



“Orion is essential” – quote from a partner

“I never had to ask for help before and I am so grateful to receive help right now. Thank you.”

~ A client ~

2014 was a busy year for Orion as we moved to a volunteer organization. New understandings occurred with the Board’s ‘street level’ experience of the needs of the most vulnerable in our community.

It became abundantly clear that the services that Orion has provided for 35 years were still very much in need. And Orion had knowledgeable and committed individuals to work with clients. The next step was to ensure that Orion would be a sustainable non-profit model.

Coincidentally, as the

Board solidified their goals in December, three individuals answered the call to support Orion’s mission. Erica Murphy, with a BA in Business-Finance stepped in as Office Manager to complement the work of the case managers. She is also learning the path that our consumers travel and is striving to make Orion more efficient in addressing their needs.

Art Munson, a long time community volunteer with Board and non-profit Treasurer experience, joined Orion’s Board. Not only does he have relevant expertise but Art

actually likes working on policies and by-laws – valuable skills to any organization.

Kris Keller agreed to join Orion’s talented team as a part time volunteer Executive Director. Kris brings management, marketing and grant writing experience and shares her enthusiasm for Orion’s mission with everyone she meets.

Stop in and meet Orion’s committed team who are serving those experiencing poverty, illness and disabilities.



movie passes. The Hair Cuttery has a program of providing free haircuts to organizations who work with the homeless and they gave us 40 coupons.

We are so grateful to everyone who helps us help our neighbors in need!

Generous Community

Can you imagine getting to the place where you need to ask for bus tokens just to get to work and walking out with your tokens and a chance to see a movie or receive a haircut? Through the generosity of our volunteers, donors and local organizations, Orion creates possibilities for

those in need and brings a few more smiles into their lives.

It really is the little things sometimes. A new community friend knit seven wool scarves. A local CVS shared their overstock of holiday sweets. The Colonial Theatre gave us free

Upcoming **Benefit Concert** with international soloist and entertainer **Julia Chalfin** this summer- details coming soon!

Gratitude from Women at *The House*



"It's been almost 2 months since The House opened its doors and welcomed women in need. We all have different backgrounds and different reasons that we find ourselves in a homeless situation. The House has been a Godsend to us all, allowing us to focus less on day to day survival and

more on upward progress to a promising and stable future.

Words cannot express the depth of our gratitude for the multitude of volunteers, helpers and friends who come to help us all in many different ways to empower us to move forward. A very

special thank you to Orion Communities for the referrals and of course Marybeth and Cheryl for making dreams reality!"

Submitted by a new resident of The House, a new women's shelter that opened in Phoenixville in December 2014.

Mission Statement

Orion is a non-profit community based organization that provides interim case management, outreach, and supportive services to residents of the Greater Phoenixville Area. We connect residents to services that engender hope, dignity, and self-reliance for those experiencing poverty, disability, or illness.

Partner Organization

Since 1991, Orion has been a member organization of The Community Coalition which is a unique collaborative model of fundraising for non-profits that can more efficiently use resources in the community.

Each year the Community Coalition raises funds to assist its members in meeting their fundraising

goals. It is an innovative approach that cuts expenses so more donated money can go directly to the needs in the community.

Decisions are reached by consensus on how money will be raised and spent. The other member organizations are Association for The Colonial Theatre, Open Hearth, Citizen Advocacy

and Phoenixville Area Positive Alternatives.

Recently The Community Coalition hired a new Executive Director, Christy Myers Baxter, who brings creative energy and experience to the Coalition's development activities. We join the community in warmly welcoming Christy to this unique organization!

Upcoming Events

After this cold, cold winter, we are all looking forward to Spring and outdoor events such as First Friday's in Phoenixville where Orion and local organizations open their doors on Bridge Street and a variety of music can be heard as you explore offerings in town. Check out our website for First

Friday dates and other area events.

On April 8, Iron Hill Brewery is again sponsoring a Gift 20 for Orion! All day long, 20% of the food bill will go to Orion for anyone presenting the Iron Hill Brewery Gift 20 coupon, pick up one at our office

or download from our website. Orion's Board and new staff members will be at Iron Hill from 6-8pm.

Please stop by to meet the Team and support Orion's mission of supporting those in need.



Report From the Board President

I continue to be surprised there are still people under the impression Orion has ceased to be a functioning nonprofit.

We were in transition for most of 2014 with our dedicated Board members assuming staff responsibilities and Orion has kept its doors open to creatively serve the most vulnerable persons in the wider community.

The Board re-evaluated the needs of the community and developed a sustainable model of service for Orion. We have just completed a successful audit and are looking forward to continuing to serve our neighbors in need.

Graciously supported by loyal donors with assistance from community members, we

not only have survived those difficult months of 2014, but now are in an improved financial and managerial position in 2015.

As a result we have increased our hours of operation to better serve the needs of our clients. We are moving ahead with renewed optimism.

Ken George



Phoenixville Area Resource Network (PARN) meets once per month to help connect local service agencies. Orion gave an update this February. Photo includes Orion's Executive Director - Kris Keller, President - Ken George, Vice President - Keith Burren and Treasurer - Art Munson.

Technology Access For All?

It's sort of like indoor plumbing, we take it for granted that there is running water in every home. Now its telephones – everyone has a phone, right? Even in developing countries.

One of our staff has two children working in Africa. She reports that almost everyone has a phone, even the mamas have a

phone clipped on their waist bands. Not iPhones and very different minute plans than we have in the US but they have cell phones to check the local markets to see where they should sell their crops.

Yet at Orion, every week we have people come in to use our phone because they don't have one. We have a drop-in resource

center with computer, telephone and fax so that our neighbors can apply for jobs on-line, send documents to local service agencies, or make needed calls.

Orion's intent is to help provide the tools that can make life a little easier for those in need and help them create a sustainable future.

Proud Member of

Cc
the Community
Coalition

Volunteer Story

A woman came in very distressed - she was about to lose her unemployment benefits because she hadn't registered for CareerLink's job search website and she wasn't comfortable with using computers.

I helped her at our Resource Center. Together we went through

the steps and completed the registration. She returned a week later with a notice - she did lose the benefits but she could appeal the decision. Again we worked together to figure out how to find the forms online and complete the appeal.

One more week passed and she returned to inform me that her appeal was

granted and her benefits were restored. That day we also completed a job application.

She was so grateful to learn something about the computer, get help with her appeal and even apply for a job.

I was glad I could help her.





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We're on the Web!

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Answering the Call

Every week this winter, Orion has helped locate warm beds for individuals and families. A local newspaper, The Mercury, had a front page article titled 'Homeless at risk in bitter cold' (February 17, 2013) that highlighted the limited resources for sheltering people from the risk of exposure in our area.

Orion often connects clients with local Shelters. Sometimes we can help provide funds or

collaborate with other non-profits or churches to cover the cost of short term housing until longer term options can be secured. We have the good fortune of receiving donations for our Community Emergency Fund to help provide a warm, safe bed to the most vulnerable in the community.

Additionally these funds are used for critical transportation, food, medical services, and

more to assist people through their challenging times.

This bitter winter has made the housing needs more obvious and pressing, fortunately local Phoenixville agencies and Orion are working to address these needs.

We are grateful for the community's support in helping to give hope to our neighbors.

About Orion...

Orion Communities is 100% supported through non-government funding. Our clients are individuals and families in the greater Phoenixville area who benefit from Orion's interim case management, emergency funding, or access to our resource center. We strive to

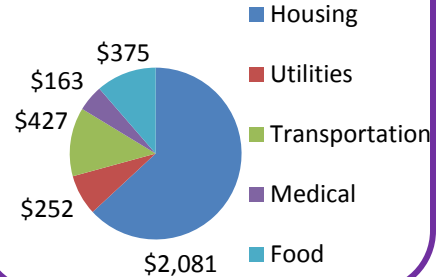
connect clients with the necessary resources to move forward in their lives.

Your donation and volunteering makes a difference in you and your community!

Thank you!

January- February 2015

Emergency Funds



NAME _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

ENCLOSED \$30 _____ \$75 _____ \$150 _____ OTHER _____

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

www.orioncommunities.org

Join Orion Communities... neighbors helping neighbors!