wealth of experience to her position and is a direct reporter to Kent Jewell, the Hall's Executive Director. Ms. Stovall is a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), a Certified Reciprocal Advanced Alcohol Drug Counselor (CRAADC), Certified Gambling Disorder Counselor (CGDC), Mental Health First Aid Professional (MHFA), and she has other related substance disorder credentials. She combines her expertise in social work along with her skills in administration of recovery programs. Ms. Stovall recently sat with the editor of *the CROSS-WALK* for an interview. Here is a condensed version of their conversation.

Ed.: Describe your various duties as Benilde Hall's Clinical Director.

Stovall: I direct operations at the Hall's Safe Haven campus. Social work is our primary concern there, so I get to know all the veterans, their needs, and their situations. My staff and I assist them as they adjust back into civilian society, helping them with housing, employment, family dynamics, and other concerns. When I am not doing that, I am likely on the main Benilde Hall campus working with clients there on many similar issues and with the overall operations of the organization.

Ed.: You combine experience in recovery work with credentialed experience in social work. Which field interests you more?

Stovall: Whatever I'm working on at the time. Seriously! You think I'm ducking the question, but it's the truth. There is nothing I like more than seeing men and women build their recovery and get to the point where social work can really help them get back on track. I enjoy what I do!

Ed.: Thirty years working with recovering people. You have seen it all, right?

Stovall: Well, if you're asking about development of better methods of helping alcoholics and addicts, the answer is yes. We have the old discipline of 12-Step programs and the tried-and-true idea that anyone who wants recovery can get it. To that, we have added sophisticated techniques and professional regimens. I'm "old school" on a lot of things, but I'm always incorporating better ways to help an addict help himself. Now, if you're asking me about lives being destroyed, the answer is no; I have not yet seen it all. I have already seen too much. Just for example, the drugs available on the street today are truly horrific. The new drug "Krokodil" mimics heroin, but it literally destroys flesh! Users lose their arms, legs, feet, and then their lives. That is just one of the drugs on the street. Drugs are not funny, not at all. They're horrible and heartbreaking.

Ed.: You have been a college professor. Do you miss that?

Stovall: Well, no because I continue to teach. Just like Kent Jewell, Benilde Hall professionals continue to teach in all we do. We continuously educate our staff so that clients are offered the best service possible.

Just like everyone else, I must practice personal discipline, doing what I can do while still taking care of myself. I am working with other professionals at the Hall in presenting outreach programs alerting healthcare and spiritual professionals in this area about successes in treatment for alcoholics and addicts, combating the community's lingering impression that there is little to be done to combat addiction. So, I can scratch my continuing teaching "itch."

Ed.: Thank you for your time, JoAnn. It is fascinating watching how you demand respect from clients and co-workers alike. You never ask for that respect, but your demeanor commands it. You have a big heart, a big personality, and a big skill-set for this work.

Stovall: You're welcome and very kind. I enjoyed giving this interview. I love our newsletter and everything about Benilde Hall. *The CROSSWALK* is a great way for readers to learn about our clients, and readers get a chance to be a life-giving part of what we do through making financial contributions. When you compare the cost of what we do with the costs of jails and prisons, we are the biggest bargain in town! And those are fair comparisons. For many Benilde Hall clients, it often is treatment or more incarceration. Oh my goodness! What a bargain the Hall is for our city. A reader who gives a yearend gift of \$50 or \$100 or begins monthly support at \$20 or \$30 can have a profound impact on a suffering person's recovery. We're partners – the Hall and its supporters.

As I said, this was fun. Come interview me again sometime. I love it.



2015 Wish List

Linens – Sheets (singles), towels and washcloths! Primarily for Safe Haven, any color, but no cartoon characters, please!

Volunteer webmaster (part-time)—He or she must be curious by nature, willing to visit with staff to ask what’s going on, eager and able to report current events on websites.

A commercial clothes dryer – Men and women coming “inside” after having lived “outside,” sometimes bring bedbugs with them. (*Last issue, we said “insects” rather than “bedbugs.” Readers asked what we were talking about. Moral: be direct.*) We wash what new clients bring in, but washing does not kill bedbugs. If staff had a commercial dryer, free-riding beasties would die . . . and this would be a better place to live and work!

Awareness of divine bounty! The Almighty is perfectly generous and good. God’s bounty is everywhere, and all of us are beneficiaries!



*Some of these items have appeared here before; others are making their debuts with this issue. Gentle reader, pick a favorite; better yet, pick two!

Short Takes: Clients' Comments (edited)

“Telling my story is really difficult. I used to think and say that I lived at home to take care of my mother. But the truth was that I lived at home to allow “Mom” to take care of me. She supported me and my drinking habit. She’s gone now, passed away two years ago. Soon afterwards, my brother and sister evicted me. They gave me 30 days to get out. My mother’s lawyer showed me that she had deeded the house to the other two kids – all legal and everything. My mother never told me she was doing that. Too embarrassed? No. That’s what I thought at first. But it wasn’t embarrassment. She was afraid, afraid of my temper.

“It took me a long time to understand all this. I spent a couple of years “out there,” drinking and being angry as hell at my brother and sister and being furious at “Mom.” I’m sober today. Today I know that “Mom” saved my life. If she had left me anything, I would have finished drinking myself to death. I can’t make it up to her, bless her, but I am considering if I need to make amends to my brother and my sister. I’m 52 years old, just beginning to figure things out. Thanks for listening.” *Client name withheld.*

“My story is not unique. (Saying that is progress for me; for a long time I thought I was unique.) I suffer from PTSD that goes back to incidents during my childhood. It was pretty strange growing up with my ever-changing family, strange and wild, “life on a merry-go-round.” As soon as I could get away from “home,” I did. I jointed the Air Force. That’s where I found dinking and drugs. I got high and stayed high, and I never grew up, got big as a man can get to be but no closer to “grown up” than I was the day I enlisted. I believe in the Lord, always have and always will, but my faith could not save me from my destructive tendencies. I needed treatment and medical help and counseling, lots of that. Through the VA and Benilde Hall, I am much better, moving out soon to live on my own. With God’s holy power, I know that I am blessed. I think I’m ready. *Client name withheld.*

BENILDE HALL

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Benilde Hall’s mission is to promote balanced and responsible independent living by preventing the relapse of chemically dependent homeless men through housing and substance treatment so they can work and live without the havoc and chaos caused by addiction and homelessness.

the CROSSWALK is a monthly newsletter, Sylvia Hoover, editor. To subscribe for electronic publication, write to shoover@mail.benildehall.org.