

YOUR WAY HOME

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

 Quarterly Newsletter

HOUSING FOR ALL

7TH ANNUAL SUMMIT 



Racial Equity Evaluation



SAVE THE DATE

Save the date for Your Way Home's Annual Summit on Housing for All.

June 7, 2019 | 8 AM-1:30 PM
Normandy Farm Hotel & Conference Center

page 1

THE GIFT OF GIVING

During a visit to Chicago, Soroush was struck by the homeless epidemic in the city and decided to make his 11th birthday really count.

page 2

ADVANCING EQUITY

On March 14th Your Way Home hosted the Racial Equity Forum. Read more about the event and YWH's next steps in this work.

page 2

YOUR WAY HOME 7TH ANNUAL SUMMIT

June 7th 2019
Normandy Farm Hotel & Conference Center

As the Your Way Home Summit approaches we'd like to invite you to submit a proposal to present during a breakout session.

Click [here](#) to learn more and apply!





THE GIFT OF GIVING

During a recent trip to Chicago (at the time), 10 year old Soroush was struck by the amount of homeless people he saw on the street. He asked his mother how their family could provide help to them.

Through a family friend, Soroush was connected to Your Way Home with the idea of donating his 11th birthday to help families experiencing homelessness in the area he lives. Soroush opted out of birthday gifts and rallied family and friends around the idea of helping families less fortunate than his own.

Together they raised over \$1,800 dollars! Soroush's actions show that wisdom is not dependent on age and there is much to be learned through cultivating compassion and generosity at an early age. Thank you Soroush, from all of us at Your Way Home.

“

When you receive a gift you become happy but, when you give a gift you become happy and you make others happy too.

-Soroush, 11



ADVANCING EQUITY

On Thursday, March 14th Your Way Home hosted over 70 nonprofit and community partners for our first ever Racial Equity Forum. This forum was to share the work done over the past 8 months to evaluate Your Way Home's homeless services through a racial equity lens. The evaluation, sponsored by the HealthSpark Foundation, was conducted by the SPARC Team at the Center for Social Innovation and guided by an Equity Advisory team of local leaders.

The SPARC team interviewed Your Way Home providers and partners and conducted focus groups with individuals who have accessed our system. Through thoughtful data analysis and examination of our policies and procedures, the Center for Social Innovation was able to gain insight into what it is like to access the Your Way Home system as a person of color. Through this analysis, we confirmed that homelessness is disproportionately experienced by people of color in Montgomery County. Black and African Americans make up 10% of the general population in Montgomery County yet make up 50% of the homeless population. Black or African American children ages 0-17 make up the single largest age and race demographic group, accounting for almost 25% of all people experiencing homelessness. The full report is available on our website at YourWayHome.org/Equity.

Your Way Home is taking a deeper dive to better understand the external challenges that have contributed to the inequity we see today. This includes challenges like a decline in available affordable rental units alongside a general increase in cost of living; discrimination in housing and employment; and increasing populations of color in the County.

In response to what we've learned we see the following as emerging priorities:

1. Increasing cross-sector collaboration for mutual accountability
2. Setting measurable targets and timelines for dramatically reducing number of Black children ages 0-17 experiencing homelessness
3. Creating opportunities for including people with lived experience in decision-making processes and in staffing structures
4. Exploring opportunities in policy and practice to remove "color blind" approaches
5. Conducting anti-racism, and implicit bias training for all staff across Your Way Home Network
6. Creating opportunities for staff of color to develop as leaders

We will continue to keep you up to date on our journey and we hope you will continue to respond with feedback. There is no overnight solution to advancing racial equity but we do believe we are on the right path.



CONTINUUM OF CARE

INTRODUCING THE 2019 COC BOARD

Katie Dunphy, United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania & Southern New Jersey, *Co-Chair*

Carolyn Mayinja, Montgomery County Office of Housing & Community Development, *Co-Chair*

Jason Alexander, Capacity for Change, LLC

Mark Boorse, Access Services

Arlene Daily, Keystone Opportunity Center

Brian Gralnick, Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia

Synethia Hill, Carson Valley Children's Aid

Geoff Hurnyak, Veterans Multi-service Center

Charmaine N. Ijeoma, Montgomery County Veterans Affairs

Jayne Musonye, Municipality of Norristown

Ruth Neiber, Salvation Army of Norristown

Jade Utz, Department of Commerce

Tim Pirog, Montgomery County Office of Mental Health

Joelle Pitts, Valley Youth House

Viviann Scholre, Family Services of Montgomery County

Patrick Walsh, Catholic Social Services

Barbara Wilhelmy, Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities



ANOTHER "EPIC" REPORT

The Eviction Prevention and Intervention Coalition (EPIC) is a project designed to stabilize vulnerable families and individuals in Montgomery County who are facing eviction by providing them with free legal and social services support on the day of their eviction hearing. Additionally, the program provides financial assistance to prevent evictions, and connections to the long-term financial and social supports needed to prevent future housing instability.

Initially launched in January 2018 as a six-month pilot, the project was successful in earning additional funding to extend for a full 12 months. During that time, EPIC prevented **85%** of evictions faced by the households it served.

This report reviews performance data of the EPIC project, including a demographic overview of the individuals who participated, prevention success, and trends in distribution of financial resources. Click [here](#) to read the full report.

YOUR WAY HOME
consumer feedback survey

Your Way Home is looking for input from consumers, partners, and people with lived experience of homelessness to inform us about our areas of opportunity and strategies going forward. Click [here](#) to take the survey

No Cost Hepatitis A Vaccine
to learn more call
610-278-5117

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection. The best way to protect yourself is by getting a vaccine. The Office of Public Health is offering free vaccines for individuals who are at higher risk of infection.