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TRANSFORMING LIVES

Spring 2005

A downtown perspective by Lynn Beck

Tiffany & Co. and the St. Charles Apartments. On the surface, these two institutions would seem to be miles apart on just about any scale. In truth, however, they are important equals in terms of their contributions to creating a healthy, vibrant and diverse downtown.

Ten years ago, all four corners of the intersection at Sixth Avenue and Pine Street, where Tiffany now thrives, were vacant, boarded up and splashed with graffiti. In fact, much of downtown Seattle was on the edge of decline. While the additions of Pacific Place, Nordstrom's flagship store and myriad other public and private investments helped turn the tide downtown, they were only part of the solution.

Key to the revitalization from which we now all benefit has been the efforts of Plymouth Housing Group. Whether you live, work, visit or do business in downtown Seattle, the vision and commitment of Plymouth has made our downtown a better place for you. Through strong leadership of both the staff and volunteers, Plymouth Housing Group is transforming neglected buildings into safe and supportive housing for the homeless. Thanks to PHG, all residents receive access to health care, counseling services and food banks. Coaching on basic life skills also is provided, including budgeting, computer training and job search assistance. Partnerships with organizations like the Metropolitan Improvement District and its Clean and Safe Program are resulting in job fulfillment and a cleaner urban environment.

A building like the St. Charles Apartments on Third Avenue and Cherry Street is another perfect example of PHG's impact downtown. After a complete renovation, the building now provides housing and services to 65 formerly homeless individuals. The St. Charles is also home to the newly opened Plymouth Cafe. All profits from the Cafe directly benefit social services in PHG's 12 buildings.

Yet another great example is the former St. Regis Hotel on Second Avenue and Stewart Street. For years, the property was an eyesore



Plymouth on Stewart Apartments, formerly the St. Regis Hotel, will open next year

and a hub for illegal activity. Plymouth Housing Group acquired the building in April 2004 and renamed it Plymouth on Stewart. The building is currently under renovation and will open in 2006, providing housing and services to 87 homeless individuals. Retail shops will be added at street level, too.

Thanks to PHG and the Building Hope Capital Campaign, these buildings are vital again. They're serving a segment of our community that we cannot ignore. In 2005, it's estimated that there will be 8,300 people homeless in Seattle/King County. I used to feel helpless when I would hear these statistics. Now I'm determined to make a difference by spreading awareness of PHG and its initiatives.

Plymouth Housing Group has demonstrated a commitment to our community that inspires and brings hope to those who need it most. PHG, just like other perhaps higher-profile institutions, is a critical neighbor and a significant contributor to the health and vitality of our downtown. Plymouth Housing Group deserves our thanks and our support.

Lynn Beck is Marketing Manager at Pacific Place, downtown Seattle's premier shopping, dining and entertainment center. Lynn serves on the Board of Trustees for Plymouth Housing Group and chairs the Public Relations Committee. She also serves on the Ratepayer Advisory Board for Seattle's Metropolitan Improvement District.

Letter from the Executive Director

Building hope, building community



Paul Lambros
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to you with exciting news about Plymouth Housing Group and the progress of the Building Hope Capital Campaign. We completed the St. Charles Apartments at 3rd and Cherry. We began construction on Plymouth on Stewart, formerly the St. Regis,

and we're on schedule to complete the project by March 2006. We'll soon begin renovations at Haddon Hall at 3rd and Virginia. Throughout the campaign, we've felt so supported and encouraged by the community. We certainly could not have come this far without our friends and closest supporters.

The level of engagement and excitement surrounding the Building Hope Capital Campaign has caused us to reflect on our potential as an organization and as a community. In addition to creating permanent supportive homes for formerly homeless individuals, the Building Hope Capital

Campaign has created new friendships for Plymouth Housing Group.

You may have seen media coverage of one of our youngest supporters, eight-year-old Perry Ortiz-Williams. Perry raised over \$1,800 from friends and family after seeing news coverage about Plymouth on Stewart. In his letter to friends and family, Perry wrote, "Last week in the newspaper was a story about a group of people who want to make an old hotel nice and shiny for people who are homeless." Perry's hard work and commitment to "helping people who are not as lucky as I am" inspires us to continue working towards our mission.

We've received the same type of encouragement from the foundation and corporate communities. The Paul G. Allen Foundation's generous gift of \$500,000 was made out of the same commitment to ending homelessness that compelled Perry to action. We see this same commitment in the volunteers who staff the Tenant Supply Closet and the computer labs, arrange community meals around the holidays, and serve on the Board and on the Building Hope Campaign Steering Committee. We also see this

commitment in the individuals who live and work downtown and have taken advantage of opportunities to learn more about the campaign.

This year, as we celebrate our 25th Anniversary, we are especially grateful for all of our friends and supporters who have made the successes of the past twenty-five years possible. We are a varied bunch. From founding church members to former and current tenants to corporate executives, we are all committed to working together to eliminate homelessness. Without the cooperation and compassion of our community, "Building Hope" is only a gimmicky title for a fundraising campaign. When we hear from our supporters, when we meet someone like Perry, and when people who have spent years living on the streets move into an apartment of their own, we know that we are truly building hope.

I encourage you to keep up to date with campaign developments by visiting our website (www.plymouthhousing.org) or stopping in at Plymouth Cafe at 3rd and Cherry.

Warmest Regards,

Paul Lambros
Executive Director

Ten-year plan to end homelessness

Three years ago, the Committee to End Homelessness in King County was formed to lead a region-wide response to homelessness. Plymouth Housing Group's Director of Social Services, Tara Connor, is a member of the Committee. The group is made up of organizations, coalitions, people who are homeless, area businesses and local governments who together have created a ten-year plan to end homelessness in King County.

The main objective of the Ten-Year Plan is to end homelessness instead of managing it. It may seem like an obvious goal, but too often homelessness is treated with a 'band-aid' approach. Shelters and transitional housing systems are an important, but temporary response. To end homelessness, our area desperately needs more supportive permanent housing apartments. Here, formerly homeless tenants feel safe to pursue other activities to enhance their health, their finances, and their involvement in their own community. A place that is called 'home' and holds hope.

The Ten-Year Plan focuses on a 'housing first' model, which prioritizes housing people at the first possible opportunity after they become homeless. Much additional low-income housing is needed to realize an end to

homelessness—an estimated 9,000 apartments.



Tara Connor
Director of Social
Services

Plymouth Housing Group has been using a 'housing first' approach to ending homelessness for a long time. People who are homeless move directly into a PHG apartment from 'the street' and are provided with supportive services to maintain that apartment long-term. Once tenants feel secure in this new home, they begin to

address other areas needing attention in their lives such as health care.

"This is the start of a more coordinated effort to end homelessness in our city," says Connor. "It's very exciting."

Plymouth Housing Group is committed to playing a major role in the effort to create housing so that by 2014, everyone living in Seattle has a place to call home.

For more information on the Ten-Year Plan, visit the Committee to End Homeless in King County's website at: www.cehkc.org.

Did you know...

- An estimated 8,300 people will be homeless this year in Seattle/King County
- There are more than 1,100 individuals on the waiting list for housing at PHG
- 60-70% of applicants have a mental illness or a physical disability

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DRIP COFFEE**
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Lunch Special
Any 1/2 sandwich, Tim's
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Offer expires 5/13/05
Plymouth Cafe – 621 3rd Avenue



Plymouth Cafe expands services to box lunches and catering

Five months after opening its doors, Plymouth Cafe's business is going strong. Continuing to see increased business day by day, cafe staff see a steady stream of customers especially during the lunch hours. As a result, the Cafe tweaked its hours to make better business sense and is open now from 6:30am to 4:30pm on weekdays.

In response to the many requests for box lunch and catering services, Plymouth Cafe now offers both! For information on the delicious offerings Plymouth Cafe can provide for your event or meeting, please contact Miranda at (206) 622-0477 or mkrone@plymouthcafe.com.

Check out daily specials at www.plymouthcafe.com, and be sure to stop by with these coupons for great deals! Remember, 100% of profits benefit Plymouth Housing Group's social services programs!

The little things bring big meaning

To most of us, an address and phone number are staples of life. We've had them forever, and most likely don't think about what life would be like without them. But when you're homeless, you think about it a lot. You have neither.

"619 Third Avenue!" he projects with joy. "That's where I live!"

James Epting, a resident of the St. Charles Apartments, couldn't be prouder to proclaim aloud his address and phone number. It's the first home he's ever had on his own.

A recovering addict, James spent time both on the streets and in shelters before he moved into the St. Charles. The day he got word from the Rental Office that his apartment was ready is etched deep in his memory.

He recounts leaping down the street filled with excitement and anticipation of his new home. And when he walked into his apartment for the first time?

"Oh my goodness, I thought I was at the pearly gates!"

He treats his home of seven months as if it were a sacred place. "I respect my house and take care of everything we have here. Not long ago I had nothing."

James is grateful for the chance to be building a new start for himself, and says he has all that he needs at the St. Charles.

"I have everything here, a bed, a phone, kitchen, computer lab... I have it all."

Among the biggest joys his new home has brought is the control he has to make his own decisions throughout the day, freedoms he didn't have in the shelter system. "I can go take a walk. I can go to the store. I can come and go as I please."

And, he points out, he can decide what he wants for dinner.

"Am I in the mood for chicken tonight?" he says with a laugh.

His smile turns into an expression of gratitude rather quickly. "I laugh about it, but I'm so thankful. I don't take any of this for granted. I know I've been given a second chance. People can change. I'm proof."



James Epting, resident of the St. Charles Apts.

We recently lost two very special friends, Carl Kese and Carl Innoway.

Both men were past members of our Board of Trustees and guided Plymouth Housing Group with incredible leadership and passion.

Carl Kese, board member from 1992-1999 and president from 1995-1997, was the catalyst behind our strong volunteer program. He and his family led by action, cooking holiday meals for tenants year after year. Their tradition lives on in the large community dinners we share throughout our building communities.

Carl Innoway was a member of the board from 1997 to 2001. He was instrumental in the creation of the Tenant Supply Closet, which today is bigger and better than ever, providing household goods to tenants free of charge as they set up their new homes at PHG.

These two men are missed greatly by the PHG community to which they so generously gave of themselves. Our heartfelt thanks go to them, and we are proud to carry on their legacy in the work we do daily.

In memoriam

Community knitting project underway

In collaboration with Hilltop Yarn and Needlepoint and with the help of many wonderful volunteers, major donors to Plymouth Housing Group's Building Hope Capital Campaign are receiving thanks that will warm their hearts—and necks: beautiful, hand-knit scarves!

We invite you to join us in supporting our mission by knitting one or more beautiful scarves to be given to our donors in appreciation of their generous gifts to the campaign.

If you enjoy knitting and are adept at knitting two strands together in garter stitch (knit, knit, knit) while maintaining constant tension and even row ends, you are invited to join the Plymouth Housing Group Community Knitting Project team! We'll provide you with a kit complete with yarn and a pattern.

For more information, contact Kristin Adams Litke at (206) 267-4722 or klitke@plymouthhousing.org.

Very special thanks to board member Leslie Christian for making this fabulous project a reality.

Spring cleaning!

It's time for you and your family to dig through your closets & garages for items you no longer need! Put them to good use and make a donation of household goods to Plymouth Housing Group's Tenant Supply Closet.

The Tenant Supply Closet enables tenants to 'shop' free of charge. Since most tenants have been homeless and living in shelters before they move into their apartments, they have very few, if any, possessions.

Items most desperately needed include: **pillows, sheets and towels; toothbrushes and toothpaste; pots and pans, can openers and kitchen utensils/silverware.**

Consider, too, organizing a drive within your office, church, apartment building or other group to collect items for the Tenant Supply Closet. Help tenants feel at home by compiling Welcome Baskets to be given to them upon move-in!

If you have items to donate or would like more information, please contact Linda at (206) 381-1320. Thank you for your support!



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Stay connected to all the latest news! Visit www.plymouthhousing.org



If you've been to Plymouth Cafe, you will have noticed the unusual light fixture above the community table. **Yes, they are ping pong balls!** And they glow with the names of donors to Plymouth Housing Group's Capital Campaign, shining for all to see.

Make a \$100 donation or more to the Campaign and your name will go up in lights—and more importantly, you'll help end homelessness. To make a donation, please visit www.plymouthhousing.org. Thank you for your support!

Want to see your name in lights?