



the CROSSWALK

A Must See Video! Seeing Ourselves as Others See Us

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Special points of interest:

- Beds are full and waiting lists are long. As you read these notes have a good thought (and a prayer if you're so inclined) for homeless people in our midst.

A significant supporter of Benilde Hall, the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City, has just released a video honoring the Hall and its work in treating mental illness, addiction, and homelessness. In less than three minutes running time, Benilde Hall is called "an oasis" in the city; the work we do is described as "unique." The video concludes with the statement that Benilde Hall is "creating a new Kansas City."

The Hall has been the subject of earlier videos, also available on the Internet, but this is the best yet. In a world of people who have never heard of this place and who may be oblivious to the work being done here, this video paints an uplifting

portrait of the Benilde Hall Program of recovery.

The Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City administers funds generated by the sale several years ago of a chain of metropolitan hospitals. This year the Foundation chose Benilde Hall as a featured agency. This "hot new" video is intended to show what kinds of work the Foundation supports.

As a supporter and friend of Benilde Hall, you are someone who must see this video! Here are easy directions: Go to the home page for Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City. There, you can click on YouTube. You're there! Watch the first video listed,

the newest video -- Grantee Spotlight on Benilde Hall!

Benilde Hall is honored to be supported by the Foundation and pleased to be chosen as a "Spotlight" agency for 2014/2015. Hearing nice things said about us? That's always nice.



Monthly Support – A New Year's Resolution?

Regular monthly contributors to Benilde Hall call themselves the "Companions' Club," and their number is growing over the past six months. Members set their own support level at whatever they can afford – \$20, \$25, \$35, \$50, \$100, or more. Through monthly support, Companion Club members become part of the journey that Benilde

Hall clients walk. Club members participate in clients' journeys from homelessness to a world of real possibilities. Club members participate in clients' journeys from despair to hope!

The Companions' Club of regular contributors was first described in print in *the CROSSWALK* last August. Response was grati-

fying. With support from its friends, Benilde Hall is able to do what it is called to do. It's not too late for you to make a 2015 New Year's Resolution to be a regular contributor to the Hall.

To join, call 816 842 5836 and speak with D'Ann or Chaplain Stephen.

Interview with Officer Jason Cooley, KCPD

Editor: (Jason Cooley is the Community Relations Officer for the East Patrol of the KCPD. Cooley recently met with Benilde Hall's Chaplain Stephen to talk about the KCPD, his duties, and about homelessness issues. Here is a condensed version of their conversation.)

Chap.: Officer, please give us a description of your responsibilities as East Patrol's Community Officer.

Cooley: I am the Department's contact person in the East Patrol area. I work with 32 neighborhood associations and with two industrial associations also located in this part of the city. Making this a safer community is the Department priority, so I am intimately involved in crime prevention activities. Those are the highlights of my job.

Chap.: The Department and Benilde Hall know each other through complementary services to KC's homeless folks. What's happening as regards homelessness these days?

Cooley: Weather-wise, it's been a tough winter already. As November and December temperatures plummeted, I checked on camps and found them abandoned for the most part. One man in a wheelchair told me that everyone had left and that he was leaving soon. As you can imagine, camps are routinely empty during December and January.

Chap.: Tell our readers your perception of homeless camps

and homeless living on the east side of Kansas City.

Cooley: Understand the Department's and my perception of homelessness. It's dangerous. Living outside is risky behavior. Cold is only one danger. Drugs and alcohol are prevalent year 'round. Fights break out, and muggings happen. These folks are living near roads and highways. They're at risk from errant drivers and from a hundred other different dangers, natural dangers – floods, snakes, tics, mosquitoes – you name it, and other dangers too. I don't go to camps to make arrests; I go to try to get people inside – to a shelter or to a treatment facility, whatever. From a safety point of view, anywhere inside beats everywhere outside!

Chap.: I think of men who survive outside, but from other conversations with you, I know there are homeless women too...

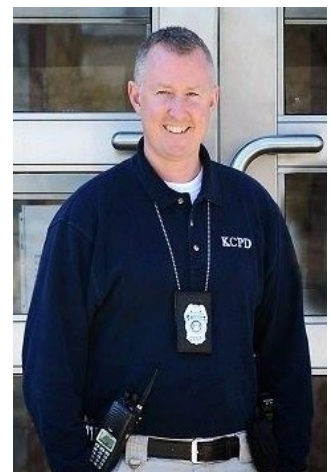
Cooley: Women and sometimes children, although that's tough to establish. For instance, last summer, I visited a tent community and saw children's toys nearly stacked right in the middle of the camp. The story was that the children's custodial parent occasionally brought two children to visit their father in the camp. I never saw a child there, and from what I was told, the children who came were only visiting. As I said before, it's risky behavior – no matter who it is.

Chap.: Police used to use vagrancy laws as a device to bring people in. Is there any tool like that you can use now?

Cooley: Not really, not unless there's some indication of a serious mental illness or some crime has been committed. And that's too bad in my opinion. A society that permits people to live in jeopardy is expressing tacit acceptance of what can happen "out there," from sexual assaults to random crimes to theft and violence, even death. Our society tends to ignore homelessness. You know: Out of sight, out of mind.

Chap.: Thanks for your insights and time.

Cooley: You're welcome. My work is made easier by competent and willing agencies such as Benilde Hall, agencies that can actually make a difference for people in harm's way.



Kent Jewell Interview

Q.: We're beginning another year. Putting aside the challenges for the moment, what are this year's successes for the Benilde Hall Program?

Successes? Every man who gets back on his feet is a success for himself and for the Program. It was a good year for successful discharges – men leaving our place clean and sober, economically stable, with suitable living arrangements to go to. The other notable success is adding 14 additional beds during 2014. That's our Safe Haven program. Calendar pages turn, and Benilde Hall transitions gradually in an effort to meet the needs of the men we serve. We continue to try to meet the needs of the neediest.

Q.: You have been a counselor at Benilde Hall, and you supervise and teach counselors. How do you assess the counseling being delivered at Benilde Hall today? Given the sort of population Benilde Hall has, where and how do counselors get the level of maturity they need?

The counseling is good. Our counselors have good supervision with Dr. Geri (Washington) and "Myke" Hill. We have a core of good, young counselors. We experience turn-over too, people who hire on here but who won't or can't do things our way. I'm proud of our counselors. We encourage them to improve themselves through continuing education. Maturity in coun-

seling comes from making mistakes and not wanting to repeat those mistakes. We stress that.

Q.: Visitors to the Benilde Hall campus comment that they observe a positive attitude on the campus generally. Talk to us about BH's clients. Have clients changed over the years? What insights do you have about today's Benilde Hall clients?

No two men have the same story about getting here, but their stories are similar. Something happened and then something else happened. Life became too difficult what with debts and domestic issues and legal issues and red tape. Factor use and abuse issues into the equation, and the whole thing just becomes too much for many. You get the picture. No one starts out with a plan to become homeless, but it happens every day. Most of the men respond to this place positively, and they do that in just a few days. That's what visitors notice, a positive attitude. After you've been here for awhile, you feel it, and you notice when it's absent too, when something's wrong.

We cannot satisfy all of our clients all the time. I have a sensitive ear; I hear grouching, particularly this time of year. It's a symptom of "cabin fever!"

Q.: We began with you putting aside challenges "for the moment." Thank you. That moment is over. What are some of the challenges that Benilde Hall must face in 2015 and beyond?

Benilde Hall has enough friends in the community that we're going to be alright. Sometimes that's difficult to remember, like when payroll is due and the bank account is a dollar or two shy of what it ought to be. Here's the real challenge in a nutshell. The inner-city is rough. Lots of bad things that happen here, but fewer and fewer agencies exist to address the real issues. There are more homeless men and women out there than there are agencies willing to help. That's a constant challenge. We made it this far. We'll be alright.

Q.: Although Benilde Hall has a 20 year operating history and is a United Way agency, the Program does not enjoy a wide support base. What is Benilde Hall doing to increase awareness of its activities and to broaden its support base?

The board of directors is taking steps right now to spread the good news about what we're doing. We started the CROSS-WALK in 2014, and we will publish more frequently this year and increase our circulation base. What we do is being noticed. We are not the "best kept secret in town," not anymore. The fact is that people are willing to reach into their pocketbooks and wallets to be part of this work. Once the public knows about us, they support us. We're getting there.



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.

Clients' Selected (and edited) Holiday Memories

"I have nice holiday memories right now. I missed a lot of holidays while my kids were growing up. I missed holiday events 'cause I was locked up! Looking back, it seems that I was always going to jail or prison in the fall and getting out in the summer. No room for good Christmas memories in that pattern. Things are better now. My counselor is helping me process thoughts about good times I missed." *Client name withheld.*

"Holiday memories? Sure. Some good, like this

year's. But there was that one year. Thanksgiving Day it was. My stepfather is a good guy, so it really surprised me and my mother and sisters too when he, right in the middle of the family's big dinner, looked at me across the table and blurted out 'every family has a black sheep. 'I don't think he meant to humiliate me, just to call attention to my presence at the family table, but he sure did embarrass me. Silence at the table was thicker than the gravy on the potatoes! It hurt. Everyone at the table could feel my embarrassment." *Client name withheld.*

"My first sober Christmas just passed! My brother was calling me before Christmas to ask me if it would be alright for him to have a beer while I'm there. Four times he called me to ask me that! I kept saying 'it's okay.' Understand, my bro's 'one beer' might be two or six or ten before the day ends. The good thing was that I could leave my folks' place when I wanted to and when I needed to. I have a life today and a safe place to return to. Thanks Benilde Hall." *Client name withheld.*

Salute for "Red, White, and Blue" Fundraising



A beaming Eddy Saylor is shown accepting the 2014 Achievement Award from Benilde Hall. The scene is RE/MAX Innovations Christmas party. RE/MAX Innovations is a leading real estate brokerage leader that offices in Kansas City North. During 2014, RE/MAX Innovations actively supported the Hall in several ways including hosting a beautifully run golfing event in September. All proceeds of the event were directed to Benilde Hall. Roy Riffe, Benilde's development director, is the smiling man on the left. He extended the reward to RE/MAX Innovation and presented the plaque to Mr. Saylor. The report is that everyone had a good time!