



over-the-rhine COMMUNITY HOUSING

Summer 2014 Newsletter

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Recently, I attended a community gathering to celebrate the life of Terry Ranson. Terry passed away on May 15th. The gathering took place in the courtyard at buddy's place, Terry's home for the past 5½ years. Prior to moving to buddy's place at 1300 Vine Street, Terry was homeless. Terry's sister and brother-in-law were in attendance, and shared a family photo album that included photos of Terry as a boy. We all commented that his face looked the same as an adult as it did as a young child; round cheeks and kind, brown eyes.

His family, neighbors, friends and community shared similar stories that resulted in heads nodding in acknowledgment and recognition of the Terry they knew and loved. The crowd was diverse in gender, race, and age.

At Over-the-Rhine Community Housing our tag line says "Where Community Comes First". While that line was developed in partnership with a firm that is helping us to market our good work, it was never more true to me then in that moment, and in that courtyard celebrating Terry's life.

As my son and I left the gathering to stop at Holtman's Donuts to get a gift card for his teacher, and a treat for ourselves, we walked up Vine Street. Already, the street was full of people heading to the upscale bars and restaurants. It felt like a completely different world than the one we had just left. Not better or worse, just different.

I wondered whether the people who live in, or visit, OTR for the food or the arts or the beers, have any sense of the community that exists here. When and how will our different worlds meet? Do they know that OTR residents with low incomes love each other; that there are family photo albums and stories; that we cry and laugh at memorial services; that we share memories on note cards and put an arm around someone whose heart is hurting?

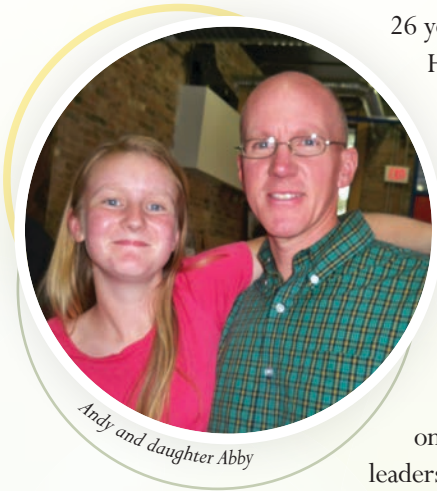
The need for community is universal. This is the part of OTR many may never know. It doesn't make headlines. It's not chic or trendy. But, it is real and it is what so many of us love about OTR, and why we love the work we do at OTRCH.

MARY BURKE RIVERS
Executive Director



We remember and celebrate Terry Ranson, friend and OTRCH resident, January 29, 1955–May 15, 2014. Photo credit to Bill Haigh.

ANDY HUTZEL CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF SERVICE IN OVER-THE-RHINE



Andy and daughter Abby

26 years ago, as part of an Elder High School service project, a kid from Western Hills came to Over-the-Rhine. He was nervous and uncomfortable. He had never experienced poverty, never seen the face of the poor. Fast forward to the present. That young man is now one of the acknowledged leaders in the community.

On May 22, Andy Hutzel was honored for his 20 years service to our neighborhood and its most vulnerable people. His wife Amy, who works at the Drop Inn Center, their three beautiful daughters, his parents, and many friends joined in celebrating this hard-working, humble man's life and vision.

Following Andy's first OTR experience, he was involved with the social justice outreach at Xavier University's Dorothy Day House. As part of that involvement, he did an "urban plunge" in the ghetto, and then spent his senior year in the ReSTOC (Race Street Tenant Organizing Co-operative) intern house, doing hard labor under the watchful eye of buddy gray. "buddy would get out of you what he could," says Andy in his understated, sardonic way. That year of service "grabbed" the collegian. "It was a great experience, just living and volunteering in the neighborhood."

After graduation in 1994, he applied for a bookkeeping job at the Drop Inn Center and ReSTOC. He got the job, and learned immediately that he would be doing a lot more than bookkeeping. "You get involved in everything. In a lot of the political campaigns in the neighborhood. We were trying to get the Recovery Hotel (1225 Vine) funded. There was some opposition from the OTR Chamber [of Commerce], and the OTR Foundation. That took a lot of time."

On Nov. 15, 1996, buddy gray was shot by a mentally ill, formerly homeless man whom buddy had helped. Andy was in the basement of the Drop at the time. According to a number of speakers at Andy's anniversary party, he immediately assumed the primary leadership role. His response downplays

his role. "I simply used the emotional adrenalin of the moment, by trying to think how buddy would handle this. But it was collaborative at the time."

Before his death, buddy had secured ReSTOC's largest building, the former Jimmy Skinner Music building (1300 Vine Street). Andy reflects, "It was a major headache in terms of getting the financing, and we were all pretty unskilled at that point in doing housing development. There were a lot of players to make that project happen." The project did "happen", and those involved saw the building as a testament to buddy's commitment and his work. Today, newly painted and named "buddy's place", it remains a landmark in the neighborhood, providing 20 units of permanent housing for individuals moving out of homelessness.

In the ensuing years, the Drop Inn Center and ReSTOC restructured as separate, yet connected organizations. In 2003, Andy became the manager of ReSTOC, located at 114 W. 14th Street. After the turn of the century, the crunch for dollars became acute. Andy reflects, "It became pretty evident at that point that there weren't going to have the resources we needed to maintain all our properties and to subsidize the rents to house the people we hoped to house."

In 2004, Andy at ReSTOC, and Mary Burke at Over-the-Rhine Housing Network, along with their boards of directors, began negotiating the merger that would become Over-the-Rhine Community Housing in 2006. "It made sense for a lot of reasons," Andy says.

From a combined staff of 12 in 2006, the OTRCH has grown to include 33 employees, owns 87 properties in OTR, and manages 440 rental units. "I think we've accomplished a lot in those eight years. It's proven to be...um...very worthwhile." Again, we hear that quiet understatement from a genuine low-income mover and shaker.

Hutzel attributes OTRCH's success in the



Jedj (Isaac) Buckmaster and Maurice Wagoner

neighborhood to the fact that the various organizations (and many good people) acquired a great deal of housing stock in the '80s and '90s at very modest costs. "If we hadn't," Andy says, "we wouldn't be around today."

Andy Hutzler advocates a quiet, ongoing resolution. "I think it's necessary for us to negotiate with our new neighbors to convince them that affordable housing needs to be a part of future development in all of Over-the-Rhine. It's simply a matter of convincing them that the need is there and that the neighborhood will benefit from affordable housing."

Story adapted from *Streetvibes* and written by Jim Luken



Andy with Parents, Mark and Nancy

THOMAS' STORY

Thomas, just shy of age 65, is one of the new tenants at Over-the-Rhine Community Housing's 1500 Elm Street Senior Building. While he may be one of the building's first tenants, Thomas is no stranger to the area. In fact, Thomas frequented "the Barrel" in a lot across the street from 1500 Elm in the 1980s. It was a place where many men experiencing homelessness and with low-incomes hung out, around a large metal barrel that always had a fire burning. You could get whatever you needed at the Barrel: temporary jobs, alcohol, drugs, etc. Thomas liked to refer to it as "central command" for his activities at the time.

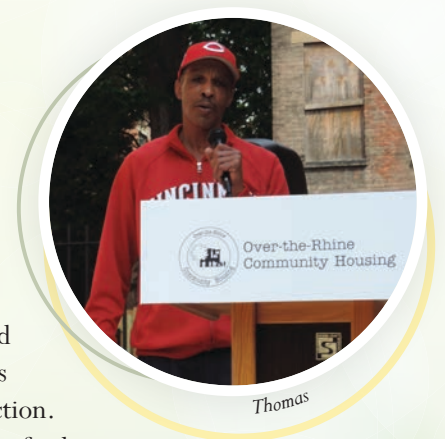
Thomas grew up in the West End, but spent much of his adult life in Over-the-Rhine. At one point, he was the co-owner of a clothing store in the 1700 block of Elm Street. But Thomas began using drugs and alcohol at an early age and considered it an addiction by age 20. He measures its impact by noticing, after he entered recovery, that when driving around the neighborhood, all he could think about was that there probably wasn't a building in the neighborhood that he "didn't get high in." After almost four decades of ripping and running, growing tired of living with people and couch surfing; Thomas found his way to the Drop Inn Center. He spent 11 months there, much of it in their men's treatment program. Most important to Thomas, he discovered patience, not having to be the person to "make things happen", but just be someone who "let things happen." He also re-discovered his higher power, guiding him along a new path.

Upon graduation, Thomas was placed at the Recovery Hotel, a permanent supportive housing facility operated by Over-

the-Rhine Community Housing, located at 1225 Vine. He has been there for five years. Thomas appreciated the environment because it took the stress off of him and was convenient to all the things he wanted and needed to keep things moving in a positive direction.

One of those conveniences for him was the Central Parkway YMCA. Thomas began volunteering there in 2009 and it was "like a meeting" for him, a supportive and consistent place to go. He still goes to the YMCA every day, meeting his walking buddies who help him maintain his good health and to continue making good choices.

One of those good choices is to move to the 1500 Elm Street Senior Building. The Recovery Hotel helped Thomas in many ways and as he said, "it's time for someone else to get a fresh start" in his apartment. Thomas looks forward to connecting more with his family, especially his two grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Thomas chose to stay in Over-the-Rhine because he knows his way around and he has so many good connections with people. He is a mentor to many recovering men and women who may have just left their own place at the "barrel." OTR is fortunate to keep Thomas as a resident and as someone who we can all learn from.



Thomas

GRAND OPENING OF ELM STREET SENIOR HOUSING, 1500 ELM STREET

On May 20th Over-the-Rhine Community Housing celebrated the opening of Over-the-Rhine's only affordable senior housing; Elm Street Senior Housing, located at 1500 Elm Street. Many seniors live in the neighborhood but this is the only project to meet their needs of accessibility, affordability, and support services. The project was the complete rehabilitation of an historic building built in 1864 by Christian Moerlein and owned by the Moerlein Brewing Company until 1919.

Elm Street Senior Housing includes 15 new 1-bedroom units, a new elevator, a resident lobby, two community spaces, a laundry room, and a new outdoor courtyard. A part-time service coordinator and live-in resident manager will provide the necessary support services for the residents. As of June 7th, all apartments have been rented and are occupied.

This project was made possible by the hard work from our staff and our partner agencies; Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Model Group, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing (OCCH), The City of Cincinnati, CR Architects, and Sol Design and Consulting. It was a momentous occasion to celebrate the completion of a project that had been in the making for over five years. It is truly incredible how far the building has come over the past year of construction. It was in extremely bad condition from years of vacancy. Over 60% of the joists in the building had to be replaced, two times more than was expected. The rear, two-story masonry building even had to be rebuilt brick for brick

from the ground up. All of the hard work truly has paid off in the preservation of this gorgeous building into a wonderful new home for seniors of Over-the-Rhine, and is an asset to the community.



The celebration started with opening songs from Dan Dorff, OTR resident and friend. Our speakers included OTRCH Executive Director Mary Burke Rivers and OTRCH Project Manager Ashleigh Finke, Kevin Clark from OHFA, Joe Pimmell from OCCH, Jim Cunningham from HUD, our new residents Thomas Fields and Burkes Menefield, long-time neighbor Sweet Pea, and Yvette Simpson from Cincinnati City Council. Annette Wick spoke on behalf of her and her husband Mark Manley who donated the funding for the garden, in honor of her father, a life-long advocate of affordable housing in Lorain County (Cleveland). Gail Greenwell, dean of Christ Church Cathedral, led the blessing of the building. The ribbon cutting ceremony was followed by a tour of the building, entertainment from Matthew Meldon and Benjamin Thomas, and refreshments provided by Coffee Emporium, OCCH, and Power Inspires Progress.

It was a beautiful day to celebrate the success of our latest development. We enjoyed sharing this day with our friends and champions for affordable housing in Over-the-Rhine.

History of the Building

According to Robert J. Wimberg's *Cincinnati Breweries* (1997), before the construction of Moerlein's ice house (a cool place to store beer before it was sold), the company stored full beer barrels in various cellars including three houses at Fifteenth and Elm Streets built by the brewery in 1864. The building contains a sub-basement that would have been used for storage and



From Left, Thomas (new resident), Andrew (neighbor), Agnes Brown (new resident), Sweet Pea (neighbor), Sandra Warmack (new resident)

fermentation, as German lagers require a cool temperature and longer fermentation times.

The building has an elaborate, arcaded store front and two interior, end chimneys that extend above the built-up roof. The building is noted for its Italianate structure that contributes to the late 19th century architectural significance and homogeneity of Elm Street. Regarding its operation, Wimberg notes that the 1884 City Atlas shows this building as being divided into three separate parts. The corner third was owned by Christian Moerlein and may have been operated as a saloon for dispensing his beer. The middle third was owned by John Heine and operated as a saloon in what was (in 1893) 498 Elm. Heine may have dispensed Hauck beer... there is an open passageway leading to a courtyard that was probably used as a beer garden.



Garden In Honor of Ettore Januzzi



Central Hallway of ESSH



West-facing Apartment



Back (and up!) of ESSH

MISSION

Over the Rhine Community Housing is a non-profit organization that works to build and sustain a diverse neighborhood that values and benefits low-income residents. We focus on developing and managing resident-centered, affordable housing in an effort to promote an inclusive community.

OTRCH is a non-profit community development organization that provides a wide spectrum of affordable and supportive housing options with life-changing programs that help low-income residents in Over-the-Rhine succeed. For over four

decades, OTRCH has never wavered from its commitment to: 1) Build a sustainable, diverse neighborhood that values and benefits low-income residents, 2) Create an inclusive community in this evolving historic district, and 3) Advocate on behalf of its residents. To meet this mission, OTRCH has restored 87 properties (440 housing units) and assembled a broad mix of 20+ service providers/agency partners and 800 volunteers to ensure that residents receive affordable housing along with access to health care, job services, education, faith-based services and community associations that strengthen their ability to succeed.

CLARENCE YOUNG'S LIFE EXPERIENCE DRIVES HIS EDUCATION

By Allison Reuther

Though recent Cincinnati State graduate Clarence Young has been through some highs and lows in his unorthodox education, that doesn't stop him from dreaming big. Young hopes to one day own a chain of rehabilitation centers around the Tri-state area—the type of places men can go to hone certain life skills needed to be productive members of society. These skills include how to interview well and dress properly for a professional engagement along with basic education. To get there, though, Young has to finish up the rest of his schooling.

As a 49-year-old father of three, Young isn't what you would consider an average student. After dropping out of Mt. Healthy High School in 1983, he worked hard to catch up. He didn't earn his GED diploma until 2005, but he's been on an uphill journey from there, with only a few snags along the way.

Starting school at Cincinnati State was a nervous ordeal for Young. Not one of his many brothers or sisters ever attended college, and they weren't supportive. But he was not to be deterred—he eventually found a group of people to help him transition to the college lifestyle.

'They weren't [sic] just my advisors,' Young says of the group of people that make up the Student Services Center at Cincinnati State. He credits them not only for getting him into college, but also for motivating him and keeping him on track. He considers them his family, and even though he has since graduated from Cincinnati State with his associate's degree in human services and counseling, he can still occasionally be found in their offices.

When he first started at Cincinnati State, Young was enrolled in their culinary program. He realized that while he enjoyed cooking, his passions lay elsewhere. His education was interrupted in 2008

when he went to prison, but his experience there only helped to shape his educational choices. Young says that while his student services family was disappointed in him, they stood by him and got him back in to school when he was released.

Instead of going back to the kitchen, Young got involved with classes geared toward social work. It was then that he rediscovered his passion for helping people and figured out just what he wanted to do with his life. After receiving his associate's degree from Cincinnati State in 2012, Young continued his education at a college in Kentucky where he earned his bachelor's degree in 2013; he is still enrolled and strives to earn his master's degree. He plans to continue his quest for education until he has enough to open his centers and become executive director. He considers education to be one of the most important things in the world, saying that through it all, he's always stressed the importance of it.

"Without education, you're just existing—not living," says Young.

Clarence is a current resident with OTRCH, and has lived at Recovery Hotel for the past 2½ years. This article was originally published in the April/May 2014 issue of *Cincy Magazine*, and is re-printed with permission.



Clarence Young

NEW PLACES, NEW FACES



Ty and Patrice

New Places

On March 31 OTRCH's long-time finance director, Ken Weartz, retired. On April 1, his OTRCH colleagues in the finance department were

appointed to new positions. Tyrone (Ty) Black was promoted from accountant to finance director. Patrice Smoot (a recent University

of Cincinnati graduate) was promoted from accounting assistant to accountant. We are glad that their OTRCH experience could be brought to their new positions, resulting in a seamless and smooth transition. Congratulations Ty and Patrice!

New Faces

This spring the OTRCH board of trustees welcomed three new members: Brian Fagan, Bridgette Burbank, Simone Yisrael.

CHILDREN'S CREATIVE CORNER SUMMER ACTIVITIES

When the facilitators of Children's Creative Corner (CCC) sat down to brainstorm some great ways to start this sunny season, they collectively reflected on some of their favorite childhood memories of summertime; nights spent looking up at the starry sky, playing games in the yard in bare feet, getting up the gusto to dive through the cool spray of the sprinkler, hotdogs and hamburgers fresh off of the grill, and s'mores around the campfire seemed to swirl together to create a happy sense of nostalgia. In an effort to share and celebrate these summer staples again, ten CCC students and 6 adult volunteers traveled to Plain City, Ohio the first weekend in June for an overnight camp-out.



Everyone!

or hula hooping through the yard, while others took to relaxing in the cool shade of nearby trees.

The campout was made possible by funds provided by Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, and a generous offer from Jenn Scheiderer (a teacher at Rothenberg Elementary and CCC volunteer) and her parents, who live and work on the land in Plain City. The use of their green space provided kids ample opportunity to feel grass between their toes and to see stars shine as brightly as they ever have.



Intense Creativity



Tent is Up!



Relaxing

After setting up and claiming their tents, the group made crafts, played some intense rounds of kickball, met farm animals, and appreciated all that the environment had to offer. Many kids immediately took advantage of the wide, open space by twirling

Bridgette Burbank

Bridgette is an OTRCH resident living at buddy's place, 1300 Vine Street.

Brian Fagan

Brian is a Senior Vice-President of PNC Real Estate Banking.

Simone Yisrael

Simone is an OTRCH resident living on East Clifton Avenue.



Bridgette Burbanks



Brian Fagan



Simone Yisrael



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- Receive our newsletter and monthly updates. Go to the signup form on the homepage of our website.
- Follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/otrch) and/or Twitter (twitter.com/otrch)

Give to Our Annual Campaign

- Make one-time, or start a sustaining (monthly), gift via our secure, online form.
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Mail check to:

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