

# The Crosswalk

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## Special points of interest:

- *Become a Charter Member of the Hall’s Companions’ Club. See page 4. Your support of recovery has never been more important that it is today.*

## “Safe Haven” Up and Running

Benilde Hall’s second campus began serving a “special” group of homeless men in March 2014. This campus, “Safe Haven, Kansas City,” opened a home-like setting capable of housing up to seven men. As of the date this article, the home is full and a second home is being made ready for more homeless clients.



The driving force for Safe Ha-

ven is the VA. Last summer, the VA offered a five-year contract to Benilde Hall for Kansas City’s only Safe Haven. Benilde Hall accepted. Program differences — Safe Haven model as compared with Benilde Hall’s existing model — dictated use of a second campus rather than campus expansion.

Safe Haven serves veterans only. What’s offered is short-term care (90 days), low-stress and low-demand. VA wrote the program using a “housing first” rehabilitation model.

Benilde Hall scrambled for several months to find structures suitable for service for up to 25 veterans at a time. Exec. Dir. Kent Jewell emphasizes that Benilde Hall was fortunate to find a site within

the Blue Valley Neighborhood Association for its Safe Haven campus. Benilde Hall knew there would be political issues in housing homeless vets. Jewell says “Kansas City, MO accepted its obligation to veterans when neighboring cities did not.”

Jewell explains that the VA pays a daily fee for room, board, and other care, but no “up front” costs. According to Jewell, “purchasing or leasing and improving a house or other structure, and then furnishing it, inflict a cash crunch on Benilde Hall. But,” he adds, “that’s reality.”



## Naming Rights Opportunity

Benilde Hall’s Board of Directors has created a unique opportunity by deciding to permit a donor or donors to name the new “Safe Haven” campus. Naming Rights have never before been offered by the Hall. The term currently used “Safe Haven,” is a VA program designation, not a campus name. The Board intends to permit a friend or friends of Benilde Hall to attach an enduring name to the entire second campus.

The Board decision is a departure from past practices. Benilde Hall is named after Benildus Romancon, a nineteenth century French school-teacher and saint of the Catholic Church. Benildus was a member of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and, something like a patron for the Hall’s founder Godfrey Kobets. Likewise, when the Hall had the opportunity to choose a name for its permanent housing project across

Twenty-Third Street, it used “Matt Talbot” to honor an Irish ascetic (1856 – 1925). Talbot used “the pledge” and proclaimed that for grace that enabled him to overcome chronic alcoholism.

For more information about naming rights now offered, contact Kent Jewell or Roy Riffe at Benilde Hall.

## Meet the Staff – Roy Riffe, Development Director

[rriffe@mail.benildehall.org](mailto:rriffe@mail.benildehall.org).

Editor: Roy, you have been with Benilde Hall since 2011. Tell our readers about your role at the Hall and your background.

Roy: I write grants for BH, so I go to lots of meetings off campus. When I'm not doing that, I'm at my computer working on raising money for the Hall's different activities. My favorite job before Benilde Hall was fundraising and public relations for the Wildlife Conservation Center in Central Park, NYC, the zoo.

Ed.: That sounds like fun, although the grant writing process itself sounds formulaic and routine. Is it?

Roy: It's anything but that. For example, you're running a short article in this first issue of *"The Crosswalk"* about different current ideas on how best to help the homeless – housing first or treatment. BH stands the risk of getting caught in the crossfire of disputes such as that. Government programs and funding foundations look long and hard at what the Hall and other agencies do. The government and foundations are always looking for effective services, seeking the "most for the buck." BH can take the attitude "We know best," but taking that attitude jeop-

ardizes funding from foundations and others that change their grant-funding and contract criteria every year.

Ed.: I'm guessing that fundraising for the Central Park Zoo is a lot different than fundraising for BH. Right?

Roy: Good question. The requirement that a fundraiser/grant writer be curious and attentive is exactly the same. Yes, the particulars are completely different. You need to understand, I'm a "mission" guy. To work for the benefit of the homeless is a special opportunity for me. The way I see it, staff, directors, and supporters of BH have to step back from distractions, and there are a lot of those here at the Hall. When we do that, we observe that we are blessed in our various roles. The Central Park Zoo is one of the best endowed and supported charities in the world! That zoo has a fabulous "backyard" and a remarkable history as the oldest operating zoo in the US. BH does not enjoy gifts like those, but it has a fabulous role to play through attention to its mission.

Ed.: You said curious and attentive. Care to elaborate?

Roy: I read a lot, and I listen a lot. I relate what I learn to BH. You see, without grants and funding by generous people and foundations, BH would have to shut its doors. "Precarious" is not too strong a word for the BH situation or for any other un-endowed operating charity. This is a challenge. I like to think it keeps me young and sharp.

Ed.: Thanks for your time. Stay curious, and stay effective!

Roy: You're welcome.



*"I'm a 'mission' guy. To work for the benefit of the homeless is a special opportunity for me."*

## Successful Discharges – Sweet Sorrows

The July 2014 opening of St. Michael's Veterans Campus, Kansas City's brand new VA permanent housing facility, resulted in ten successful discharges of BH clients. Seeing so many men moving at one time was bitter sweet: thrilling and chilling at the same time. Successful discharges happen all the time here (and are beginning to occur at the new "Safe Haven" campus too), but never this many at one time. The men leaving were excited to be part of St. Michael's, and the men remaining on campus saw evidence of positive possibilities for themselves too. St. Michael's is just one more piece of the puzzle. The big picture shows that it takes a variety of programs to serve (and actually help) homeless adults.

Successful discharges involve elements of stable income, secure living arrangements, and a plan for maintenance of a sober lifestyle. More than 60% of BH discharges are successful. True, there are other discharges, some that are not all they could be. Those too convey the message that recovery, while not easy or assured, is offered to those men who really want it.

## “Housing First” or “Treatment First” ???

How should society care for homeless adults? Should they be treated first (treated for whatever caused their homelessness), or should they be housed first? There are competing and compelling answers to these questions, answers that at times conflict with each other.

“Housing first” advocates always have a say in these debates. Their voices are always influential, and, sometimes quite persuasive. Right now, in 2014, the housing first advocates are making themselves heard – loud and clear! Their essential idea is to combat homelessness. They point to the dangers of

homeless living and to the benefits (physical and psychological) that an abode provides. Get a woman or man off the streets first they argue; then provide counseling or other needed services as necessary.

“Treatment first” advocates disagree. They look at homelessness as a symptom of underlying problems. Instead of moving a homeless adult into immediate housing, treatment first proponents prefer a two-step approach: First, control the situation by bringing the adult into stabilizing care and treatment; second, return the woman or man to the real world, but *only* when she or he has tools for coping with life.

Benilde Hall gets caught in the middle of this discussion! In fact, Benilde Hall is accustomed to this conflict. At its core, Benilde Hall has been, and will remain, a treatment first agency. Benilde Hall was designed around treatment first. However, some agencies that refer men to Benilde Hall do so with “housing first” in mind. Part of the Benilde Hall “wisdom” is recognizing that some clients respond to certain models better than others. Benilde Hall advocates for treatment first, but the Hall adapts. The Hall never injures itself by being inflexible. In the end, the role of the Hall is to serve. That’s what we do; that’s who we are.

## Friends in High Places

Tom Mitchell, one of Benilde Hall’s best friends, has been actively working for the Hall’s continued success. Tom made arrangements for Benilde Hall to be the beneficiary of this year’s RE/MAX Innovations “Red, White & Blue” Golf Tournament, September 11, 2014. This scramble-format event – for women and men – visits Staley Farms Golf Club, a challenging and interesting premier course, one of the very best courses in the metro area

Don’t miss this event. To enroll a team or sign on as an individual, call Laura Tyson at 816 454 6540 or call Staley Farms at 816 734 3839. And thanks, Tom; thanks a lot.



## High Demand for “Handyman” Services

Benilde Hall Services continues its “jack of all trades” growth, serving clients all across the metro area. During summer months, Benilde Hall Services keeps busy mowing, but it also has other activities including property maintenance for a significant new client, a large apartment complex in Wyandotte County, Kansas.

Benilde Hall Services was first created five years ago to address two unrelated needs – keeping up with maintenance required for the older build-

ings on the BH campus and providing employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed men. From mowing to landscaping to janitorial and painting, carpentry, electrical, even snow removal, BH Services demonstrates the ability to take care of property owners’ needs. Mark Breads has taken charge for BH Services, supervising and assigning crews, taking emergency calls, and generally acting as “the face” of Services. Three months ago, Services needed another

truck, and many Benilde Hall supporters responded to a Kent Jewell letter asking for contributions to help buy that vehicle, a four-year-old Ford Super Duty pickup. If you missed out on the chance to make a contribution to that effort, call D’Ann Clark at Benilde Hall. She will be glad to help you make a quick and painless contribution to help BH Services keep up with demand.

*How to Best Treat Adult Homelessness – the Unsolved Debate Continues.*

## BENILDE HALL

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### For your Calendar

**September 17,  
2014 3:30pm**

Board of Directors  
meeting

**October 10, 2014**

5th Annual Benilde  
Hall Charity Golf  
Tournament

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

The CROSSWALK is a bimonthly newsletter, Sylvia Hoover, editor. To subscribe for electronic publication, write to [shoover@mail.benildehall.org](mailto:shoover@mail.benildehall.org).

## Companions' Club – "Charter Membership Available"

One of the purposes of *The Crosswalk* is to promote the **Companions' Club** to Benilde Hall's many friends and supporters. **Companions' Club** members support Benilde Hall operations by signing up for monthly contributions. Members of the **Companions' Club** set their own giving level -- \$20 each month, \$25, \$35, \$50, \$75 -- you get the idea. The promise of Benilde Hall has never been needed more than it is today. Without the support of its friends, Benilde Hall

would not be able to do what it does. If you have any doubt about what BH is doing or about the value of your support, go to [www.benildehall.org](http://www.benildehall.org) to read more about the program, its history, and its delivery of what it promises.

To request your **Companions' Club** membership card and to enroll, call Chaplain Stephen (King) at Benilde Hall, 816 842 5836, or send "Chap" an inquiry at [sking@mail.benildehall.org](mailto:sking@mail.benildehall.org).

Look for future editions of *The Crosswalk*. To receive future editions of *The Crosswalk* in PDF format, send your email address to Chaplain Stephen at the address given above. Become part of the journey that our clients walk, the journey from homelessness to possibilities, the walk from despair to hope!

