



Because you care, we want to keep in touch with you.

## Newsletter – Summer Edition

### *Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness. Starting on the Path to Independence*



#### **GREETINGS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**

It's summer time ....and here at Hyacinth's Place there is calm. Maybe it is because our women can lounge longer into the evening on the balcony where the cool breeze is saturated with

the fragrance of our herbal garden ..... or maybe it is because we are months away from celebrating four years of operation and we feel more experienced and stronger. Maybe the calm of this summer signifies a comfort in the progress our women have made.

During this summer, we also had the pleasure of a number of students who chose to volunteer their time and skills at this agency. For the first time, Hyacinth's Place has welcomed military veterans to our volunteer corp. From the Air Force and the Army, our veterans are working to assist Hyacinth's Place in fulfilling its mission. Since we last went to print, we have also welcomed two new Board members. Our new Directors have brought an infusion of energy and enthusiasm. They come with ideas, resources and skills to assist in the development of Hyacinth's Place. While we are growing and making progress, we have only just begun.....If you wish to make a contribution to the work of Hyacinth's Place, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.



#### **WELCOME OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!!**

We are thrilled to introduce our two new board members,

Teresa Ferrante and Reverend Dr. Jalene C. Chase-Sands!



*Ms. Teresa Ferrante*

Teresa, a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law, began her successful real estate career as a property manager and investor before practicing law.

After spending years litigating and managing employment-related civil rights cases and serving in management positions for the Federal Government, she is currently the Broker for Terra Firma Real Estate, LLC and a member of the United States Supreme Court Bar. In addition to her legal and real estate expertise, Teresa brings to the Board of Directors an infectious smile and an endlessly happy and positive altitude. Teresa's infectious kindness and generosity even spread to her family—she recently encouraged two of her grandchildren to volunteer at Hyacinth's Place during their summer vacations from college. We are very excited to have the privilege of having Teresa's extraordinary vision, remarkable expertise, and radiant presence with us on the Board of Directors!



*(Rev. Dr. Jalene Chase – Sands)*

Reverend Dr. Jalene C. Chase-Sands currently serves as Pastor at the Community United Methodist Church, a block away from Hyacinth's Place. Having earned a Doctor of Ministry specializing in Urban Ministry at Wesley Theological Seminary, Rev. Chase-Sands has founded Balance and Life Ministries, LLC and served on a number of

committees of the Baltimore Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church. A winner of the 2015 Praise 104.1 Community Award, Rev. Chase-Sands has also won awards as a community leader on research projects examining how to reduce barriers precluding undeserved black youth and families from mental healthcare. Rev. Chase-Sands and her church have long supported Hyacinth's Place, and we are excited to now formalize this unique relationship. We are lucky to make use of Chase-Sands exceptional knowledge of the racial and class disparities in mental healthcare. In sum, we are incredibly grateful to have Rev. Chase-Sands as a board member and we look forward to engaging with her caring spirit, her generosity, and her dedication to the personal and communal spiritual growth of our community!

 **OUR HERB GARDEN: SPICING UP LIFE AT HYACINTH'S PLACE.** In July, a few ambitious residents started a new project: planting an herb garden and hanging it off the second-floor balcony of the building. For many residents, planting the seeds and working with the soil was a soothing and therapeutic experience.



(Herb Garden Seedlings)

After joking about how dirty her hands and news clothes would become, LaRea expressed how calming she found the planting process. "I had never gardened before, but it was very relaxing," said LaRea. While some women enjoyed the adventure of gardening for the first time, for others planting the seeds brought back cherished memories. "The last time I planted something was when I was a little girl in my grandmother's garden. I planted an actual peach tree, and my

grandma showed me how to water the plants every morning when I got up," said Jamiah. This summer Jamiah relived the old memories when planting thyme instead of a peach tree. Other herbs that were planted include Rosemary, Basil, Chives, Lemongrass, and many more.

Quite auspiciously, the herbs seemed to be planted at just the right time. "When I first planted the herb, it actually rained every day for two weeks straight!" Jamiah said while laughing. Similarly, LaRea commented on how fast the herbs grew: "After uprooting the weed and planting the seeds, in about a month the herbs were already growing tall."



(Herb Garden after a few weeks)

The garden follows in the footsteps of Viola Ernestine Barrow's love of gardening and the greenery of nature. This love of flowers and plants led to her nickname "Hyacinth," a beautiful flower that grows in the waterways of her native country, Guyana. Hyacinth was famous for planting flowers in every square inch of her yard, and the hanging herb garden is a testimony to her legacy and another addition to the dozens of plants already filling the rooms and halls of "Hyacinth's Place."

Even with all of the herb garden's successes in its initial month, the women at Hyacinth's Place are excited for the best part which is yet to come: delicious, fresh, organic herbs that will add flavor and spice to the community's home-cooked meals. Come join us. We need volunteer chefs who are willing to share their knowledge regarding preparing healthy nutritious meals.



My cup has overflowed  
I've never made a fortune,  
And it's probably too late now.  
But I don't worry about that much  
I'm happy anyhow  
and as I go along life's way,  
I'm reaping better than I sowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

Haven't got a lot of riches,  
And sometimes the going's tough  
But I've got loving ones all around me,  
and that makes me rich enough.  
I thank God for his blessings,  
and the mercies He's bestowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong,  
my faith wore somewhat thin.  
But all at once the dark clouds broke,  
and the sun peeped through again.  
So Lord, help me not to gripe,  
about the tough rows I have hoed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

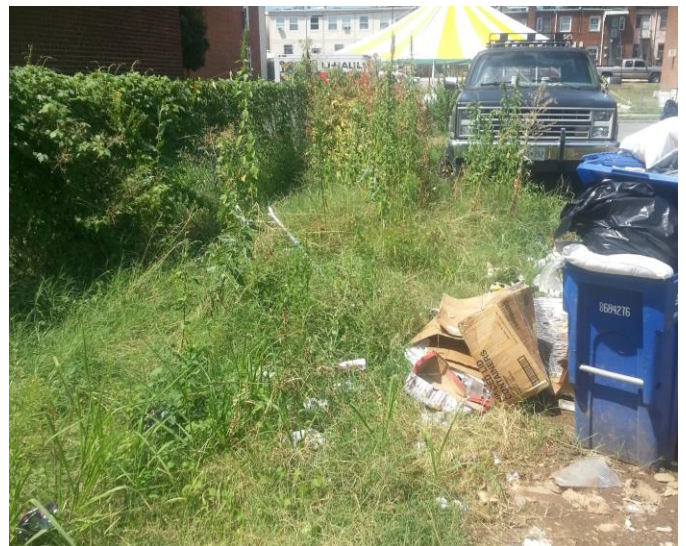
God gives me strength and courage,  
when the way grows steep and rough.  
I'll not ask for other blessings,  
I'm already blessed enough.  
And may I never be too busy,  
to help others bear their loads.  
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

When I think of how many  
People in this world....  
Who have it worse than I do,  
I realize just how blessed I am  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

(Author Unknown)



**ALLEYPALOOZA.** Many of our readers may be aware that the front entrance of Hyacinth's Place is not on Bladensburg Road, but rather is accessible from the *Alley* behind the building. Because our parking area is strategically located in this vicinity, it is also where residents, interns, volunteers, donors, and board members regularly enter the building. This alleyway also leads to the Community United Methodist Church, a path where many children and the elderly walk.



(The current state of the Alley)

This public entrance can greatly be improved. Over the past four years in spite of our efforts to work with the City Council, it has become an eyesore. We believe the environment of the community plays an important role in creating our memories and shared experiences, and HP is now prepared to take up the task of restoring this alleyway in the interest of the rehabilitation of our women.

Where now there is trash and waste, Hyacinth's Place is working diligently to envision this *Alley* in better condition, much like the alleyways typically seen in NW Washington. We are excited to again work with Ward 5 Councilman Kenyan McDuffie.



We intend to build off the momentum of DC's first ever *Alleypalooza*, a summer project that is repairing a total 64 alleyways spanning every ward in DC. As Councilman McDuffie expressed in great support of *Alleypalooza*, "There's some basic services that the government must deliver upon. That is, making sure we pick up the trash. Making sure we plow the snow. And making sure we pave our streets and alleys. This is very important."

Councilman McDuffie's commitment to cleaning and paving our city's streets has already benefited Hyacinth's Place. As we wrote in our last newsletter, the sidewalk on Bladensburg Road from Levi Street to Hyacinth's Place was full of cracks and even a large pothole right next to the B4 bus stop outside of our building. The disrepair of the sidewalk had become a danger to our community's children, elderly, and handicapped members. Thanks to our industrious and determined staff and a partnership with Kenyan McDuffie and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, we have a new, beautiful sidewalk that ensures the cleanliness of our neighborhood, the safety of our community, and the accessibility to public transportation for all our residents.

With these successes behind us, Hyacinth's Place looks forward to working with local politicians to clean our neglected alleyway and create a safe, clean, and beautiful neighborhood. Stay tuned ... we will post updates in our newsletter.



**CHANGING FACES: NEW AND DEPARTING VOLUNTEERS.** Here at

Hyacinth's Place, volunteers are essential in carrying out the organization's mission. We currently have a team of 26 volunteers spread over the departments of clinical, financial, public relations, Development/Fundraising, social media, and administrative. We are excited to welcome our new volunteers and interns: Adam, Kenneth,

Brad, Lester, Janika, Dana, Saliyma, Quina, Deidra, Derrick, and Yolanda. We give a huge thanks to our departing volunteers: Jenna, Kay, Beth, Mika, Vanessa, Kathy, John, Chris, Charlene, and Maeto. We are grateful for the work our volunteers have put into making Hyacinth's Place a special place, and we are joyful to see our departing volunteers move on to new employment opportunities.



(Brad Wilder)

We recently sat down in our conference room to talk with Brad Wilder, who started volunteering at HP earlier this month.

*HP: Tell me a little about yourself?*

**Brad:** I am prior army and military, and I've been working on a master's degree on the GI Bill. My master's degree will be in criminal justice, and my undergrad was in psychology.

*HP: How did you hear about Hyacinth's Place?*

**Brad:** I applied on internships.com and it seemed like a great organization so I sent an application and got an interview.

*HP: Was there anything from your interview that convinced you to volunteer here?*

**Brad:** I was very inspired to meet Urla [Urla Barrow, HP Executive Director], and see what she does. It was very difficult to make this place happen, between the economic factors, the permits, the expectations, and everything else. She went through a lot of work. It was a great challenge she worked really hard on. I was very impressed and inspired by how she went to such great lengths to help other people.

*HP: What aspects of your experience are you enjoying so far?*

**Brad:** I am happy to use my skills very efficiently here, because I know how to do so many things. For example, I am currently helping with the

building and landscaping of the healing garden using skills I gained from working as a city landscaper in Aspen, in addition to the responsibilities that are more closely related to my degree.

*HP: What is your favorite part of volunteering at HP, and why would you encourage those you who are considering volunteering at HP to go for it?*

**Brad:** I watch a lot of news and keep up with current events, and there are a lot of terrible things you see happening. This is the opposite. This is really helping people. Just the positivity of the environment. You get to see people in need who are really inspirational and you also get to work with qualified people who go overboard and work diligently to improve people's lives.

*We thank Brad for his time, and we are excited to continue working with such a kind and talented person!*



#### **LOOKING AHEAD: "THE GAZEBO"**

Brad is building our ladies a Gazebo in the "Healing Garden". A veteran, psychology and criminal justice graduate, candidate for another Masters, this time in Social Work, this intern is also a very kind individual with a big heart who is a skilled landscaper. Our garden needed the attention of an expert for the past year. Our efforts to secure funding from the DC Department of Environment "River Smart Home Shade Tree" program, has met some obstacles along the way and our garden wore a very sad look. Brad immediately went to work on transforming this space for our ladies. He artistically built a wall to prevent those who could not resist backing their vehicles into the plants. Our Gazebo will be in the middle of the garden complete with seats and surrounded with plant life, paintings and green space that allows our ladies to relax and recharge.



#### **OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup> FALL OUTDOOR – COOK-OUT FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS**

How do you say thank-you to so many folks who have generously given of their time, skills and support straight from the heart....well Hyacinth's Place plans to say thanks to past and present volunteers, interns and Board Members with an "Early Fall Cook Out". We intend to make this "Fun" so everybody has an opportunity to meet and know each other. Please follow us on Facebook, our website, and email for details about this fun occasion!



#### **A MESSAGE TO OUR DONORS:**

**THANK YOU!** We would like to thank our generous donors who make

Hyacinth's Place possible. We are always impressed by the magnanimity of our donors who give what they can to keep our organization running strong. We are so grateful to have the personal and financial support of so many friends in this important mission: to move women from homelessness, adversity, and needing support services to a full recovery and productive functioning in the community and in society. We rejoice in your efforts to help spread our story and cannot thank you enough!



**CALLING ALL SHOPPERS.** Did you know that if you shop on Amazon, the site will donate money to Hyacinth's

Place? *How does it work?* Prior to shopping, pick Hyacinth's Place (<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1410842/>) as your charity of choice. Then, you can shop to your heart's content. Through its AmazonSmile program, Amazon will then donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Hyacinth's Place.

Please remember that we have an EBay store and are always looking for donations of memorabilia, accessories, small electronics and furniture. Money raised by both programs goes to support our goal of providing support services to our residents.



**TRANSPARENCY AND INTERNET  
PRIVACY POLICY: Hyacinth's Place is**

**committed to cultivating an atmosphere of accountability and transparency. Hyacinth's Place has been designated both a Top-Rated Non Profit by GreatNonprofits (a review site for nonprofits) and a Bronze-level Guide Star Exchange participant.**

*Our Internet Privacy Policy. Your privacy is extremely important to us, and we'll do everything we can to protect it. To this end, our organization maintains an opt-in policy for its email communications. That means we only want to send mail to individuals who have requested that these mailings be sent to them or to people with whom we have an ongoing individual or business relationship." To unsubscribe from our email list, please email [info@hyacinths.org](mailto:info@hyacinths.org) and include the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line.*

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**SAVE THE DATES:**

**Important dates:**

**October 15: Fall Cookout for Our Volunteers from 4:00 – 8:00 PM.**