

# ORION Communities

For over 30 years, Orion has been dedicated to addressing the concerns of those with the greatest needs in our community.

## Community Spirit

What a generous summer this has been for Orion! We are so grateful to the people and organizations that provided funds or services to support Orion's mission. Here are a few examples of summer gifts...

The Thrift Shop of Phoenixville Hospital included Orion in their annual grant program. The shop, located at 238 Church Street, donates all of their proceeds back to the community.

Orion also raised money

during First Fridays in Phoenixville from a raffle of gift certificates provided by local fine eateries - Iron Hill Brewery and Seven Stars Inn.

Plus area residents stopped by with cash, checks and heartwarming stories! A woman from outside the area made a donation to Orion because one time she had been the victim of a house fire and a local non-profit had helped her and her family with temporary housing - she wanted to help

Orion do the same thing for another stricken family.

We are honored by the continuing commitment to Orion Communities and our clients.



Phoenixville residents Mark & Laura Birdsall learn more about Orion from volunteer Kris Keller

## Creating Partnerships

Orion's mission is to provide interim case management, outreach and supportive services to residents of the Greater Phoenixville Area to connect residents to services that engender hope, dignity and self-reliance to those experiencing poverty, disability and illness.

Just as our clients cannot do it alone, Orion strives to create affirming partnerships with other organizations to best serve local residents who are struggling. We are long-standing members of

the Community Coalition which is a collaboration of local non-profits that share resources for fund-raising and programming. Additionally we collaborate with organizations such as PARN (Phoenixville Area Resource Network) that bring area non-profits together to share concerns, ideas and solutions.

As the community needs grow and change, Orion develops new and creative connections. A partnership has blossomed this summer

with Growth Ministries - a non-profit organization that acts as an information resource and provides advocacy services for single, homeless women. Recent weeks have found Growth Ministries staff at Orion's office jointly researching possibilities for women who lack a stable and safe housing option.

Orion is grateful for all the partnerships that enable our neighbors to improve the quality of their lives.



## A Volunteer's Story

During my evening shift, a woman slowly walked into the Orion office with the aid of her walker. This visitor asked if she could sit down and share her concerns. She discussed her disabilities and explained that she was in need of rental assistance in order to maintain her residence.

She said that her landlord supported her health challenges and if she lost this placement "I would be back

on the street". Her concern was how to cover her rent for the next 2 months until her social security disability was finalized.

I was impressed that she took it upon herself to walk to Orion, through the front door and humbly share her story and struggles (current as well as lifelong).

The next day we were able to partner with an amazing organization, People to

People, who understood the risk of this woman becoming homeless again. With their kindness and resources, the rent was paid that very day. We had the privilege of calling to tell her of this good fortune and hear her cries of thankfulness!

*The economy is improving but there seems to be a growing segment of the population that does not earn a sustainable wage and no longer qualify for government support.*

-observation from Orion volunteer

## Getting the Word Out

Access is an important part of working with our neighbors. Located at the corner of Gay and Bridge Streets, Orion's office is wheelchair accessible and located at a public transportation stop which are both important to our client base.

But also necessary for success is that the larger community knows about Orion and our mission. To that end, we opened our

doors during Phoenixville events this summer – First Fridays and BlobFest. And a good time was had by all!

Orion Board members and volunteers set up tables on the sidewalk that included literature, newsletters and treats to help initiate conversations about Orion's mission. The intent was to make sure the community knows of the resources Orion provides as well as recruiting new volunteers.

Participants at these events stopped by to ask questions, purchase raffle tickets and check out the newly renovated Orion office.

If you know someone who would be interested in learning more about Orion, please give them our phone number or email address or invite them to an upcoming event (see page 4).

## Gift 20 October 8<sup>th</sup> at Iron Hill Brewery

Iron Hill Brewery Gift20 supports local non-profits and is a great way to have a delicious lunch or dinner in Phoenixville and give to Orion. Iron Hill will donate 20% of your food tab to Orion Communities when you present your coupon! See you on October 8<sup>th</sup>!

**Stop by our office or go to our website [www.orioncommunities.org](http://www.orioncommunities.org) to download a coupon for Iron Hill Brewery Gift 20 on October 8, 2014. 20% of your food order will go to Orion to help our neighbors in need!**

## Meet Board Member Glenn Moses

Orion Communities got me my very first job back in 1991 when I was in my thirties. Orion had begun as a group working with people with developmental challenges but by '91 was also working with the disabled, ill and poor. Things were different back then. I didn't start school until I was 11 years old because they didn't know how to support a student in a wheel chair. My parents were the ones who told me about Orion and it was great to get a job.

I was a researcher for a technology company and

called people all over the country and overseas. The first year I was a volunteer until they could see how I handled the work but then I was a paid employee for 14 years. As computer access increased, there were fewer clients so the owners wanted me to go back to school to become a computer programmer. I always loved math but I felt there were too many gaps in my education to become a programmer.

Now I get around in a powered wheelchair and I've been on the Orion Board of

Directors and a volunteer in the office for almost 10 years. I enjoy coming into the office, the work is very important. I have seen a lot of sad stuff... a couple came in with their baby and they hadn't eaten for a day or a woman in tears because her husband had beaten her. I feel Orion does things here like no one else. Orion makes people feel secure.

Stop by the office sometime and say hi and meet Orion's volunteers.

Glenn Moses  
Board of Directors



Glenn answering phones at Orion with Board Vice Chair Keith Burress.

## Local Hero Needs Support

Last winter a young man walked into Orion's offices. He was a familiar face but this time he had decided it was time to ask for help for himself. He was an out of work landscaper. There could be work for him but he couldn't afford a phone and snow removal companies couldn't reach him.

He had a supportive family

and girlfriend that were encouraging him to find counseling. He was a vet but previous attempts to access resources at the VA had been more than frustrating.

We have all heard of long wait times at some VA offices. But due to Orion's commitment to not let anyone fall through the cracks, a plan was developed

with this vet to offer some immediate suggestions and line up counseling services for the coming week.

By not accepting any government funding, Orion is able to partner with agencies in creative ways to best assist our clients.

*Orion is committed to not letting anyone fall through the cracks.*

## Orion Goes On-Line

So many skills sets are needed to run a non-profit organization efficiently and you never know what talents will walk in the door in the guise of a smiling volunteer asking 'what can I do to help?' This summer, Orion was lucky enough to meet Erica, a friend of a current Board member.

Erica, mother of three young children, has joined Orion's Development Committee and quickly found places to apply her social media savvy and organization skills to help get the word out about Orion plus update Orion's mailing list.

Now Erica is tackling our

newsletter to expand Orion's on-line presence. We'll still have paper copies available but using the internet allows more of our funding to go directly to client services. Don't miss Orion's next newsletter – sign up today! [www.orioncommunities.org](http://www.orioncommunities.org)

Many thanks, Erica!





**247 Bridge Street  
Phoenixville, PA  
19460**

Phone  
**610.415.4110**

E-Mail  
**info@orion  
communities.org**

*We're on the Web!*

**www.orion  
communities.org**



**www.facebook.com/  
orion247**

## Upcoming Events....

Come learn more about Orion Communities and pick up your coupons for Iron Hill or Boscov's at these Fall events:

- September 5<sup>th</sup> - Open House for First Friday in Phoenixville from 6-9pm.
- September 6<sup>th</sup> -Blues Fest at Reeves Park starting at noon. Stop by our table to say hello and enjoy some great music.
- September 13 – St. Vincent De Paul Flea Market at St. Joseph Church, 9-noon. (raindate 9/27).
- October 3<sup>rd</sup> - Open House for First Friday in Phoenixville from 6-9pm.
- October 4 – Kiwanis Community Day & Chicken Barbecue, 8am-3pm Reeves Park
- October 8<sup>th</sup> - Iron Hill Brewery on Bridge Street in Phoenixville – Iron Hill will give Orion 20% of the food bill all day for anyone who presents an coupon for Orion. Go to our website or stop by

- the office for a coupon.
- October 21<sup>st</sup> - Boscov's Friends Helping Friends - 25% off everything – buy a \$5 coupon at Orion.
- Second Annual Art Sale coming up this Fall – check out our website for details ... [www.orioncommunities.org](http://www.orioncommunities.org)

Go to Orion's website for the latest information on all of our events!

## About Orion Communities...

Orion Communities is 100% supported through non-government funding and relies completely on charitable donations to fulfill our mission, this allows us to serve individuals who cannot get help from other agencies which includes individuals or families who may not meet the requirements of a food

pantry, service organization or homeless shelter.

Volunteering makes a difference in you and your community! Give us a call and see how you can help our neighbors in need.

*Thank you!*



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

ENCLOSED \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

I want to join Orion Communities, neighbors helping neighbors

Provide transportation  Answer phones  Grant writing  Website/social media input

Emergency daycare  Fund raising events  Other \_\_\_\_\_

*Or go to our website to  
make a donation by  
credit card or paypal!*

[www.orioncommunities.org](http://www.orioncommunities.org)