



the CROSSWALK

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Special points of interest:

- Kudos to RE/MAX Innovations for a great golf event on September 11, "Red, White, Blue" raising more than \$10,000 for Benilde Hall. Thank you everyone involved.

Pinning Down Homelessness

"Homelessness" is a difficult phenomenon to quantify. A recent estimate (that some experts consider too high) is that there are 5,000 homeless people in the Kansas City metropolitan area at any time. Most of that number, maybe 80%, are able to find shelter when they want it – from a friend or from a service agency.

Society "nibbles" to find homelessness data. For example, schools refer to "children in transition," i.e., children who move during a school year, often two or three times, as a tool to estimate the

number of families dealing with homelessness. The documentary movie "Rich Hill," showing in theaters at "press" time for this newsletter, focuses on the lives of three teenage boys living in or around Rich Hill, Missouri. The term "homeless" is not used, but the family of one of the boys moves twice in one school year – away from Rich Hill and then back again. The family moves in with cousins as the school year finishes. What that family confronts is not the type of homelessness we deal with at the Hall, but it is real and actual

homelessness.

See <http://pprc.umsl.edu/files/pdfs/mo-homelessness> for a current study. The estimate is that homelessness in Missouri occurs at a rate of 17 per 10,000 residents. The study found "modest decreases in the number of unsheltered homeless persons in the chronic substance abuse, severely mentally ill, chronically homeless, and veterans' subpopulations between 2011 and 2012." (Page 11) Good to see that; those are the populations Benilde Hall serves.

East 23rd Street—A Holy Place!

For more than a century the Benilde Hall campus has been a place of respect for life and service to "the homeless." In August 1899, St. Anthony's Home for Infants was established on East 23rd Street, right where Benilde Hall operates today. Times must have been difficult then and painful too. Babies were being abandoned at an alarming rate. Two days after the St. Anthony's Home was opened, its first infant client

arrived. Other infants followed. In its first three years, St. Anthony's accepted more than 100 babies.

St. Anthony's Home continued on this campus for more than 40 years. For much of the time, it shared this space with St. Vincent's Maternity Hospital. The Home provided care for as many as 235 youngsters at a time. At five years of age, girls and boys not yet adopted were referred to gen-

der-specific local orphanages. The maternity hospital's mission broadened as it became a general hospital known as Queen of the World Hospital.

Taking care of the homeless and providing care seems to be part of the legacy of this part of God's Good Earth.



Meet the Staff – D’Ann Clark, Financial Assistant to Executive

Editor: D’Ann “Dee Dee” Clark has done everything at Benilde Hall and has done everything well. In more than 20 years, Ms. Clark has “manned” the front desk, “counseled” clients, and agonized over countless monthly budgets for Benilde Hall. D’Ann, who prefers to operate behind the camera rather than in front, took time recently to answer a few questions.

Ed.: You have been here a long time, longer than anyone else. When exactly did you begin working for Benilde Hall?

Clark: BH had only been open for two years when I began. That was in 1993. Godfrey Kobets was still around then. The CEO was Toby Perez. Linus Benoit was the clinical supervisor. There were a couple of counselors and a married couple who ran the kitchen, Linda Kidd and her husband. I was naïve enough to think that I could do everything else!

Ed.: How many clients were being served then?

Clark: Maybe nine. At that time, we were in a building on a Catholic Church campus, St. Monica’s, on the Paseo at Sixteenth Street.

Ed.: Tell us about that.

Clark: Things were so simple then.

I looked it up. That was nearly 3000 clients ago! Everyone on the staff shared one office. There was no privacy. So, Toby Perez, the CEO, decided no one could smoke in the office. But Linus Benoit, the Clinical Director who would eventually become executive director, took to standing at the office doorway smoking and “blowing” smoke out into the hallway. Having fun was how we kept our cool.

Ed.: You said Godfrey Kobets was around too?

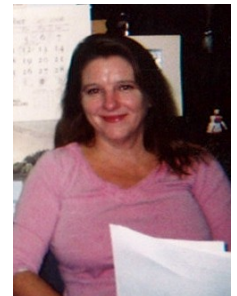
Clark: Not every day. He was in and out. He was a big man, imposing, too. He was a widower. He had been a football coach; people still called him “Coach,” and a high school principal at DeLaSalle High School. He had a kind heart, but I had to get around his intimidating aura to find that out. He believed in people and in helping. He had no reservation at all about asking for money to keep “the Program” alive. We received no government money then. Donations kept BH going. When we were broke, Coach Kobets would go knocking on the doors of his former students, guys who had played football for him too.

Ed.: How is it that you stayed this long? No wander lust ever?

Clark: I have found my niche, I guess that’s the answer. If I told you I never looked for other jobs or never had other job offers, that would be a lie. But there was never a place like this, not for me. I have known almost everyone of those 3000 clients! I have talked to them about paying rent here or, especially early on, about how to do laundry or how to avoid blowing a paycheck on the first day, about how to make amends to a wife or girlfriend, everything. Sr. Mary Frances, Godfrey Kobets’ daughter, told me once that I should be thankful for having a place to make a living and do good at the same time. She was right. My father was a veteran. This is a way for me to give back. I’m blessed.

Ed.: I sense that you have much more that you could tell readers. Can we do this again someday?

Clark: Sure. You know where to find me!



Godfrey Kobets...had no problem asking for donations for “the program”

Safe Haven Expansion

Benilde Hall is pleased to announce expansion of its second campus. Only five months after accepting its first Safe Haven client, the new campus has nearly doubled its floor space offered for housing homeless US veterans. Simultaneously, the Hall can proudly announce that its contract with the VA for operation of Kansas City’s Safe Haven program is being renewed for another year. Kent Jewell described the significance of these two related events as follows: “In less than a year, the Hall entered into a renewable contract for the Safe Haven service in Kansas City.” And he continued, “In that year’s time, the Hall launched a Safe Haven program successfully and has now grown the program from 7 beds to 14 beds.”

Safe Haven serves veterans only, offering short-term, low-stress and low-demand, “housing first” care. The VA pays a daily fee for room, board, and other care of homeless male and female veterans. The VA does not “front” any costs or identify locations suitable for the type of program homeless veterans want or deserve. Finding houses and neighbors willing to welcome homeless neighbors into their midst were both challenging. Benilde Hall staff handled those chores and then brought the two selected houses up to the standards of repair and cleanliness demanded by the VA. The whole process has been taxing. Kent Jewell expresses admiration for Jennifer Twigg, Clinical Director of Safe Haven and to her staff. Also, a special thanks to Benilde Hall Services which provided “up-tempo” rehab. “Mark Breads really did a remarkable job getting the properties ready quickly.”

“Germaine Washington Earns Doctorate”

One of Benilde Hall’s leaders and heroines, Germaine Washington, has recently earned her “final” (maybe) academic degree, Doctor in Management and Organizational Leadership, University of Phoenix, 2014.

Dr. Washington has served as Clinical Director at Benilde Hall since 2011. Before that she spent three years at the Hall serving as a substance abuse counselor. Dr. Washington is enthusiastic in everything she does, from working with clients, to supervising counselors, even in the review and correction of a client chart. Washington com-

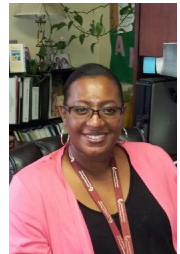
mands and deserves the respect of Benilde Hall staff. She chairs the weekly staff review of client issues and recommendations.

Dr. Washington graduated from Missouri Western State University (St. Joseph) in 1996 with a degree in criminal justice. She also has an MBA from the University of Phoenix earned in 2009.

Dr. Washington is married and has two children. Dr. Washington first worked in substance abuse treatment at Preferred Family Healthcare. She is a registered substance abuse professional (RSAP), and she is an International Certified Criminal Justice Addictions Professional (ICCPJ).

She is an avid reader, particularly interested in books of inspiration. She and her family enjoy a wide variety of activities together including theme parks.

The next time you are on campus, if you hear a boisterous and joyous laugh, chances are you have just encountered Benilde Hall’s Dr. Washington! Congratulate “Dr. Geri” she deserves it.



What “24/7” Really Means

Executive Director Kent Jewell dislikes casual use of “24/7” terminology. He knows that there is nothing casual about staffing Benilde hall AND the new Benilde Hall Safe Haven campus for every hour of every day, and for every week and every month of every year. Jewell says that staffing is a constantly changing puzzle for the Hall’s administrators. “Night shifts are difficult to fill,” he says, “and even one ‘no show’ disrupts everything.” Monitors are on duty on both campuses every night of the week, for the protection of residents and for maintaining peace and tranquility.

In addition to all-night monitors, there is an obvious need for cooks everyday in the kitchen at Benilde Hall. That kitchen currently feeds all clients, those living on the Twenty-Third Street campus and those living on the Safe Haven campus too. So, the kitchen is staffed seven days a week every week. Clients have to eat on holidays just as they must be fed normally. For those of you who are curious, meals for Safe Haven clients are currently being packaged and transported from the main campus to the Safe Haven campus. Procedures in place were developed in accordance with Kansas City Health Department standards for food handling.



Tall and Fragile

The smoke stack (pictured) stands on the back (the north side) of the Benilde Hall campus. It has been unused for longer than anyone presently associated with Benilde Hall knows, looming over Twenty-second Street and deteriorating by the year.

Although the existence or condition of the stack have never been kept secret, little has been done due to -- lack of funds and the rumor that 22nd Street would be widened by the City.

Benilde Hall administrators

and successive boards of directors have put off dealing with the stack while waiting and hoping for a remedy -- some miracle (!) or for funds to somehow materialize to pay for repair or demolition.

The Dangerous Buildings office of the City of Kansas City recently discovered the tower’s plight. “Major spalling” is the term the office uses to indicate the obvious decay of the structural concrete stack. The City opened a file on this matter and commenced a 30-day clock for resolution of the perceived

problem. Benilde Hall has been told to come up with a repair or demolition proposal with the allotted time.

That is where the matter is today. The last time Benilde Hall sought a demolition estimate . . . five years ago . . . the estimate was \$30,000.

BENILDE HALL

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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.

“Letter to the Editor”

Thanks for sending me “the CROSSWALK,” Benilde Hall’s newsletter. Sylvia, I’m very impressed. Good for you and good for Benilde Hall.

You included me on your mailing list because I’m a “grad” of Benilde Hall. Always loved the place; still do. I had been living on Kansas City’s streets for seven years. When some place took me in – some mission or Restart or the Salvation Army or someone else – I would stay for awhile and then

wander off. The places that took me in were great for what they did for me, don’t get me wrong, but Benilde Hall trusted me more than any other place. “Trust” is what I felt there.

Benilde Hall let me find my own “pace” for recovery. Linus Benoit was running the show while I was there. He and the counselors and the kitchen folks and the monitors, they all accepted me. They knew they could help me avoid a miserable, lonely death on the

streets before I knew that. Treatment for alcoholism and drug addiction is wonderful, but it can’t be rushed. It had to be at my pace! I guess I made that clear while I was there. Did I set a record for number of days there? Just kidding . . . or maybe I’m not. Treatment can be a joke, or it can work if there’s trust and if the “pace” fits the man.

Best wishes to all at the Hall,
(Name withheld to protect client privacy.)