

SUMMER 2008

**Special points of interest:**

- A former client helped write this newsletter—check it out!
- Three one-step ways to help Respite today
- Once homeless, now a Respite employee: Cleon Hughes shares his story

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## Well put together by Charlotte Wright

It is not very often that you are placed in a facility where you can say you liked the entire staff. When I came here I was extremely depressed, close to suicide. I couldn't have been placed in a better place. It is a very homey atmosphere, there is someone to help everyone.



Staff go the extra mile to help the clients be happy and spirit-strong through their recovery. On days when you are blue, at least one staff person cares enough to brighten your day. They actually care. They

make recovering easy, no matter what your illness all of your needs are met as they are required. It is a safe and clean environment. You never go to sleep at night feeling bad, it's their goal. You are provided with three well-balanced meals and one snack each day. All of your medication is there as needed. Your clothing and personal needs are there as well. We have individual activities that are required of us each week as well as group activities. Last but not least, we have fun and do a lot of laughing.

I am sure I will recover in more ways than one, no matter how long I stay here. One thing I know is my life of homelessness is over. One step at a time. Hats off to the clients and staff of Respite. We work well together. This is our safe haven, our home until we get our own.

*Photo: Charlotte Wright*

**Our mission is to provide quality medical care to homeless people who need a safe place to heal, while assisting them in breaking the cycle of homelessness.**

## Respite honored with Caracole Living Award

On April 23rd, the Center for Respite Care received the Caracole Living Award during Caracole's 2008 Annual Meeting. Caracole provides safe, affordable housing and support services for persons and families living with HIV/AIDS. We love the friendly staff at Cara-

cole and work closely with them - men and women with HIV/AIDS often recover with us during periods of illness and then find more permanent housing with Caracole.

Caracole celebrated its 21st anniversary this year, and we are



proud to receive the award and to work with them every day.

## From the Board Chair

Welcome to the first Center for Respite Care newsletter. I want to take this opportunity to thank our supporters and introduce ourselves to those who may be learning about the Respite for the first time. The



Joe Kiesler, MD  
Board Chair

Center for Respite Care first opened its doors in October 2003. Our mission since then hasn't changed: providing quality medical care to homeless people who need a safe place to heal, while assisting them in breaking the cycle of homelessness.

In almost five years, our dedicated team of staff and volunteers has cared for more than 700 homeless men and women and has assisted over 70% of our clients in finding better housing options upon discharge. Without the Respite, these individuals would have to return to the street or shelters. Imagine trying to recover from pneumonia, a leg fracture, or undergoing chemotherapy treatment without a home. It is difficult to picture. Fortunately, the Center for Respite Care is here to erase this reality for the homeless.

Whether you are just learning about the Respite or have already become involved, I hope this newsletter gives you a better picture of the ways that you can make a difference – your support of our mission is deeply appreciated!

**SPECIAL THANKS: To Jean Beirise, brochure and masthead designer; Ken Wigle, our webmaster; and Jan Hay and Jack Kues, photographers.**

## You make the difference—thanks to donors, volunteers, and friends

We're pleased to report that individual donations increased this year as did volunteer involvement and in-kind donations.

Volunteers have provided mental health counseling, computer and life skills classes, repainted our front door and even installed a walkway! In addition, in-kind donations of clothing, personal care supplies, household items, and cleaning supplies continue to pour in. Thanks so much for your support.

On behalf of everyone at the Center for Respite Care and the clients we serve, thank you! Your generous contributions are essential to our success, and we are grateful that you remember those who are homeless and sick.

## Respite receives Health Foundation grant



From left: Pat O'Connor, Puspa Das, Mary Wood-Constable, Francie Wolgin, and Don Hoffman at the Grantee Recognition Luncheon.

## Flying Pig runners: Congrats!

Congratulations are due to our Flying Pig Marathon team which raised over \$1,300.00 to support homeless medical recovery care—and ran 26.2 miles. Wow! Thanks for going the extra mile for a good cause!

Runner Ron Weitzenkorn finished his tenth Flying Pig run this year!



Ron Weitzenkorn

## Respite employee shares history of homelessness

Years ago, Cleon Hughes arrived at the Center for Respite Care homeless and injured; today he works with us. At our Community Reception on April 10, Cleon shared his story.

During a semi-professional football try-out in December 2005, Cleon sustained a serious leg injury. Unable to work and without medical insurance, he became homeless as he sought surgery to repair the injury.

Months passed, but no one was able to help. Cleon became bitter, wondering if he could ever gain meaningful employment and housing. After six months at the Mt. Airy Men's shelter, he was referred to the Center for Respite Care in June 2006. Respite staff worked with Cleon to schedule the surgical procedure and cared for him during his recovery. Today, Cleon has recovered full functionality of his right leg.

"I got to Respite and I could not believe that all these strangers were pulling for me," says Hughes, "Without them, I don't know where I'd be today. Being able to recover here was truly a blessing." Today, Cleon is a Personal Care Assistant at Respite, where he helps others regain hope in their journeys out of homelessness.



*"I got to Respite and I couldn't believe that all these strangers were pulling for me. Being able to recover here was truly a blessing."*  
*-Cleon Hughes*

Former client and current employee Cleon Hughes

## Community Reception 2008



Guests enjoy the reception on April 10th

## Reach out to Respite: How you can help

Each year, we expand our services, offering new ways for our clients to recover physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We gratefully accept donations.

If you'd like to learn more about the Center for Respite Care, please consider a tour and information session. Email [respitesupport@zoomtown.com](mailto:respitesupport@zoomtown.com) for scheduling.

### ONE STEP WAYS TO TAKE ACTION:

- Mail** a donation to PO Box 141301, Cincinnati, OH 45250 or donate online at [www.homelessrespite.org](http://www.homelessrespite.org).
- Call** 621-1868 to donate personal hygiene supplies or kitchen items.
- Email** [respitesupport@zoomtown.com](mailto:respitesupport@zoomtown.com) to volunteer.



Respite volunteer  
 Lon Kaylor



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## FAQ's about homeless medical recovery

### **1) Why do the homeless need additional medical care? Can't they just go to the hospital?**

Most of our clients are actually referred from area hospitals. Not sick enough to remain hospitalized, our clients nevertheless have pressing medical concerns. Without treatment, many would end up in emergency rooms over and over using valuable community resources for non-urgent issues or allowing serious exacerbation of existing illness.

### **2) How can illness cause homelessness?**



Most of us recover quickly from mild illnesses such as the flu. However, when serious illness strikes, it can take both a physical and financial toll, especially

for individuals without health insurance. Torn between paying medical bills or submitting rent and utilities payments, these individuals may find

themselves on the streets.

Injuries that prevent an individual from working can also lead to homelessness.

### **3) If the Center for Respite Care is a medical facility, how do you also help deal with homelessness?**

As clients begin to recover, our social services staff works with them to develop a case plan identifying their needs, goals, and plans for the future. When clients leave the Respite, they enroll in substance abuse treatment, housing programs, and more.