

the CROSSWALK



Got one of these?
See page 4



Golfers! See page 4



First Women Clients

The Safe Haven program operated by Benilde Hall waited more than a year for referral of its first female client, but she is here and on campus, and the Safe Haven staff is excited about her presence. For anyone who doesn't yet know the Safe Haven story, here it is. Safe Haven is a separate program operated on a campus about one mile east of the Hall's main campus. Safe Haven care is offered pursuant to a contract between Benilde Hall and the VA. Safe Haven provides short-term care (90 days, plus or minus) for homeless adults. It is open to armed-services veterans only.

With many social programs, women (more than men) tend to get "lost in the shuf-

fle." So, obtaining a feminine client referral and having her arrive on campus are huge developments for Safe Haven and for Benilde Hall (the "sponsor" organization). Victimization, fear, and anxiety often prevent women, even those who are homeless and desperate, from taking advantage of care and treatment options. Safe Haven is doing what it can to overcome reluctance on the part of women veterans. Safe Haven hopes to provide its women clients with comfort and care in a low-stress atmosphere and help them return to society able to take care of themselves.

From the start, the Safe

Haven campus was designed with the anticipation of service to male, female, and veterans suffering from impairments or limited physical abilities. Twenty-four / seven staffing assures that all clients come and go and stay without aggravating anxieties occasioned by service-related or pre-existing trauma. To reach a Safe Haven admission counselor, call 816 326 7755 .



If Now is the Time, This is the Place!

Benilde Hall and its separate Safe Haven project are both accepting referrals this summer. If you are homeless and you need help with issues such as addiction or alcoholism or mental illness, the summer is an ideal time to inquire about getting into Benilde Hall or Safe Haven. Maybe it's not you. Maybe it's a friend or a brother or a sister, a daughter or a son. If you know a homeless someone, this may

be the time, and these may be the places!

A few beds are available right now. Anyone who really wants what these two programs offer needs to call the Hall (816) 842 5836 or to call Safe Haven (816) 326 7755. Waiting lists change daily! Those who qualify and really want to get in, get in. Some callers have to register with the KCVA before they can get in here; other

homeless men can be admitted almost immediately.

If your situation or the situation of a friend or loved one just stinks, Safe Haven or Benilde Hall may be the answer. "Stinks?" Is that the right word? Is that word appropriate? Yes, it is. Homelessness stinks. There are answers here. Place your call now or encourage your loved one or friend to call today.

Survival and Success – Benilde Hall Graduate Tells All

Next year, God willing, I turn 40. My friends and family never thought I would live that long. Why not? Well, I started doing methamphetamine and other drugs when I was just 13. My using got me into trouble, real trouble, first with juvenile officials and then with everyone in authority. I was in adult jails at age 17. When I was out, I was on my own, a nice way of saying I was homeless. And I was still running and drinking and using, on the path marked “This way to destruction.”

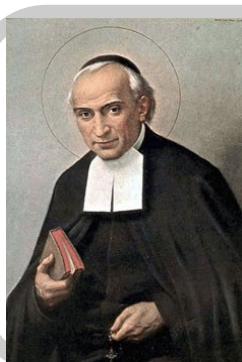
I first heard of Benilde Hall in the 90s. I checked in. At the time, I was the youngest client that Hall had ever tried to help. I still am one of the youngest people who ever lived at Benilde Hall. They were good to me there, especially my counselor, Robert Davis. I was clean for awhile too, but never clean for long. I checked into Benilde

Hall two more times; then, as they say, I GOT IT the third time. The guy in charge then, Linus Benoit, took an interest in me. Linus kept telling me that I was an alcoholic. I didn’t believe him. I didn’t particularly like alcohol. I liked meth highs! But, eventually, I had to admit that Linus was right. My pattern was to drink first, and THEN do drugs. Like Linus said, it was the first drink that got me, not the last drink or the drugs. It was the first darned drink!

The last time I checked into Benilde Hall was 2007, two days after Linus’ sudden death. He wanted me to have his copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s “Big Book.” I still have that and other special mementos from Linus. The wreckage of the past is pretty much behind me now. I got a great job right out of Benilde

Hall. My boss wanted me to succeed and showed me how. I am responsible now with three kids and love and self respect. I’m invested in recovery, and I have three holes in one! Benilde Hall? I love the place and help it every way I can.

(Former Client, name withheld. Interview submitted for Benilde Hall’s newsletter, the CROSSWALK. Many former clients are willing to disclose their names as part of their stories. However, because disclosure by one could pressure another . . . with the result of fewer clients telling their stories, it is editorial policy to publish all client stories anonymously.)



St. Benilde Romancon

Short Takes: Clients’ Comments (edited)

“How I got here (Benilde Hall) is not all that interesting. I didn’t have a plan or goal to become homeless, but I did have help! My “Ex,” bless her heart, evicted me, and my brother got tired of me crashing on his couch. It was a combination of money and personal problems – a perfect storm! And when I asked to get into Benilde Hall, there was a waiting list! Wow; talk about singing the blues. My first roommate here had a real bad attitude. I wanted to be as unlike him as possible. I went to every group I could and started to see how my life might be different, better. My goal is to get a place where my two kids can visit me; “sleep-over’s,” you know. I’m going to get to that place, swear it.” *Client name withheld.*

“Every morning, I wake up in amazement. You see, I’m a hermit at heart, but now I live in a *dormitory*. Before I ‘came in,’ I lived in the woods in the middle of the city. Where? Well, if you drive around Kansas City very much, you have probably driven by my old “house.” I almost guarantee it. I built it myself. You couldn’t see it from the road unless you knew exactly where to look. Pretty cool, but it was a dead-end. I drank and used there and had no hope. The wreckage of the past is pretty much behind me now. I have made friends here. The Hall’s people and the other clients help me. They’re better friends to me than I was to myself. That’s the truth.” *Client name withheld.*

“This is my second time here. I discharged a year ago, “successfully,” and moved into an apartment. You can figure out what happened then. My sobriety evaporated. I need more than some other guys need. I need support. It’s okay. My plan this time is to get a place close to the Hall and to come back here for groups. Heck, I can talk to newcomers and maybe help them by sharing my experience and hope. Like I said, coming here twice for help is okay. I’m glad to be here, and I’ll be glad when I am prepared to leave.” *Client name withheld.*

Chaplain's Open Letter

Dear Friends of Benilde Hall:

It has been my pleasure to serve as chaplain here for more than a year. Before I moved into a campus office, I was curious about what to expect. The people I have met here and what I have found here stagger my imagination and test my vocabulary.

Call me sometime. Come see me. Let me show you around, introduce you to a few people – staff and clients. What a cross-section of humanity! Here you encounter men who aspire to be somebody once again and men who have lost all hope. The amazing fact is this: No one can tell in advance who wants a better life and who just doesn't care. So the counselors begin as if everyone is serious. And lo and behold, they're right more than they're wrong!

Do you know that Benilde Hall is over 20 years old? How can it be that a place this successful, doing this kind of difficult work, can be almost unknown in its own city? Two challenges to those who have read this far: First, this week, tell someone about Benilde Hall. Do that . . . and repeat next week. Second, consider making your financial support of Benilde Hall regular, even monthly, \$20, \$25, \$35, \$50, \$100, more if you can do that. By their monthly support, "Companion Club" members become part of the journey that our clients walk.

The people who work here must listen to truly awful accounts of ugly facts from clients' lives. But they also witness remarkable recoveries here. Your support makes a real difference for the men served here.

Thank you,

Rev. Stephen H. King, Chaplain

Meet the Board / Serve on the Board

Roger Dusing, Chair of the Benilde Hall Board of Directors, announces that Mark Porter has officially joined the Board for a three-year term. Porter describes himself as a "community activist and problem solver." Mark is a long-time friend of Benilde Hall and current president of 100 Men of Blue Hills as well as executive director of the Southeast Neighborhood Association. In 2002, Porter retired after a 31-year career with Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, and he has been busy ever since. He received the Swope Community Builders Good Neighborhood Award in 2004. He has also been recognized for community-service by Genesis School and by the 49/63 Neighborhood Association.

Porter's taking a director's seat follows two other 2015 additions to the board as previously announced. "Doc" Golden and Brian Morales came onto the board the first of the year.

Mr. Dusing continues to invite interested friends of Benilde Hall to consider service on the Benilde Hall Board of Directors. "Mark Porter coming onto the board is a good reminder for friends of this place to consider – or reconsider – support of the Program's mission. Not everyone has Mark Porter's depth of experience and broad-based support," Dusing says, "but the board has a variety of needs. Doc Golden, Brian Morales, and Mark Porter have the potential to contribute a lot to what this board needs to be. There are still spots for other new board members. As soon as board candidates are confirmed, they can begin to help guide this program and help the program grow in service and efficiency."

Interested friends of Benilde Hall may call Chaplain Stephen (King) at the Hall to get information about board service. Or, they may send the chaplain a resume-type statement of their experience.



2015 Wish List

BENILDE HALL

3220 E 23rd St
Kansas City, MO 64127

Phone: 816-842-5836
Fax: 816-421-5026

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

Plates, bowls, and flatware! Two of the Hall's best friends brought 60 coffee mugs to campus. The misprinted mugs read "cheeburger" rather than "cheeseburger." Someone else's bad news is the Hall's good news. The men like the mugs . . . a lot! Both campuses need china or durable plastic dishes and sturdy knives, forks, and spoons. Misprints welcome!

Volunteer webmaster (part-time)! 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.

Divine or angelic intervention to solve the Benilde Hall smoke-stack quandary: We at the Hall have been told that the stack must come down . . . but we don't have the thousands of dollars needed to make that happen.

Commercial Clothes Dryer!! Laws of nature apply here just as they do elsewhere. So, men coming to the Hall from "outside" sometimes bring insects with them. We wash what the men bring with them. If we could then put everything into a commercial dryer, all generations of the little free-riding beasts would die. 'Nough said.

Optimism and Hope! Benilde Hall and Safe Haven clients successfully discharge every month, without fanfare . . . but with confidence in the future. Here's a good idea: Greet eve-

ryone with a positive attitude . . . he or she might have recently completed a recovery program. You might be one of the first people she or he encounters today!

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

One or Two Brushcutters – Benilde Hall Services is busy this summer cutting weeds and grass from more than 500 City-owned lots. Services is mowing and cutting elsewhere too. Many of the lots the men are mowing have not been well attended. The men need two Billy Goat Brushcutters or equivalent machines. The men need heavy duty equipment to do the work they have taken on. They need two machines, but they will settle for one; new or used in good condition, please.

September Golf Tournaments – Two Fridays to Remember

As we go to press, the city has experienced rain, rain, and more rain. Golfers and outdoor enthusiasts are itching for dryer days. When the rains abate, area golf courses will be in top condition, with lush turf, full ponds and lakes just waiting to swallow errant shots. If these prospects appeal to you, mark your calendars now for two September golf events.

First, on Friday, September 11, 2015, the RE/MAX Innovations "Red, White & Blue" Tournament returns to the challenging Staley Farms Golf Club for its second annual outing – with proceeds going to Benilde Hall. This well-run event honors our nation's military. Tee-off time is 9:11 a.m. The contact person for "Red, White & Blue" is Carol Lalumondier, 816 777 3259.

Two weeks later, on September 25, Benilde Hall's Golf event visits Blue Springs Country Club, a beautiful course that requires golfers to use their skills and to employ all the clubs in their bags. Registration forms are available at the Hall now. Why wait? Call Sylvia Hoover (816 842 5836) to get a form or register with Sylvia over the phone by providing information about your team. (Golfers in groups of less than four will be scheduled into foursomes.)

Both events feature prizes, contests, raffles, and, shotgun scramble, best-ball formats. All levels of players can enjoy the days and the courses and each other's company – along with good food and drinks.

Play one tournament for sure, both if possible. See you there!



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.