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November, 2008

Health, Homes and Jobs for Homeless New Yorkers

E News for:

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Renewal House
Graduation

Graduates are
thankful for...

Learning How to
Live Again ...
Clean

Junior Board Fall
Ball a Success!

How You Can Help



Renewal House Graduates and Alumni Share their Stories

Renewal House Graduation

On November 20th, we celebrated the graduates of Renewal House, a transitional housing program for 24 men in recovery from substance abuse. Clients acquire employment skills by working with the Times Square Business Improvement District. They acquire life skills by living together at the house -shopping, cooking, maintaining and cleaning the house together. Staff are there during daytime hours only. The combination of treatment, support, life skills and work speaks for itself: *95% of Renewal House graduates become fully employed; 99% become permanently housed.* During the graduation, new graduates as well as alumni celebrating 5, 10 and 15 years of recovery spoke about their experiences and the impact that Project Renewal has had on their lives.

Renewal House Graduates are thankful for:

- "Not waking up in the mud. Waking up in my own bed."
- "The friends and family who never gave up on me."
- "The staff at Renewal House who showed me tough love when I needed it."
- "The other men who pushed me to stay clean."
- "Having my own apartment after living on the streets for 15 years."
- "My wife, my apartment, my two cars...all the things I could have had years ago if I hadn't chosen drugs."



Project Renewal
Wishes You a
Happy
Thanksgiving!



Learning How to Live Again...Clean

Keith Smith, Renewal House Graduate

I was born in Panama. My mother told me when I was six that I shouldn't have been born and I really believed it. By the time I was 14 and living in the states, my mother was beating me so badly I ended up in the hospital twice. My father said I couldn't live with him. So I hit the streets and decided never to trust anybody ever again. I had the shakes from alcohol at 15 years old. From age 14-17 I was in juvenile detention constantly. At 17 I was hospitalized for mental problems. And at 18 I went to jail for a year.

I ended up in New York. I wanted to die. I lived under a bridge. I was a beggar. I stunk so bad the police wouldn't deal with me. At that point I realized I had a major problem with drugs. So I went to detox and then Bedford Atlantic shelter. Everyone was using in there, fights were breaking out. I couldn't stay clean there. I told my counselor I had heard about Renewal House, and wanted to try it.

I got to Renewal House and they gave me extensive counseling. They also gave me kitchen duty. And I started taking on extra duties. Four months into my recovery I found out that I had cancer. I stopped in front of the liquor store and thought about it for a long time, but something in the back of my head said don't use, no matter what. I went back to Renewal House and they made sure I was all right.

I recently went to my father's funeral. I haven't seen my family for 30-something years. At the funeral my mother said, "I didn't mean to be so angry, I'm sorry I hurt you." And I realized, maybe I should forgive her. Those are the benefits of me staying clean. I've gotten through the cancer, so far. I've got my family back in my life. I'm learning how to live again...clean. Project Renewal saved my life.

Junior Board Fall Ball a Success!

The Junior Board's Annual Fall Ball, held this year at the Cabanas at the Maritime Hotel, was a huge success! Over 200 guests helped raise much needed funds towards Project Renewal's programs and services. Thanks to the Junior Board for spreading awareness about our important mission. And a very special thank you to our liquor sponsor, Diageo!

For more information about the Junior Board, call Robin Lee at 212-620-0340.



Pictured above: (1) Jr. Board Member Anna Valeo and friends (2) Jr. Board Members Chris Bellapianta and Jenny Sharfstein (3) Jr. Board Member Frederick Volp, Paddy Smithwick, Anna Valeo, Chris Bellapianta

How You Can Help

This holiday season, show Project Renewal's clients they are not alone. Show our clients that you support their recovery and want to give them hope for a better new year! Here are some ideas:

- 1. Start a food or clothing drive.** Our Holland House residents pay a portion of their income towards rent and they're on a tight budget. Help our residents celebrate the holiday season by having a food or clothing drive where you work. We'll help you create signage and coordinate a pick-up. Please, non-perishable food items only and clothing must be new (hats, scarves, and gloves in size L, XL or one-size-fits-all.) Call Robin Lee at 212-620-0340 for

more information.

2. **Have Project Renewal's Comfort Foods Catering Service cater your next party.** Comfort Foods provides training experience for our Culinary Arts Training Program students and jobs for program graduates while offering low-cost, nutritious meals to shelters, senior citizen centers and other not-for-profits as well as catering services for parties and conferences. For more information click [here](#) or see below.

3. **Donate Now!** [Click here](#). Your gift helps homeless New Yorkers leave the streets for good.



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Let Project Renewal's
Comfort Foods do the Cooking!
Call Barbara Hughes at 212-533-8400 x 162.
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Yes, I wish to make a gift and help end homelessness.

Contact Us:

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www.projectrenewal.org

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