

The Streetlight

Shining a light on homelessness in and around Trenton, New Jersey

thestreetlight.pages.tcnj.edu

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Morgan and Morgan: Together Once Again

By Jared Kofsky

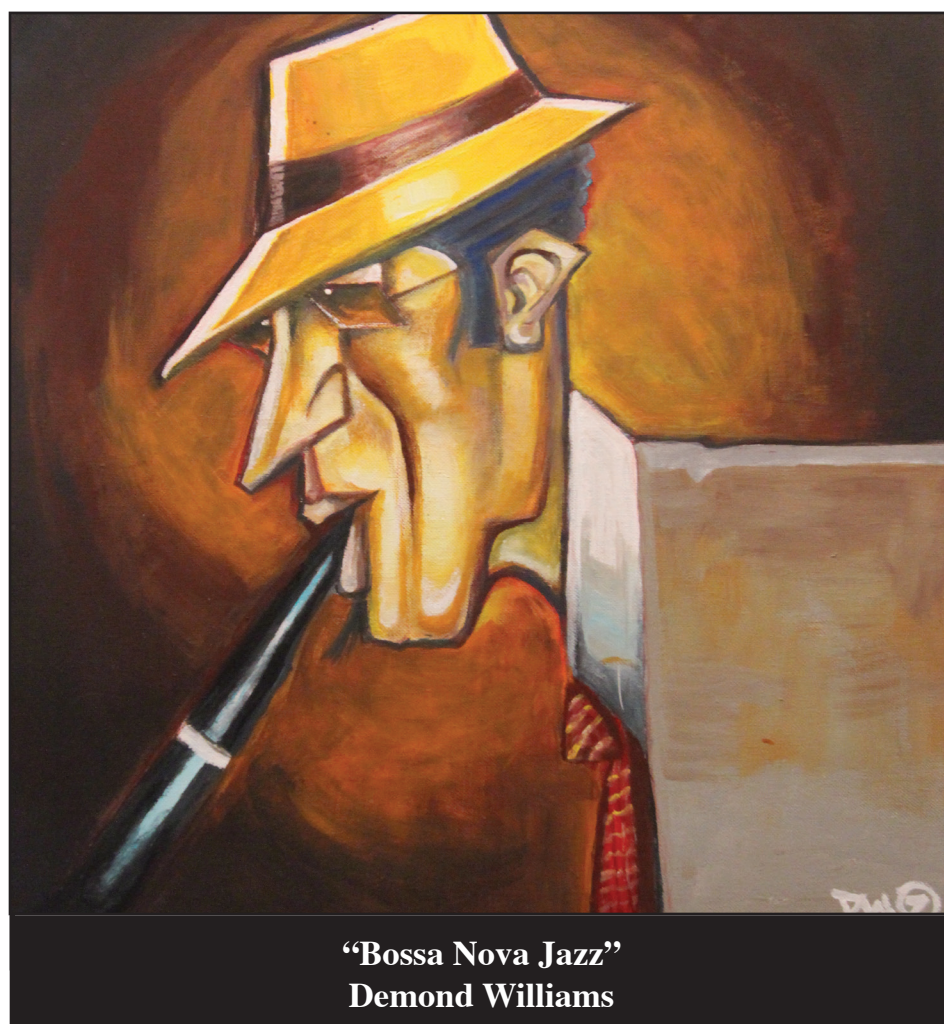
In our last issue, we brought you the story of Morgan Wilson, a lifelong Mercer County resident who reunited with his long-lost son outside of the Rescue Mission of Trenton. In the time since the story was written, much has changed. Here is Part II of The Streetlight's exclusive series, Morgan and Morgan.

"The bond that we have is incredible. I just wish he wasn't so far away."

That was how Trenton Area Soup Kitchen patron and lifelong Mercer County resident Morgan Wilson described his relationship with his son Morgan West Jackson in an interview with *The Streetlight* last spring.

After being separated for 24 years, Wilson and West Jackson reunited after running into each other outside of the Rescue Mission of Trenton. When both men realized that they shared the same first name, they engaged each other in conversation.

"I listened to his story that day



"Bossa Nova Jazz"
Demond Williams

and I realized that this was my son," Wilson explained.

Sure enough, through the assistance of Rose Bernard, his

case manager at Oaks Integrated Care, Wilson confirmed that West Jackson was his long lost son, the man he had long hoped to see

again following a period of incarceration.

Wilson, West Jackson, and Bernard were not the only people excited about the reunion. Word soon spread throughout Oaks Integrated Care's Trenton-area offices and eventually to West Jackson's adoptive brother, Darby, Pennsylvania firefighter Eric West Jackson. His brother told *The Streetlight* that he was very pleased that West Jackson reunited with his father after so many years apart.

Although the father and son saw each other for the first time in over two decades in New Jersey's capital city, West Jackson was raised in suburban Philadelphia and later lived in New York and Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Despite being separated by over 140 miles, Wilson and West Jackson continued to communicate frequently over the phone and over the internet.

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the
WALL
is now
The
Streetlight

Together in Trenton
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West Jackson signed his father up for Facebook, and the two strived to stay in contact for the next two years, hoping to regularly see each other in person as frequently as possible.

Now, the two Morgans no longer have to wonder when they will be near each other once again.

In late 2017, West Jackson returned to the city of his birth to live near his father for the first time in 26 years.

In addition to residing near each other, both Wilson and West Jackson's living conditions continue to improve. Wilson recently passed his driver's test and received his license.

He also moved out of transitional housing and is now renting his own apartment in the suburbs, where he lives with his girlfriend

and four-year-old son. Meanwhile, West Jackson is now employed locally and sees his father on a regular basis.

Both Wilson and West Jackson have been through quite a journey since West Jackson was born in the early 1990s, with both men experiencing different kinds of successes and failures.

From Wilson's experiences in transitional housing to West Jackson's frequent relocations for employment across the Northeast to their surprise reunion encounter outside of a local shelter, their experiences have each been quite memorable, resulting in plenty of stories for them to share with each other.

Clearly, after a quarter century apart, Morgan and Morgan are grateful to be together in Trenton once again.

About Our New Name...

The team behind *The Wall* is excited to announce that we are changing our name to *The Streetlight*. The changing of our name, which was approved by our Editorial Board in November 2017, will also come with a new website, a new email address, a new resource guide, community events, and more! Although our name will be changing, the content that our readers have come to expect from us will not. In fact, *The Streetlight* will feature even more coverage of homelessness in Mercer County in order to continue shining a light on this crisis at the local level.

Artwork in this issue is available for purchase

Trenton Community A-TEAM
51 North Stockon Street,
Trenton, NJ 08618
Info@trentoncommunityateam.org
(609) 421- 0793



"Digits"
Derrick Branch

Do Not Judge Me

Annette Price

Poetry

People have their ways of judging other people.
We should not be judging one another.
What do you know about me to be judging me?
Do not judge me.

We are already living in a crisis, and you want to judge me?
Do not judge me.

We all go through changes in life
And we all make mistakes.
Do not judge me.

What do you get out of judging other people?
Look at you, and your ups and downs in life.
Do not judge me.

Judging me is not going to get you anywhere.
Do not judge me.

You could just be walking down the street and someone is judging you.
You do not have to have anything for someone to judge you.
Do not judge me.

Some people are jealous. Some people want the life you have.
It is not hurting you, it is hurting them.
Do not judge me.

I cannot do anything about the way you feel and the way you want to be.
Do not judge me.

Questions

Agnes Abdelwahabe

Poetry

Will I ever be loved by the one I love?
Will you ever kiss me the way I want?
Will you hold me like you hold me in my dreams?
I ask myself: was it even real? It wasn't, it seems.

It feels so long ago when you yearned for me like I do for you.
But now you just ignore me and it's me, yearning for you.
Without meaning to, I call out your name.
As if you were right next to me and I'm going insane.

I close my eyes, see you, and feel your touch.
And when reality sets in, it hurts so much.
I give you your space and I leave you alone.
How long should my heart wait for you to come home?

If you would just open your eyes and completely see.
That I was made for you and you were made for me.
So I ask again... When will I be loved by the one I love?

Will you kiss me again the way that I want?
Will you hold me again like you've held me in my dreams?
I ask myself: was it even real? It wasn't, it seems.



"Tangled Cat"
Carol Johnson

Capital City Farm: Breaking Ground for Trenton

By Josh Tobia & Andrew Nebbia

There are three supermarkets serving approximately 84,000 Trenton residents, making it difficult to access nutritious, low cost food within city limits.

On the other hand, Trenton has more than 75 bodegas that sell primarily unhealthy meals and a limited supply of fresh produce at a high cost.

This makes it increasingly difficult for city residents to maintain a well-balanced diet.

A study conducted by Rutgers University in 2010 determined that nearly half of children ages 3-18 growing up in Trenton are either overweight or obese, nearly twice the childhood obesity rate in the nation.

Rutgers attributed these statistics to the consumption of too few vegetables and too many high-energy foods.

Capital City Farm, a project of the D&R Greenway Land Trust at 301 North Clinton Avenue in Coalport, works to address this increasingly problematic reality in ways that are sustainable.

Both a profitable business and a model for urban agriculture, the farm is a beneficial addition to the community. Urban farms, like Capital City Farm, grow fresh produce and supply it to local corner stores.

After years of being a food desert, Detroit has used urban agriculture to address rather similar concerns.

The Michigan Urban Farming Initiative transformed unused land into gardens for fresh produce, which expanded businesses, provided jobs, and helped circulate healthy foods across the city.

Capital City Farm is following

a similar trajectory. Kate Mittnacht envisioned a farm that would create "a place of beauty that grows food for people that need it."

It has done exactly that. John S. Watson Jr., Vice President of the D&R Greenway Land Trust, sees the farm as a "green oasis where fresh produce and flowers are grown."

Watson explained that approximately 30 percent of the greens that they produce are donated to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK).

According to Watson, the other 70 percent of the food grown on the farm is sold to the Greenwood Avenue Farmers Market and Capital City Farmers Market in Mill Hill Park, and they are actively working to find more places to sell their product.

The farm's website advertises that plots of land on the property will be available for local citizens to rent out and use for personal gardens

Their mission, however, is to serve and thus, the farm has set up canvases in neighborhoods around the city to learn what residents want grown and supplied.

In addition to serving the local community, Watson explained that one of their goals is to "create a sustainable and replicable agricultural model that can be created in other cities around the state and the nation."

Capital City Farm

**301 North Clinton Avenue
Trenton, NJ
(609) 924-4646**

Trenton Free Public Library: Bridging the Digital Divide

By Noah Hasko

The digital divide continues to adversely impact neighborhoods throughout the city of Trenton. A number of organizations are working to address this growing problem and the Trenton Free Public Library (TFPL) is at the forefront of the movement.

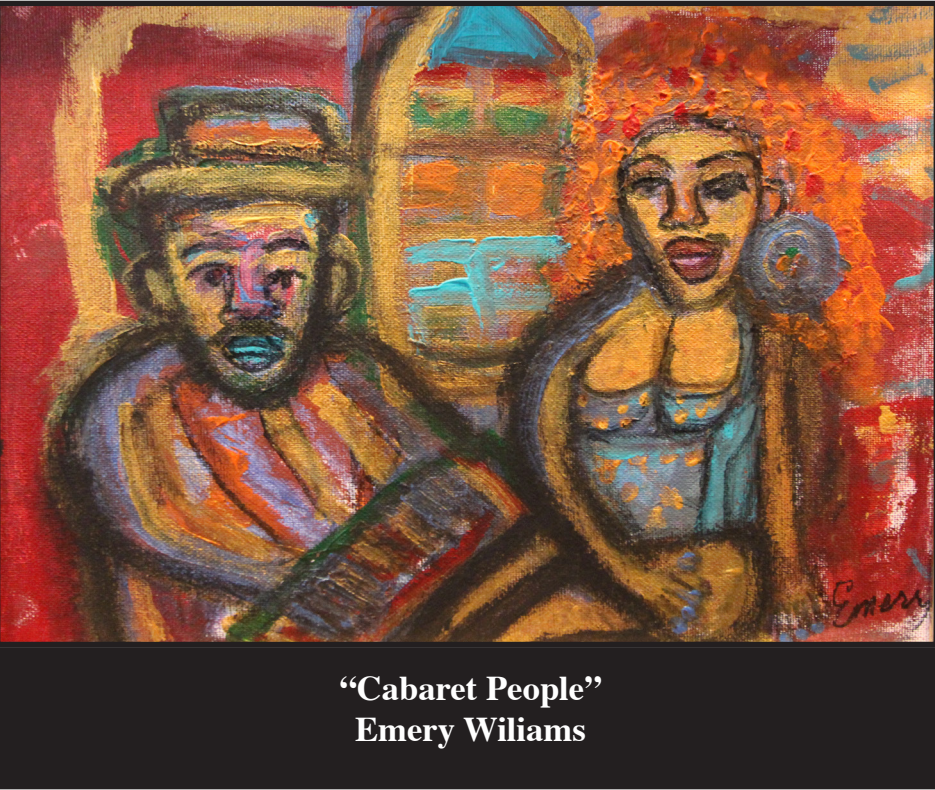
The library provides respite to individuals experiencing homelessness in the daytime and access to amenities that they need. Richard Jutkiewicz, the Community Outreach Librarian at the library attested to their ongoing efforts to support city residents.

Jutkiewicz has seen the impacts of the digital divide on individuals pursuing employment opportunities. Many find it difficult to access online applications and other resources for jobs while others enter the field with little understanding of and expertise with technology, making it difficult for them to maintain and grow in their positions.

Jutkiewicz explained this reality as he has seen it: “It has been eye-opening for me to see there are families where the head of household is out of work, and are applying for a job to a company or an organization that only accepts a digital application. They don’t have an email account, or had one but are not sure how to access it.”

With the ongoing efforts of those at local organizations in partnership with public resources such as those at The TFPL, efforts to address the digital divide are far-reaching.

Although the Briggs, Cadwalader, East Trenton, and Skelton Branch Libraries has been closed since 2010, the main branch of the TFPL is open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 A.M to 8:00 P.M and Friday and Saturday from 9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M. The TFPL is free for all to use with acquisition of a library card and is located on 120 Academy Street. To contact the library, go online at www.trenton-lib.org or call (609) 392-7188.



“Cabaret People”
Emery Williams

Local Summer Camp Offers Education and Entertainment

By Jasmine Green & Némy Thomas

Many parents rely heavily on school hours and after-school activities as a time when their children have somewhere to be safe and cared for. The problem is that most schools run for only nine months a year, leaving many children with working parents with nowhere to go for over eight hours during the remaining three months.

This leaves parents struggling to work and to find adequate and appropriate care for their children. This is where programs such as UrbanPromise Trenton come into play. In addition to running an afterschool program, the organization hosts a summer camp.

The UrbanPromise Summer Camp offers a welcoming and nurturing environment for over 150 children from all over Trenton at several locations. In the West Trenton location, the program takes place for six weeks and the location in East Trenton is offered for eight weeks beginning the week after the fourth of July. Michael Lovaglio, Academic Director of UrbanPromise Trenton, explained that UrbanPromise requires applications for many of its programs and with the limited funding that the organization has, they struggle to accommodate all applicants but try their best to support the greatest number possible. There is also a wait list available to those who do not make it.

UrbanPromise offers fun in the sun but unlike many other camps, it combines these activities with educational enrichment. According to Lovaglio, the camp builds on students’ academic skill sets and knowledge and preserves learning so that students do not experience the dreaded “summer learning loss.”

UrbanPromise not only provides a space for younger children to grow, but they also offer employment opportunities for teenagers in which they can acquire valuable leadership and collaboration skills. Teens can serve as “Street Leaders” in the program and receive a small stipend.

UrbanPromise also provides \$1,000 to each participant when they go off to college. The program has a 100 percent high school graduation rate and it teams up with local organization, Mercer Street Friends, to provide nutritious breakfasts and lunches.

Bounce Back Betty Barr

It’s not a wrap.
Bounce back forward side to side.

It’s like the Electric Slide.
Bounce back and enjoy the ride.
It’s cool, it’s a-ok to have a set back.

Not a side order, but a great surprise.
When you bounce back you’ll be wise.

Not in chips, honey dip.
But in your mind.
So, let it rise.

Bounce back & give me a high five.

Don’t Cry Over Me Brook Beatty

Poetry

Don’t cry over me.
Let me rest in peace.

Please don’t weep over me, let me sleep.
Don’t cry over me.

Let my soul rest in peace.
I was in excruciating pain.

I never once used my Father’s name in vain.

So please don’t anyone cry over me.
Let my soul rise up in heaven.

With tear drops calling out.
My name!

Soup Kitchen Expansion: TASK’s Latest Task

By McKenna Samson & Engy Shaaban

The Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) has provided services to thousands of those in need for the past 35 years and has become one of the area’s leading nonprofit organizations in the process. In addition to meal services, the kitchen houses an Adult Education Program, an Arts Program, and Case Management Services. In the past five years, TASK has provided over 1.1 million meals and its program services have increased by 30 percent.

TASK relies on the help of volunteers to keep many of these programs running, and only receives three percent of its funding from the federal, county and state resources. The kitchen benefits from donations and the meals are served entirely by volunteers, so it remains largely a community-run effort.

To maximize their efforts, TASK has recently announced that it will be expanding its building and beginning renovations to update already-existing portions to better accom-

modate its patrons and staff. Executive Director, Joyce Campbell spoke of the project’s timeline and explained that although there have been a few “starts and stops”, the expansion is expected to be done in August and the renovations in September. She noted that TASK will continue to serve meals and provide services during all phases of the project.

The expansion is set to include additional rooms for partner organizations to offer on-site services. In addition to increasing capacity in the dining room, this will also provide a more private setting for confidential conversations, more space for eye exams and blood pressure readings.

A multipurpose room will be built to house TASK’s Adult Education and will also serve the arts programs, allowing them to operate year-round. Four additional computer stations will be added in a private testing and intake area for students. A walk-in refrigerator will be brought in to increase storage for perishable foods. On-site storage for TASK records will be established which will eliminate the cost



“Pinwheels”
John J. Jacobs

of off-site storage and allow for these funds to be dedicated elsewhere. And finally, a space for administrative staff to work will be built which will free out office space for direct service staff working with patrons.

Building renovations will allow for an office for the Kitchen Manager to coordinate kitchen operations more effectively and efficiently. It will also move the Patron Services office and enlarge it to address privacy concerns; provide volunteers with space to store their personal items and to change for meal service; and double the space for the storage of personal hygiene and other basic needs supplies.

This enlarged space is particularly important as it will accommodate the large number of holiday donations that TASK receives. The renovation will also include a reorganization of the patron computer lab; new, sturdy work surfaces; and proper storage for extra equipment.

The majority of the space will receive a new coating of paint and flooring. Campbell explained the importance of the latter and the impact that

these changes will have on TASK employees: “Staff morale begets positive patron service and patron success.”

The expansion will provide 3,679 square feet of additional space dedicated to advancing TASK’s mission of feeding body, mind, and spirit. Campbell told *The Streetlight* that “the expansion will certainly impact the community very positively.”

“It will allow us to bring in more services. We will have designated spaces for these services and service providers so it will allow for more privacy and efficiency. It will also allow us to provide services during the evening and on weekends; and it will allow outside providers to run programs when the soup kitchen is closed and we are not there. This will all build on our community-centered approach to the work that we do,” Campbell explained.

Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

72 1/2 Escher Street
Trenton, NJ
(609) 695-5456

MERCERCounty ResourceGUIDE

Where You Can Turn For Help

All information is subject to change without notice. Call before visiting each location. Check thestreetlight.pages.tcnj.edu for more listings and a map of all resources.

Emergency Shelters & Transitional Housing

Amani House

518-520 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Trenton, NJ.
Transitional housing (24 single adult males between the ages of 18-65). Call for appointment. Tel. (609)-393-3168 ext. 13.

Anchor House, Inc.

482 Center St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-8329
24-hour program for runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth ages 10-17
Anchor House Shelter, school Outreach Program, (609) 396-8329
Anchorage Transitional Living Program, (609) 989-1625
Anchor Link Street Outreach Program, (609) 218-5630
Anchor Line, (609) 218-5630

Better Community Housing Trenton – Doorway to Hope

827 East State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-5579
Emergency shelter for homeless families in an apartment setting for up to 90 days.

Escher Street SRO & Transitional Housing

50 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-4599
Single Occupancy Rooms for single men and women (Project Specific Section 8); Transitional Housing for single men (26 beds) and women (8 beds). SRO accepts transitional housing clients and walk-ins. Referred by Mercer County Board of Social Services or New Jersey Department of Corrections.

HomeFront New Jersey Family Campus

101 Celia Way, Ewing, NJ. (609) 989-9417
Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Housing are available.

LifeTies

Triad House & Administrative Offices: 2205 Pennnington Rd., Ewing, NJ (609) 771-1600
Mary's Place/T.L.I.T.: 1901 North Olden Ave., Ewing, NJ. (609) 671-0040
Providing 24/7 shelter for homeless LGBTQ youth ages 12 to 21 at four houses in Mercer County

Rescue Mission of Trenton

98 Carroll St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-1436
Emergency overnight shelter: day center, meals and clothing for single adults
Housing: Transitional Housing; Rooming and Boarding House; Permanent Sup-portive Housing
Other Services: Adult education, job training, thrift store, and courtesy store.

United Progress Inc. – Emergency Shelter

56 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-2822 and Fax: (609) 392-3215
Providing 22-bed transitional housing service for single homeless males of Mercer County. Accepting transitional housing referrals from Mercer County Board of Social Services.

Princeton United Methodist Church

7 Vandeventer Ave., Princeton, NJ. (609) 924-2613. Free community dinner, Wednesdays 5 pm – 6:30 pm

Resurrection Lutheran Church Food Pantry

4315 Nottingham Way, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 586-3355
531 Dr. ML King Blvd., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-0016. Saturday 9 am – 11:30 am

Rise Food Pantry

225 Franklin St., Hightstown, NJ. (609) 443-4464.
Open for limited food distribution on Monday through Wednesday from 9 am – 12 pm Please call the office for requirements and information.

Sacered Heart Church

343 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-2801. Soup Kitchen: 4th Sunday Lunch from 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm. Food Pantry: 3rd Tuesday of the month. 2 pm – 6 pm

Samaritan Baptist Church

531 Dr. ML King Blvd., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-0016. Saturday 9 am – 11:30 am

South Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

First Baptist Church, 128-140 Centre St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-8810. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Dinner from 4 pm – 5:30 pm.

St. James AME Church

413 Summit St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 448-7855
Community dinner, Wednesdays 5 pm - 6:30 pm

St. Mary's Cathedral (Loaves and Fishes Food & Soup Kitchen)

151 N. Warren St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-8447. Last two Saturdays of the month. Lunch is 11 am – 2 pm

The Food Center at Morrisville Presbyterian Church

771 N. Pennsylvania Ave., Morrisville, PA (215) 295-4191

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral Food Pantry

801 W. State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-3805. Food Pantry. Every other Saturday 9 am – 11 am. Services via the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen are also available.

Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

72¹/₂ Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-5456. Mon. – Fri. Lunch from 11 am – 1 pm; Monday – Thursday Dinner from 4pm-5:30pm. Call for other services.

Turning Point United Methodist Church

15 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. Dinner served / Food Pantry. 3rd Sun. 1 pm – 3 pm.

Trinity United Methodist Church of Bordentown City

339 Farnsworth Ave., Bordentown, NJ. (609) 298-0158
Dinner is served Tuesdays from 5 pm – 6:30 pm

United Progress, Inc.

62 West State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-2161. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9 am – 12 pm.

West Trenton Soup Kitchen

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. 801 W. State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 902-042. Thurs-day Dinner, 5 pm – 6:30 pm

Emergency, Health, & Addiction Services

Catholic Charities, Behavioral Health Services

10 Southard St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-4557.
Integrated behavioral health and physical health services.

Capital Health Medical System at Hopewell

1 Capital Way, Hopewell Township, NJ. (800) 637-2374.
Clinics, Medicaid, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care.

Capital Health Regional Medical Center

750 Brunswick Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-6722
Mental Health Crisis Assistance. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare

Henry J. Austin Health Center (Main)

321 North Warren St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 278-5900
Offers fast track, pediatrics, adult medicine, OB/GYN care, social services, podia-try, eye care, behavioral health care, dental services, HIV and Hepatitis C testing and treatment. Have ID. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare. Monday through Friday 8 am – 5 pm and Saturday 9 – 1.

Henry J. Austin Health Center (Chambers)

317 Chambers St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 278-5900.
Adult Medicine and other services. The satellite centers are open Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Appointments are encouraged.

Henry J. Austin Health Center (Ewing Street)

112 Ewing St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 278-5900.
Adult Medicine and the above services and dental care. Open Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Appointments are encouraged.

Mount Carmel Guild

73 North Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-5159. Limited Utility and Prescription assistance. Home Health Nursing Services: visits for medication management, vital sign checks, pre-filling syringes, adminster injections for economically disadvantaged, medically frail elderly. Free and do not accept third party payments.

A Better Way

65 Prospect St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-1224
Specializes in mentoring, re-entry & gang reduction.

Arm in Arm

123 East Hanover St., Trenton, NJ
48 Hudson St., Trenton, NJ
61 Nassau St., Princeton, NJ
(609) 396-9355

Food pantries; emergency financial assistance (rent, utilities, security deposit, mortgage); workforce development, and driver's license restoration assistance.

Catholic Charities – Emergency & Community Services

132 N. Warren St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 394-8847.
Provides support related to housing, food and mental health.

CEAS (Coordinated Entry and Assessment Services) Center

509 Perry St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-3722
Monday-Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Operated by the City of Trenton, this center strives to provide services like hous-ing, identification, and information about benefits eligibility.

Central Jersey Legal Services, Inc.

198 West State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-6249.
Will discuss legal issues with individuals, landlord/tenant or issues and will make appointments. Call for appointment (9 am – 4:30 pm).

Child Care Connection

1001 Spruce St., Suite 201, Ewing, NJ. (609) 989-7770.
Resource and Referral agency assists families in their search for quality child care and provides access to child care subsidy funds. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9 am – 5 pm., Thursday 9 am – 6 pm

City of Trenton – Health & Human Services

319 E. State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 815-2160
Can provide emergency assistance for back rent, first month rent for the homeless and/or at-risk homeless, assistance for Senior Citizens, and other ser-vices from its City Hall office.

Community Health Law Project

225 East State St., Suite 5, Trenton NJ (609) 392-5553.
Discusses legal questions with those with disabilities. Offers a low-cost fee-for-service legal service program. Will make appointments.

Community Justice Center

310 West State St., Trenton, NJ (609) 218-5120.
Encouraging the empowerment, resiliency and rights of those struggling with disabilities by providing the essential ingredients of legal education, outreach, ad-vocacy and representation. Will discuss legal questions with veterans and disabled and will make appointments.

Community Options, Inc.

16 Farber Rd., Princeton, NJ (609) 951-9000
Provides housing and employment services for individuals with disabilities.

New Horizons Treatment Service, Inc.

132 Perry St., Trenton, NJ. Appointment: (609) 394-8988.
Provides an array of medical, clinical and special services, i.e. substance Abuse treatment, detoxification, methadone maintenance, methadone detoxification. Mon-Fri 6am-8pm. Accepts Medicaid, WorkFirst NJ, and self-pay.

Oaks Integrated Care

31 Lexington Ave., Ewing, NJ. 609-583-1900.
1001 Spruce St. Suite 205, Trenton, NJ. 609-396-6788
1320 New Willow St., Trenton, NJ. 609-396-8877
314 East State St., Trenton, NJ. 609-396-4258
2550 Brunswick Pk., Lawrenceville, NJ. 609-396-8877
Linkage to mental health services, medical services, entitlements and housing. Call for appointment.

Oxford House

1065 River Rd., Ewing, NJ. (301) 587-2916, Toll Free: (800) 689-6411
Halfway houses to transition from rehab to independent living for individuals

Princeton House Behavioral Health

741 Mount Lucas Rd., Princeton, NJ. (1-800) 242-2550; (609)- 497-3347
Intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

Planned Parenthood

Trenton Center - 437 E. State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 599-4881
Hamilton Center - 2279 State Hwy 33, Hamilton, NJ. 689-4964
Services: Abortion Services, Birth Control Services, Emergency Contraception, General Health Care, HIV Testing, LGBT Services, and more.

Rescue Mission of Trenton

96 Carroll St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-3533. Residential and Outpatient Treatment for addictions and co-occurring disorders.

Robert Wood Johnson Hospital at Hamilton

One Hamilton Health Pl., Hamilton, NJ. (609) 586-7900
Clinics, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

St. Francis Medical Center

601 Hamilton Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 599-5000
Clinics, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

Government Agencies & Human Services

Helping Arms

50 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-7500
Provides counseling, employment placement services, housing and other social services to low income people, and operates a prison re-entry initiative in Trenton. Referrals from Dept. of Corrections.

HomeFront

Administrative Offices
1880 Princeton Ave., Lawrenceville, NJ. (609) 989-9417
Homelessness prevention (rent/security); permanent service-enriched affordable housing; food pantry; FreeStore; Furnish the Future. Monday – Friday 9am-5pm. Except Tuesday 12 pm – 8 pm

Housing Initiatives of Princeton

11 Mercer St., Princeton, NJ. (609) 252-1572
Serves individuals experiencing homelessness or in danger of experiencing home-less in order to assist with finding affordable housing and resources.

Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness

1001 Spruce St., Ewing Township, NJ. (609) 599-9762
Not a direct service provider, but works alongside other Mercer County agencies and organizations to aid people experiencing homelessness.

Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS)

200 Woolverton St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-4320.
Complaint Line: (609) 989-4400. Social Services: (609) 989-4451. Assist individuals with General Assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income and other services.
M-F, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, T 8:30 am – 8:30 pm. Can call or walk-in.

Mercer County Clerk's Office

240 W. State St., Floors 6 and 7, Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-6494
ID's- Voter registration forms, Mercer County photo ID, passport.
Monday – Friday 8 am – 4 pm; Wednesday until 6:45 pm. Walk-ins accepted.

Mercer County Connection

957 Route 33, Hamilton, NJ
County ID card and passport services. Mon, Wed, Fri. 10am – 6pm. Tuesday & Thursday, 10 am – 8 pm. Saturday, 10 am – 3 pm.
Walk-ins accepted.

Mercer County Department of Housing and Community Development

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-6858
Provides heating/cooling assistance, first-time homebuyer assistance, residential rehabilitation assistance, and affordable housing.
M-F 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Mercer County Department of Human Services

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 468-8296

Mercer County Office on Aging

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ
Information for Seniors (877) 222-3737, (609) 989-6661

Mercer County Office for the Disabled

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ (609) 989-6663

Mercer County Veterans Residence

2280 Hamilton Ave., Hamilton NJ. (609) 989-6120. (Must apply in advance)

The Salvation Army's Trenton Adult Rehabilitation Center

436 Mulberry St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 503-5124

Trenton Department of Health and Human Services - Clinical Services

218 N. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-3242
Health Promotions and Clinical Services; Health Incentive Program for Women (HIP4W), Children's Health Services.

Trenton Treatment Center (Part of United Progress, Inc.)

56 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-2822
Trenton Treatment Center offers residential (for men only) and outpatient pro-grams for those addicted to drug and alcohol. Accepts referrals, client walk-ins, and uninsured Mercer County residents.

University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro

1 Plainsboro Rd., Plainsboro, NJ. (609) 853-7000
Clinics, General Acute Medical Care. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

United Progress Inc. Trenton Treatment Center

56 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-2161.
Provides substance abuse treatment, HIV/AIDS counseling, employment and job development counseling, emergency food, utility, housing services and homeless prevention.

Womanspace

1530 Brunswick Ave., Lawrenceville, NJ. (609) 394-9000; (800)-572-SAFE
Emergency services designed to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault immediately following the initial crisis. Spanish-speaking staff available.

New Jersey Department of Labor One-Stop Career Center

26 Yard Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-6200.
Offers workforce readiness services and career resources. Referrals from MCBOSS, unemployment. Walk-ins accepted. (Monday-Friday), 8:30 am – 5 pm, Tuesdays, 8:30 am – 8:30pm.

Opportunities for All

1701 S. Broad St., Hamilton, NJ. (609) 394-7013
Training and employment opportunities to a diverse group of job seekers. We specialize in working with applicants with disabilities.

Rise – A Community Service Partnership

Main Office, 116 N. Main St., 2nd Floor, Hightstown, NJ. (609) 443-4464.
Providing case management to individuals in the East Windsor/Hightstown area. Main office is open: Monday through Friday 9 am – 4 pm
(Closed for lunch from 1 pm – 2 pm daily)

Social Security Administration

635 S. Clinton Ave., 2nd Floor, Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-2254; 1-800-772-1213.
Assists clients with social security card replacement. Disability info, questions and assistance in applying for SSI and SSDI. Call or walk-in.

Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

72 1/2 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-5456
Hot lunch and dinner; adult education; computer classes; job search assistance. Monday to Friday Lunch from 10:30 am – 12:50 pm; Monday to Thursday Dinner from 3:30 pm – 5 pm

Ujima Urban Women's Center

1001 Pennington Rd., Ewing, NJ. (609) 882– 2098
Providing compassion, advocacy, and training to urban women residing in Trenton and surrounding areas. Call for Appointment.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Trenton Vet Center

934 Parkway Ave. Suite 201, Ewing, NJ. (609) 882-5744

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Hamilton Outpatient Clinic

3635 Quakerbridge Rd., Hamilton, NJ. (609) 570-6600
General Medicine for veterans.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Intervention Program

Hotline is intended to assist homeless Veterans and their families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community.
(1-877) 4AID VET (877-424-3838) (National)

Hamilton Township's J. O. Wilson Neighborhood Center
169 Wilfred Ave., Hamilton, NJ. (609) 393-6480. Open Mondays from 10 am – 12 pm, Wednesdays 1 pm – 3 pm.

The Highlight : Essence Scott

By Kristen Frohlich

Essence Scott began experiencing homelessness at eight years-old. Now 27, she is a homeowner attending Mercer County Community College. Essence is a dedicated community columnist for *The Streetlight* who has written numerous pieces about her experiences with homelessness. We sat down with her to share more of this story.

The Streetlight: At what age did you realize that you were homeless? How did you make this realization?

ES: I did not realize that I was homeless until I started getting involved with Homefront at age 13. I thought it all seemed normal even though at some level I knew it was not. I was confused as to why my parents never described our situation as “homelessness”; every-time we had to get up and move, they just said that we had to go somewhere new. Getting involved with Homefront made me realize that there was a word for my situation: homeless. Now that I realize there is a word for this situation, I am choosing to give it a loud, clear voice and to recognize it for all its unique facets.

The Streetlight: What sorts of emotions did this realization evoke? How did those feelings change as you got older?

ES: I felt like an outsider especially when I first found a word to describe our situation. When I was living in Lawrenceville, my peers lived in fancy places, had their own bedroom, owned decent TVs, and could eat anything that they wanted to. I felt very envious of them because I wanted to have those things. When I got older, I didn’t want these things as much as I began wanting a space to express myself.

The Streetlight: I read your article “Connecticut Avenue” from Spring 2016 issue. When did the motel housing start? What was the hardest part of living in a motel?

ES: We began living in motels when I was about 16 years old. At that time, it was my mother, brother, and sister all living in a small, cramped room. I was beginning to feel very depressed at this age and I wanted, desperately, to be by myself all the time but I could not find space to do this unless I went to the bathroom or sat outside. It was challenging.

TS: I understand that you worked with HomeFront and some of their programs while experiencing home-

lessness. Can you tell me a little more about this?

ES: I was a part of the first generation of a program called Triumphant Teens at HomeFront. This was my first experience working and it certainly taught me a lot about the value of independence and hardwork. Both my parents are very hard working people and working with the program helped me appreciate their efforts so much more. There were very few programs out there for children in similar circumstances but I was lucky to find such a great mentorship with HomeFront.

TS: Who or what helped you the most during your time experiencing homelessness?



“Saffron”
Derrick Branch

ES: My writing helped me a lot. I started keeping journals when I was 12 and I felt a lot better after that. I could be whoever I wanted to be in my writing—I could be happy, I could have more friends—really anything. Writing helped me to stay afloat a little longer.

TS: What did you learn about yourself while experiencing homelessness? What did you learn about others?

ES: My experience taught me the power of my own resilience. I am tough and that it takes a lot to wear me down. I know that I can handle a lot because I did for so many years. Others taught me that there is a lot of good in the world—more than you would expect—and sometimes we just are just looking in the wrong places. The night before Christmas Eve one year, my friend walked through the door with toys that her family had bought for us. I was not expecting this and I remember the feeling that I got when I saw her. It was truly incredible.

TS How did you transition from not having a home to being a homeowner?

ES: Before I met my boyfriend, I was living with my family in another apartment. It was a sudden transition for my family and me as we were going to be evicted from a hotel. I then decided to ask someone at Homefront for help since we were really about to be homeless and he helped us find and secure a home on Connecticut Avenue. I think I was too excited and overwhelmed at the time for it to really sink in. And for months after that, we were nervous about becoming homeless again. Once you experience the security of your own home, the last thing you want to do is lose it and return to an unfamiliar hotel room.



“Ita”
Dolores Fails

I Saw You Paul Norris

Poetry

I saw you kiss her goodbye this morn,
as you turned and walked away.
She continued to gaze at you,
as if she had found perfection.

And you continued to walk away.

I saw you move up the street,
ignorant to her optical obsession.
Not knowing that in her eyes were,
the desire of ages to never let go.

And you continued to walk away

I saw you sway in and out of the crowds,
not seeing her eye you, as a hawk.
Scanning the fields for a final morsel,
hungering with a primal urge to eat.

And you continued to walk away.

I saw you turn the corner, into oblivion,
and I saw her slump and sigh and.
Turn into her vain existence of living,
waiting for your return.

Do you look at her, as I saw you?

Community Opinion

Scott: Food Meets Family

By Essence Scott

Food is a popular topic of conversation in my family.

We all enjoy talking about a good meal just as much as we enjoy eating one. Growing up, I remember my mother always cooking meatloaf, macaroni and cheese, and my personal favorite—pepper steak (our name for onion steak because it has no peppers in it).

My sister used to love (and still does) everything that my mother made. I also remember most of these foods being made in the microwave.

On the second day of every month, my mother would buy what she could from the long list of foods that we had been craving: Purdue chicken and hot wings galore.

Of course, we were not so fortunate to have many of these foods when we were living in motels. When we were living here, there was no stove to make pepper steak or meatloaf in. And before we moved from the Trails End Motel, we had been eating canned goods for approximately two years.

When the school nurse gave my family gift certificates every so often, we would walk to the diner and eat pancakes at four in the afternoon. The walk to the diner felt short. There were no sidewalks, only grassy areas.

I remember all of us staying in the grass, talking as we walked. When we got into the diner, it felt homey: safe, warm, inviting, and friendly. There were games that we could play, but they always cost money.

We ordered pancakes with butter and syrup. We ordered hot chocolate. My siblings and I were just kids but my mother would let us get what we wanted.

When we were not at the diner, we’d talk about the foods our mom would cook for us when we moved. Meatloaf slathered in ketchup, meatballs bathed in gravy. Pork chops.

We talked about ice cream—any food we did not have, we spoke about excitedly. Talking about food became my family’s way of discussing a better quality of life.

It is difficult to leave a lifestyle behind, especially if you are still entrenched in the happy moments from that time—despite their brevity.

Nowadays, my mother always wants to know if I am “eating well.” For her, “eating well” is a hearty, home-cooked meal, or even a small meal from a restaurant—something that my family does not always get an opportunity to do.

But she is happy to see me eating well—unhealthily, sometimes so, but, for her, still better. And I am happy too.

Resource Awaits Across the River

By Paul Mulholland

Many Trenton residents receive food assistance across the Calhoun Street Bridge in Morrisville, P.A. One such food program is run by the Morrisville Presbyterian Church (MPC) at 771 North Pennsylvania Avenue.

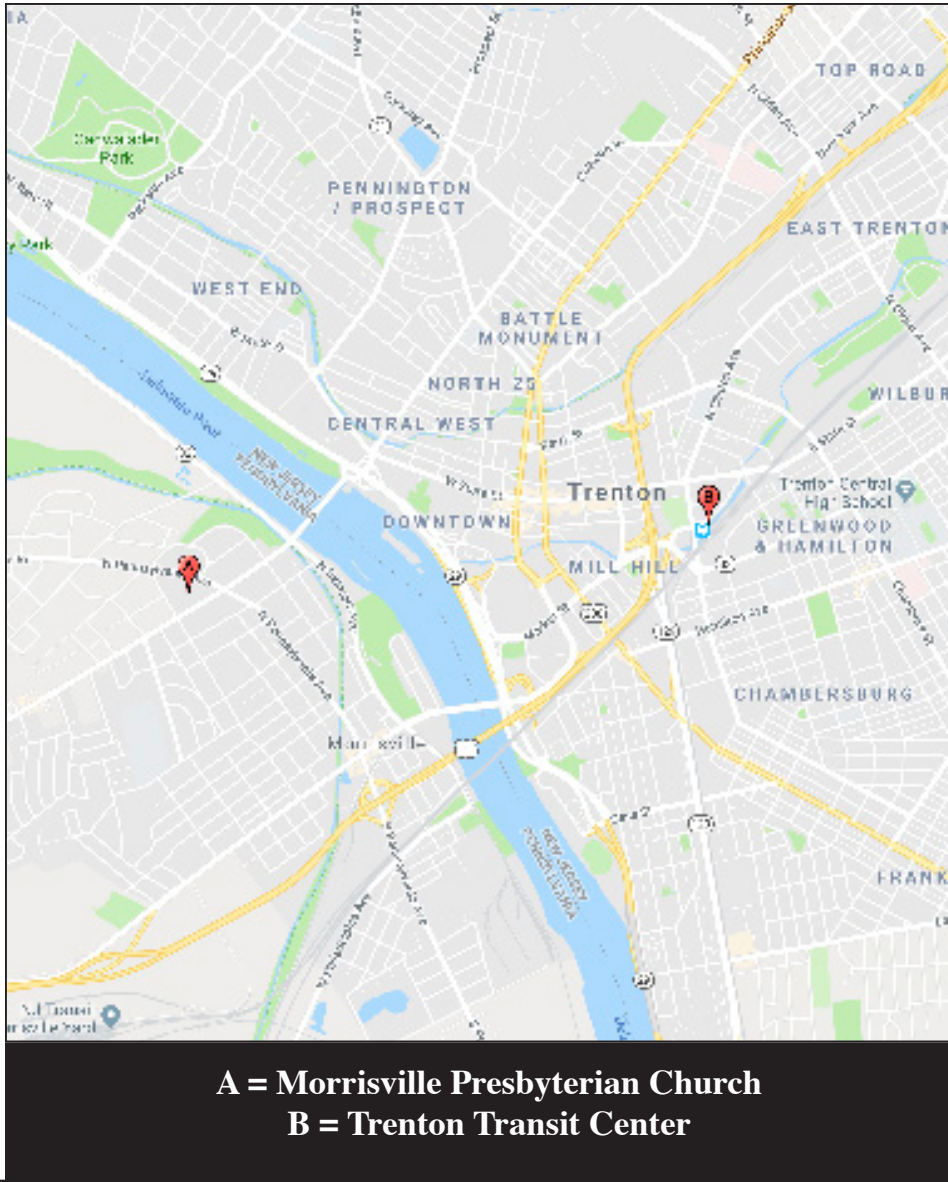
The program is open from 9:00am to 12:00pm every Wednesday, and from 7:00pm to 8:00pm on the first Tuesday of the month for working families. Clients may only come once every calendar month. The center serves well over one hundred families every week on a first come first serve basis.

Potential clients are interviewed and are expected to have photo identification, proof of residency, proof that their children live with them, and income verification. Mercer County IDs, passports and bills are accepted as proof of

address for adults, while school records can be used for children. Residency documents are not necessary for individuals experiencing homelessness.

MPC is able to give donated bags of fruits, vegetables, pasta, and high quality proteins to its clients. They are often stocked with chicken, beef, tuna, peanut butter and other protein items, as well. The center will give one, two or three bags of protein depending on the size of the family.

Clients should have a plan to transport these bags to their home. A parking lot is available to clients with a car. The center also has volunteers that help carry food out as most receive far too much to transport alone. Morrisville Presbyterian also carries basic household and hygiene items such as toothpaste, pet food, and garbage bags that are available upon request.



The Spotlight

Men’s Mission House Opens in Ewing Township

By Jessica Middleton

Pastor Erik Lydick, sitting near the entrance to the Trenton Transit Center, immediately stands out in his black hoodie with the words “God’s Got This.” Lydick works at Restoring Hearts Ministries and is a very active part of the Trenton and Ewing communities.

He explained that at the Ministries, “the guys are sitting down, they are being taught the Bible, and everybody gets a breakfast sandwich”. Lydick and his fellow workers are able to talk to roughly 100-125 patrons each week in these Bible study groups. They also spend some time providing food for unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness roughly five times a week wherever the need is.

Lydick has a series of goals for his program aimed at making sure that those experiencing homelessness are receiving the care, guidance, and resources that they may not find through state-run organizations and initiatives.

First and foremost, his main goal is to make sure that these individuals know that someone cares about them. “You guys have probably had some kind of interaction with homeless folks, people struggling in homelessness, so you understand that for the most part they really feel like they’re not valued. That nobody really loves them. That’s kind of one of our main goals. Our motto really is: work hard to establish trust, so that we can establish a relationship,” Lydick emphasized.

One of the newest projects that Restoring Hearts has taken on is a housing project on Ewing’s Iowana Avenue, which aims to offer safe housing to those who need it. Its functions surpass those of a typical recovery house.

More specifically, Lydick wants it to feel like home. While there is no limit to how long residents can live in the house, they must follow program guidelines during their stay. And while the house can technically house 14 individuals, it is being limited to only five.

This is in an effort to bring about that feeling of having a home, as opposed to simply some place to rest your head. Lydick proudly proclaimed the effect that this has had on those who have stayed in the house:

“In three, short weeks, you start to see a change. They go from folded into themselves to initiating conversations with each other and joking around. Their personalities start to resurface.”

Lydick discussed his long-term goals for Restoring Hearts over the next decade. He hopes to continue being able to maintain this feeling of family among his residents even as they create their own families and move into their own houses. He also hopes that more people come to recognize the group’s efforts and join them.

He also wants create a location for Restoring Hearts within Trenton’s city limits, making it easier for those he serves to go here as opposed to needing transportation for the home in Ewing.



THE STREETLIGHT INVESTIGATES



“Aging Out Into Homelessness”: A Garden State Crisis

Part I

By Jared Kofsky

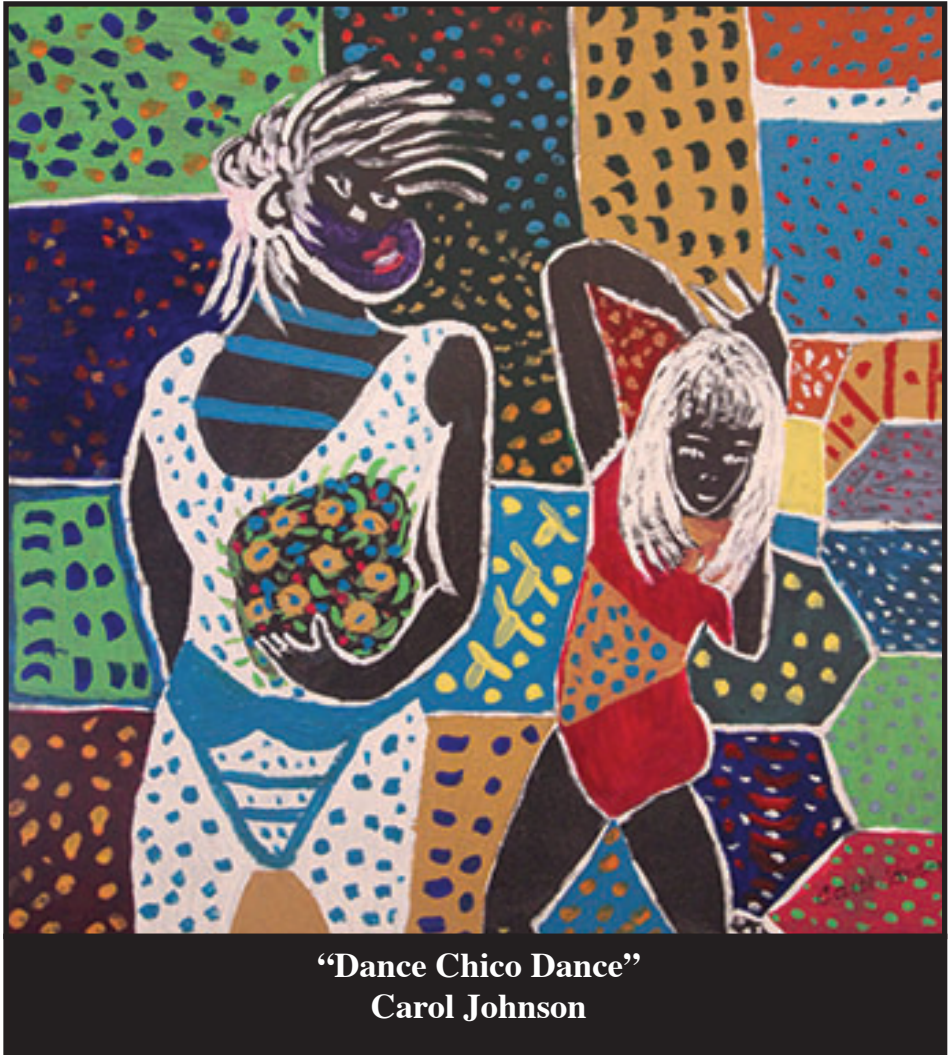
To some youth, the day that they turn 18 or graduate from high school are moments that they await for years, since it allows for increased independence. However, for many of the thousands of teenagers in the Garden State’s foster care system, their 18th birthday or high school graduation date signals an end to a way of life that they have known for nearly two decades, resulting in uncertainty about where they will sleep, eat, and work.

From aging out of the foster care system to surviving domestic violence to not being allowed to purchase or rent a home, a variety of factors are continuing to cause homelessness to remain a crisis impacting youth between the ages of 18 and 24 in the Trenton area and across the state.

State records show that 10,994 children in NJ public schools are known to be experiencing homelessness, but the number of young adults in Mercer County without housing is unclear. Volunteers found that 78 people under the age of 25 were experiencing homelessness in Mercer County during the Point-in-Time Count (PITC) in January 2017, but the actual number is likely far higher.

Some young adults who do not have their own home routinely alternate between the homes of acquaintances or relatives, but three percent of Mercer County participants in the PITC told surveyors that this resulted in them turning to shelters or the streets upon running out of places to stay.

Subsequently, many turn to emergency shelters. The lack of an emergency shelter specifically for young adults experiencing homelessness in Mercer County can result in un-



“Dance Chico Dance”
Carol Johnson

sheltered youth, according to Anchor House Director of Outreach Services Ben Thornton. These individuals often end up sleeping in parks, transit hubs, and baseball stadiums when they cannot find anywhere else to go.

Aging out of the foster care system is one of the primary causes of homelessness for adults under the age of 25 in the Garden State. In fact, according to Covenant House New Jersey, 30 percent of their clients use their services after having nowhere to go when they turned 18 since they are often unable to afford or denied the opportunity to rent or purchase a home.

The New Jersey Child Placement

Advisory Council reports that “without the benefit of family and community support systems, their [youths] risks for homelessness and human trafficking are at a much higher rate than the general population.”

Locally, some steps are being taken to address homelessness among youth by non-profit organizations such as Anchor House, LifeTies, Isles, and the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness, but they often lack the resources to meet the demand for services. Anchor House serves some youth who have aged out of the foster care system through its Anchor-age Transitional Living Program on

Centre Street in South Trenton and hosted a Youth Connect outreach event in January for youth experiencing homelessness following the 2018 Point-in-Time Count. In addition, this 40-year-old organization operates a Street Outreach Team and the Anchor Link drop-in center at the corner of South Broad and Beatty Streets.

However, unlike nearby cities, the capital region has yet to see a comprehensive investigation and proposed solution to the crisis by any government agency. Philadelphia has its own Office of Homeless Services which operates a Youth Homelessness Initiative while the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development has a team that researches and funds housing, shelters, and outreach services for young adults experiencing homelessness.

Meanwhile, although the City of Trenton does operate the CEAS Center for people of all ages who lack housing and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families started a Connecting YOUTH Project a few years ago, there are very few active municipal, county, or state-operated facilities that specifically tackle the issue of homelessness among youth

Our hope is that this investigative series will prompt a change in our approach to this growing problem. If you are a young adult experiencing homelessness who would like to tell your story in the next part of “Aging Out into Homelessness,” please contact *The Streetlight* at thestreetlightnews-paper@gmail.com.

Jessica Middleton contributed research for this report.

City Brings Groups Together to Address Homelessness

By Jared Kofsky

Despite its small size, Trenton is home to a large number of agencies and organizations aiming to address poverty in the capital region. Yet despite the efforts of these organizations, homelessness continues to impact hundreds of Trentonians.

From senior citizens spending the night inside the Rescue Mission of Trenton to young adults sleeping under bridges, it is clear that there is still a long way to go before every individual experiencing homelessness in the city is housed.

For many years, despite there being a variety of stakeholders in the fight against homelessness in Trenton, representatives from each non-profit, government, and religious organization lacked a place to inform their colleagues of the progress and challenges that they were facing.

However, in the time since the City of Trenton opened its Coordinated Entry and Assessment Services (CEAS) Center at the corner of Perry and Ewing Streets, that is all beginning to change.

Every month, CEAS Center Director Janet Kleckley-Porter now hosts a meeting of the CEAS Coordinated Mobile Outreach Team to discuss matters related to the unsheltered homelessness. Each gathering attracts approximately a dozen officials, representing organizations like Soldier On, Catholic Charities, and Oaks Integrated Care.

During each meeting, every attendee shares how many families the group that they represent were able to find housing for that month, and information is released about upcoming outreach events and housing opportunities in Trenton. Attendees regularly discuss not

only their efforts within city limits, but also how they intend to or are already addressing homelessness in the suburbs. For instance, the Men's Mission House in Ewing and the regional Point-in-Time Count effort were addressed when *The Streetlight* attended one of the group's meetings in December.

Other topics of discussion change based on each gathering. In December, one major subject of concern was a sudden increase of Puerto Rican families experiencing homelessness in the city who came to the mainland United States after being displaced during Hurricane Maria.

Although most of these families were not believed to be unsheltered, representatives discussed how many of them could not afford their own place to stay and were going between the beds and couches of relatives and acquaintances in Trenton.

Attendees discussed a need to work with these displaced families in order to provide them with housing of their own to avoid the risk of possibly not having a place to stay at all at some point.

Although homelessness is still a crisis in Trenton and cities all across the country, officials hope that by having this gathering of organizations, their efforts can be maximized and a greater number of individuals can be supported in their journey to finding and securing permanent housing.

**City of Trenton
CEAS Center**

**511 Perry Street,
Trenton, NJ
(609) 989-3722**

The Streetlight

Mission Statement

The Streetlight is dedicated to giving a voice to and empowering individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as raising public awareness of the various issues facing the local homeless population.

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**"Shadow of Things to Come"
Derrick Branch**