



## Summer Transitions

### 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. Orion connects residents to services that engender hope, dignity, and self-reliance for those experiencing poverty, disability, or illness.

This Spring, Orion Communities went through an energizing restructuring while continuing to advocate the needs of clients for housing, food and transportation. "The Board is working very hard to become an effective, efficient and respectful provider of needed services," says Ken George, Chair of Orion's Board of Directors.

It has been an exciting time that has included strategic planning sessions and reorganizing the office. A number of friends within the community have extended a hand and/or professional advice. Several members of the community have joined an Advisory Board to help

determine the best fit so that Orion can continue to provide for the community and move forward.

Other friends have helped spruce up the office with new equipment, removing old items and good old fashioned elbow grease to sort through 35 years of collected materials. The client needs are being addressed by an impassioned group of volunteers. Additionally, the Board has developed a new awareness of the need and role for Orion (see article from Board Chair on page 3).

Many thanks to members of the community for helping to disposition the old, polish up the remaining and find a

couple of new items to help Orion serve our neighbors in need. There will be more visible changes to see in the weeks and months to come. Please stop by to say hello and check out the new Orion!



Orion's Board of Directors and friends during a cleanup and clean out day.

## Meet the Orion Team

Orion Communities has planned a variety of new opportunities to help the community learn about Orion—the first will be our participation in select First Friday's and to have an open house on Friday of BlobFest weekend in Phoenixville this summer. If you are familiar with these events then you



know it is a great way to check out local businesses and bump into friends while listening to a variety of music as you wander down Bridge Street.

Please stop by Orion's offices on the evenings of June 6, July 11 and August 1 from 6-10pm to

meet some of our Board members and volunteers so that you may learn more about how Orion meets the needs of our neighbors in the Phoenixville area.

Orion Communities  
247 Bridge Street  
Phoenixville

One in ten people go hungry in Chester County each night.

*Chester County  
Food Bank*

## Story: Orion Helps a Local Citizen

On a recent evening, we received a call from a young man explaining that he had just started working again and that he had obtained a room at a local housing establishment.

He shared that his room was fairly barren without sheets, towels and that since he was using all of his earnings to pay for his rent and deposit, he had little money for these 'extras' and little money for

food. We found it impressive that this young man was working hard to sustain himself and agreed to make a referral on his behalf.

The next day, we partnered/advocated for him and placed a call to the wonderful local organization, People to People.

That evening their volunteer delivered sheets, blankets, towels, a hot plate, pans and

canned food so this young man could sustain himself.

Perhaps the best part of this story is that the volunteer knew this young man as she had him as a student many years ago when she was teaching. She later shared that he not only was the recipient of the items he needed, but that she was able to provide brief support and counsel as his former teacher.

## Alianzas Center Has Opened!

During our storied history, Orion has incubated new initiatives to support our neighbors most in need of services. Open Hearth is one example of a non-profit that started in Orion's offices before moving out to independently address affordable housing opportunities, family budgeting, etc. for those often excluded from traditional avenues.

Orion Communities was

invited to form and house a Latino outreach program. Two years after that creation, we celebrate the joy of having the highly successful Latino Outreach Program moving into its own independently operated **Alianzas Center**. Nina Guzman and the existing programs and services continue in their beautiful new location.

Alianzas Center is located at 148 Church Street and can

be reached at 610 933-9200.

Best wishes to Nina and Alianzas!



## Story: I Can Feel Human Again!

We met a woman who has gone through significant changes. This impressive woman, who has been employed and independent her whole life, lost her job this past year and her unemployment income has been exhausted. Currently, she has many needs regarding rental assistance, food and even gas money to

look for new work. When Orion's volunteer asked if there was something small and immediate that Orion could tackle for her, she said, "I would love to get a haircut and clean my clothes so I can feel human again."

She was provided a small donation to assist with the cost to wash her clothes.

With her permission, we called a local hair salon who happily agreed to donate a haircut to this member of our neighborhood.

Never has a haircut meant so much or felt so good to so many people!



## Our Board Chair – New Connections

Though I have lived in the Phoenixville area for 34 years, it wasn't until I became involved with Orion that I really began to understand and appreciate the needs of the wider community.

After retiring, I was asked to serve on Orion's Board of Directors and that was the beginning of my enlightenment regarding how a growing number of people are trying to cope with the

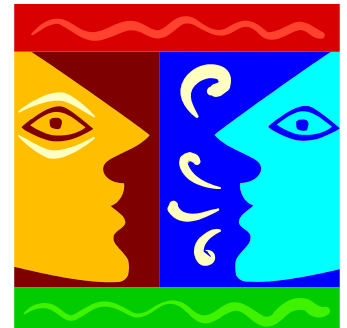
challenges presented by poverty, unemployment, addiction, limited educational opportunities and mental and physical impairments.

I especially became aware of the increasing needs during our recent transition when board members assumed some of the day to day responsibility of engaging with clients. The board members have been exposed at a very personal level to the challenges facing those

in desperate need and that a number of people in the Phoenixville area are still falling through the cracks of our social service network and turn to Orion as a possible last resource.

It has been an honor to get to know and serve our neighbors in need.

Ken George  
Board Chair



## A Volunteer's Story: Tied One On (Literally)

One weekend, Orion received a call from a woman on disability who needed help in locating a bed so she wouldn't have to sleep on her sofa following an upcoming surgery.

I reached out to agencies and peers for three weeks and finally a co-worker found an almost new mattress for \$40. The woman was thrilled. She had a friend who could assist in carrying the bed to her third floor apartment, but she asked for our help in getting the bed transported to her home.

Sometimes, with community miracles such as this, flexibility is needed. In this case, the store could not hold the bed so the mattress needed to be moved or risk losing the chance to help this woman in need. With no other option, we placed the mattress set on the roof of my car and then they gave me men's ties to secure the mattress to my roof top.

The ride from Spring City to Phoenixville was cautious but successful. I made it to our client's home and her friend was there to assist with

hauling the bed to the third floor.

Of course it couldn't be that easy as we negotiated the turn between floors we wedged ourselves between walls and mattress. Luckily a neighbor came home and allowed us to use his apartment as a turnaround point to make it to the third floor. Our client was very pleased to have a bed for her upcoming convalescing and we wish her the very best.

## Stay In Touch With Orion

Last summer, an Orion supporter helped us set up a website! Having a presence on the internet enables our friends and supporters to keep track of our upcoming events and learn new stories of neighbors helping neighbors. There also is

contact information for anyone who wants to volunteer on a regular basis or to help with a specific event.

We also have the ability to accept Pay pal or credit cards making it a convenient and secure way for donations to be

made making it possible to continue to meet the needs of those in need with such simple requests as a meal, temporary housing or bus token.

Check us out at **www.orioncommunities.org** and let us know what you think of our website.

*Orion Communities always welcomes donations and volunteers. Please get in touch with us to learn how you can support our neighbors and community!*

610.415.1141

or

info@orioncommunities.org



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Phoenixville, PA  
19460

Phone:

**610 415.4110**

E-Mail:

**info@orion  
communities.org**

We're on the Web!

*Find us at:*

**www.**

**orioncommunities  
.org**

**Web site address**

## How To Help a Neighbor

Sometimes it is hard to believe that in an area as affluent as Chester County that everyday people struggle to have their basic needs met for food and shelter for themselves and their families.

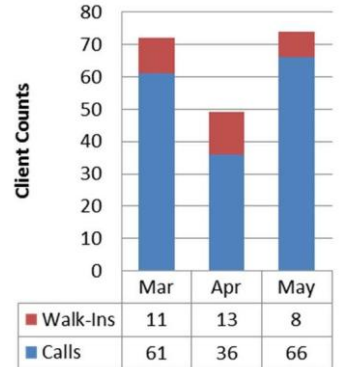
But it's true.

At Orion we use donated funds in many simple but necessary way:

- bus passes or tokens for job hunting or getting to work
- food vouchers for a family
- cost for photo ID for non-drivers who need identification to seek employment.

Can you spare some change to help a neighbor?

## Clients Served



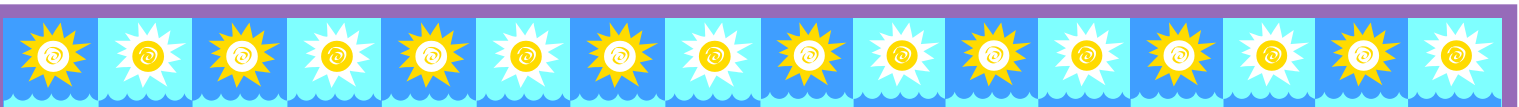
## About Orion...

Because Orion Communities is 100% supported through non-government funding and rely exclusively on charitable donations, we can serve individuals who cannot get help from other agencies. These might be individuals who do not meet the limited requirements of a shelter, an

employment program or food bank.

Volunteering makes a difference in you and for others! Give us a call and see how you can help our neighbors.

*Thank you!*



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

I want to join Orion Communities, neighbors helping neighbors

Answering phones  Office/clerical  Grant writing  Website/social media input

Drivers  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)