



FALL 2017



victories

VICTORY PROGRAMS **OPENING DOORS TO HOPE, HEALTH AND HOUSING**

Victory Programs' alumni Kelly R. and New Joelyn's Home Program Director Henryce Jackson-Gumes at the Grand Opening ribbon-cutting ceremony with Governor Baker, Mayor Walsh, Secretary Sudders and Representative Malia.

Crossing the Bridge to Recovery

Victory Programs' alumni Kelly R. looks back on the Long Island bridge closing and reflects on new beginnings and rebuilding her life around recovery.

Kelly R. has made her commitment to recovery a central part of her life. It is a commitment she made a few years ago, for herself and for her son. Not so long ago Kelly was a resident at Victory Programs' Shepherd House, a recovery home for women. She moved to our Portis Family Home with her son after they were reunited. Before that, Kelly was a resident of Joelyn's Family Home, Victory Programs' women's residential recovery program on Boston Harbor's Long Island. She was

there in October 2014 when the bridge closed and all of the programs on the island were evacuated. "I was waiting for the van to go back onto the island, and I got a phone call from my roommate and my senior counselor saying, 'They're closing the bridge, what do you need? We'll grab stuff from your room,'" she recalls. Kelly also remembers how hard it was to get into a residential recovery program in the first place, particularly as a woman, which is why she stays connected with Victory

Programs even now that she and her son are living on their own. "I talked to Jackie, my counselor, just last week," she shares. "Victory Programs was there for me every step of the way."

Kelly has come a long way since she first walked through the doors of Joelyn's Family Home. She and her son live in the heart of the city, near a T station that gives them easy access to school, work, education and appointments. Kelly found a job that gives

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RECENT GIFT AND GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you!

Because of your generosity, thousands of individuals and families will receive the housing and health services they need to reclaim their lives and get back on their feet.

Supporting ReVision Urban Farm

Cedar Tree Foundation
The Doe Family Foundation
(also supports Chamblet
and ReVision Family Homes)
Krupp Family Foundation
The Mary B. Dunn Charitable Trust
Paul and Edith Babson Foundation

Supporting the Boston Living Center

Ameriprise Financial
The Boston Foundation (Open Door Grant)
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
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Fund/Bank of America, N.A. Trustee
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Helen Schmidt Hardman Charitable Trust

Julian A. and Louis G. Brodsky Foundation
Liberty Mutual Foundation
MAC AIDS Fund
The Memorial Church, Harvard University
Walmart Foundation

Supporting Victory Health & Victory Housing

Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Beacon Hill Circle for Charity
BNY Mellon/Alice P. Chase Trust
BNY Mellon/Eugene F. Faye Trust
Brookline Bank Foundation
Cabot Family Charitable Trust
Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation
The Hanley Family Foundation
The Janey Fund Charitable Trust
Lawrence Model Lodging Houses Trust
MassHousing/Center for Community
Recovery Innovations

People's United Community Foundation
of Eastern Massachusetts
TD Charitable Foundation
TJX Foundation

Supporting Victory Programs Operating Expenses

Alice Willard Dorr Foundation
Anonymous Foundation
de Beaumont Foundation
Esmond Harmsworth 1997
Charitable Foundation
Health Resources in Action

Supporting Victory Programs Prevention Programs

BMC HealthNet Plan
The Boston Foundation (Equality Fund)



CHERI EPPS
Senior Director of Programs

New Senior Staff

Cheri Epps, MSW, LADCI, is the new Senior Director of Programs at Victory Programs. In her role she oversees the Divisions of Health, Housing and Prevention and is responsible for overall agency program operations and clinical treatment. Prior to joining Victory Programs, Cheri was a Division Director at the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) in the Homeless Services Bureau. She worked for BPHC for over 22 years providing services and support to the homeless, managing Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing and Community Housing Programs. Cheri's work is focused on dismantling health disparities and improving the overall health and well-being for the most vulnerable populations. She received her MSW from Simmons College and is a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor.



LARRY DAY
BLC Program Director

Larry Day joins Victory Programs as the new Program Director of the Boston Living Center. He is well known for his work with the HIV/AIDS community and is a former member of the Victory Programs' Board of Directors. Larry has more than a decade of experience in human services leadership positions with AIDS Action Committee and the Justice Resource Institute. His skills include program development, management, communications, advocacy and policy development. The announcement of Larry's new leadership role at the Center in early 2017 was met with great enthusiasm by staff and members and represents an exciting new chapter in the Center's history.

A Growing Partnership with Bank of America!

The Bank of America Charitable Foundation has offered invaluable support and help to Victory Programs.

For the last two years, they have supported the many services provided to the families of our ReVision and Chamblet Family Home shelters, as well as Portis Family Home sober living program. Additionally, this spring a cheerful team of Bank of America representatives arrived at our new doorstep with donations of comforters, bed linens and bags of personal care items for the soon-to-be-residents of our New Joelyn's Home residential recovery program. They even stayed to help make all the beds!

We are grateful to Bank of America for all their support and look forward to a continued partnership.



Crossing the Bridge to Recovery (continued from page 1)

her the flexibility she needs to take care of her son and the opportunity to build skills. "I was in hospitality for 20 years doing front of house, and I wanted to learn back of house skills," she explains. She took a food service course during the two years she and her son spent at Portis Family Home, and she was able to land a job at Hale and Hearty Soups. "It was the best thing that ever happened to me," says Kelly. "It is fun and they work with my son's school hours."

Kelly has spent the last few years doing what she calls "cleaning up the wreckage of the past." While she was at Victory Programs she started paying off old debts, including what she owed to renew her driver's license so she could retake the driving test. She's since purchased a car. "We don't use it often," she shares, however, she appreciates the freedom it gives her to reconnect with her family on the South Shore. "This is still kind of new, being on my own and having that freedom and that responsibility."

Recovery has given Kelly a second chance at the life she wants for herself. She's committed to attending meetings and feels it is important to share her experiences with other members of the recovery community. "There are so many people in recovery," she says. "It makes it easier to know what someone else is going through. To know that you are not alone, there is help, you just need to ask and there is always something."

Kelly joined us for the Grand Opening of New Joelyn's Home, Victory Programs' newest residential recovery home for women located on the line of Roxbury and Dorchester. "I'm so glad New Joelyn's Home is open because it gives other women the same chance I had."



Opioid Facts

- ✓ Opioid overdose deaths increased over 300% between 2006-2016 in Massachusetts
- ✓ In 2014, overdose death rates in MA were more than double the national average
- ✓ Opioid overdoses are the number one cause of accidental death in MA, surpassing car crashes for the better part of a decade
- ✓ In 2015, 276,000 adolescents were current nonmedical users of pain relievers, with 122,000 having an addiction to prescription pain relievers
- ✓ Among new heroin users, approximately three out of four report abusing prescription opioids prior to using heroin

These facts are all sourced from Mass.gov Chapter 55 report in combination with information from the Centers for Disease Control.



NEW JOELYN'S HOME

Opens the Doors to Hope for Women in Recovery

New Joelyn's Home represents the culmination of more than two-and-a-half years of planning, preparation and implementation to rebuild the women's residential recovery capacity at Victory Programs. Housed in a beautiful Victorian home, this program stands as a safe-haven for women who have struggled with substance addiction and need support on their journey to recovery.

On May 18, 2017, Victory Programs celebrated the Grand Opening of New Joelyn's Home, a newly renovated 24-bed, state-of-the-art women's residential recovery program located on the line between Roxbury and Dorchester. The event was attended by luminaries from across the Commonwealth including

Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders, State Representative Liz Malia and Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson. Opening this new facility proves yet again, despite all odds, Victory Programs can make impossible dreams come true with enough perseverance, hope and help from you and the many members of our community!

From the day the only bridge to Boston Harbor's Long Island closed and we evacuated Joelyn's Family Home, to the day we opened the doors to New Joelyn's Home, it has been a long journey. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has helped us along the way.



Victory Programs' Board of Directors

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Beyond Victory – Ending Hepatitis C in Massachusetts Takes a Coalition

EndHepCMA is a coalition of consumers, advocates and organizations working together to eliminate Hepatitis C in Massachusetts. With an estimated 300,000 people on the low end (data is often underreported due to stigma) living with the Hepatitis C virus in the Commonwealth, the Coalition aims to increase public awareness, improve access to care and expand the resources available to those affected by this virus.

Last year, Victory Programs worked with the statewide Hepatitis C Coalition to assume coordination responsibilities for the group. Since then, we've seen expanded engagement including six standing committees. Over recent months, the Coalition has met to establish long-term committee goals and set action plans. The Coalition is working to develop and cultivate relationships between community leaders, policy-makers, providers and people living with or at risk of Hepatitis C. The goal of the Coalition is to eliminate Hepatitis C in Massachusetts. In the effort to build community awareness, the Coalition hopes to foster the expansion of access to Hepatitis C prevention and treatment services.

Please visit the Coalition's website, www.vpi.org/endhepcma, or contact Richard Baker, Coalition Coordinator, at rbaker@vpi.org for more details about the Coalition and how to join!

Photo Credits: Greig Cranna
and VPI Staff

Housing and Beyond

Victory Programs' supportive housing programs offer more than a roof over residents' heads. They provide a permanent home to individuals who face health or social barriers that make it difficult for them to stay housed without a little extra support. In addition to housing, residents work with a case manager on social services coordination, employment issues, education, recreational opportunities, support structures and accessing benefits such as childcare services or food subsidies. Residents also work with a medical case manager on adherence to healthcare such as making doctors' appointments, staying compliant with medications and accessing mental health services. Victory Programs runs four supportive housing programs, each with its own unique mission:

- **CEDAR FAMILY HOME** provides long-term, permanent housing for two large families with children where one or both parents have an HIV/AIDS diagnosis.
- **RUAH HOUSE** provides permanent housing for seven women. All Ruah residents have an HIV/AIDS diagnosis and a history of chronic homelessness. Many also have a mental health diagnosis and/or substance addiction. The primary goal at Ruah is to not only assist residents in maintaining their housing, but also to support their health and quality of life. Many residents will stay at the program for upwards of a decade. Some move on when they are ready for a greater degree of independence.
- **SERENITY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING** houses residents of any gender who have an HIV/AIDS diagnosis. Serenity is located in Topsfield, MA and is considered ideal by many residents who enjoy the slower pace of life away from the city. Because of the location, Serenity also provides van service to residents who need rides to appointments or other places.
- **VICTORY HOUSING ON WARREN STREET** provides subsidized housing for formerly chronically homeless individuals with a disability. The Case Manager at Victory Housing on Warren Street operates under a concierge model, allowing her to assist residents with a variety of needs and challenges.

Being Better Prepared to Serve the Transgender Members of Our Community

Victory Programs was recently awarded a grant through The Boston Foundation's Equality Fund to support a new TransHealth Initiative. Specifically, the grant enables us to assess our organization's preparedness to serve the transgender community appropriately and effectively. This assessment will evaluate the agency's current capacity, including strengths and limitations, across all services. Results from the assessment will help Victory Programs develop an agency-wide training and education agenda to broadly increase our knowledge of the unique strengths, needs and vulnerabilities of transgender individuals. Next steps may include strategies such as capacity-building, specific supervision, development of peer services and structural changes. The goal is to move beyond access and improve Victory Programs' ability to provide services to transgender individuals in a manner that is safe, welcoming and best meets their unique needs.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, data comparing transgender individuals to the general population suggests that they are at higher risk of living in poverty, 29% compared to 14% of the general population; experiencing homelessness; having a negative experience with a medical care provider such as verbal harassment, refusal of treatment or having to teach the healthcare provider about transgender people to receive appropriate care; experiencing serious psychological distress; contracting HIV or using illicit drugs. Furthermore, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Infectious Disease, Office of HIV/AIDS identified the need for increased cultural competency in serving the transgender community including an expansion of peer health navigation services for at risk and HIV+ transgender individuals. Victory Programs, a known ally of and trusted service provider for the LGBTQ community here in Boston, has taken this opportunity to lead the way to improving services and creating a safe, welcoming space for transgender individuals who may be homeless, living with HIV/AIDS and/or struggling with substance addiction and seeking services in a stigma-free environment.



Voices of Victory

Brenna is a client at New Joelyn's Home, a residential recovery program for women. She is in recovery so she can have a new start on a sober life. She started her journey to recovery six months ago. Brenna would like to open her own hair salon with special services for other women on the path to recovery so they can feel as beautiful as they are.



Chelsea is a client at Women's Hope, a transitional support services program for women. Chelsea still hopes to finish her undergraduate degree, attend med school and wants to provide a healthy and stable living situation for her daughter.

Leanne is a resident at Chamblet Family Home, a family shelter in Dorchester. Before entering Chamblet, Leanne and her family moved from place to place. Since moving into the shelter program Leanne has started school at Lincoln Tech to learn how to be a Dental Assistant.



Todd is a member of the Boston Living Center, New England's largest community and resource center for people living with HIV/AIDS. Every morning Todd makes a point of saying hello to all the volunteers, staff and other members at the Center. He enjoys making people happy & stress free.



Freda is also a member of the Boston Living Center. She was introduced to the Center in 1993 by an advocate and close friend. Through her participation she has learned how to teach others about HIV/AIDS to help dispel ignorance and stigma. She enjoys learning new things every day.

Paul is a client at Victory House, a residential recovery program for men. He is in recovery for substance abuse issues. He wants to be successful in recovery so he can find housing and pursue his dream of a career in residential interior design.





OPENING DOORS TO HOPE, HEALTH AND HOUSING

965 Massachusetts Avenue Boston, MA 02118

f/VictoryPrograms @VictoryPrograms

f/BostonLivingCenter @LivingCenter

f/ReVisionUrbanFarm @ReVisionFarm

Victory Programs opens doors to hope, health and housing for individuals and families facing homelessness, substance use disorders and chronic illnesses.

4 Ways to Support Victory Programs:

1 Make a contribution

Visit www.vpi.org or send donations to:

Victory Programs, Inc.
965 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02118

2 Donate new items to our clients

Our clients are always in need of items to start their own homes, specifically linens, toiletries and kitchenware.

3 Volunteer!

Victory Programs offers many volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups looking to get more involved with the community we serve. For more information, contact Tammy at 617-236-1012 or tblocker@vpi.org.

4 Spread the word!

Tell your friends, family and coworkers about our programs and ways they can get involved.

Please visit our website, www.vpi.org, to learn more about Victory Programs.



Pictured is the first cohort of women in recovery at New Joelyn's Home.