



ST. PHILIP  
HOUSE

## News from the house

Winter 2009

80 Broad Street  
Plainville, CT 06062

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

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### **From the Executive Director**

20 years and counting.....

It was a beautiful morning in the autumn of 1989 when Brother Anthony and I attended the Farmington Valley AIDS Task Force breakfast to learn more about issues and housing for individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

Jodi Miser, who passed away last year and supported St. Philip House until she died, was the chair of the Task Force. Her challenge at the end of the morning was, "you have the information, now what are you going to do with it?"

Thus began St. Philip House. Neither one of us really knew what we were doing, or getting ourselves into. We took the information and began to develop a program to assist and house people living with HIV/AIDS.

We met with volunteers from AIDS Project Hartford for assistance with all the "legal" matters of starting a program. We also met with Alan Carbonneau from the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services to discuss the possibility of funding from the State. In 1990, we received our first grant from the Department of Social Services in the amount of \$5000 to assist us with the program.

Father Richard McGann, then pastor of Our Lady of Mercy, donated a vacant classroom at the Parish Center for our first office. We were now ready to begin!

*Commemorating 20 Years of Serving the Community—1989—2009*

## Elizabeth Norton Trust

The Elizabeth Norton Trust of Plainville awarded St. Philip House a grant in December 2008

The \$1,500 grant will be used to replace the CCTV security system at St. Philip House.

St. Philip House has received funds in the past from the Elizabeth Norton Trust to assist with purchasing items for our facility.

We are all most grateful to the Elizabeth Norton Trust for its continued support of our program.

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In the past 20 years, many individuals and families became part of the St. Philip House family. I remember Lisette and Tony, both living with AIDS, and their three children. Tony died shortly after they entered the program. I remember sitting with Lisette when she told her children that their father had died. Lisette died three months later and the most difficult thing I have ever had to do was sit and tell the children that their mother had died. There was Terry who was pregnant and unknowingly contracted the virus from an infected partner. When she gave birth to her son, Josh, he tested positive. How horrible for a mother to unknowingly pass this terrible disease to her child! Fortunately, we were there to support her during this time. There was Dean who contracted the virus at birth. Abandoned by his family, he was 18 and on the verge of homelessness when he came to us. Through our assistance he was able to attend community college and is now doing well on his own.

Medications have come a long way since then. Twenty years ago we averaged 3 to 4 funerals a year. With today's meds people are not only living longer but have a better quality of life. Yet the battle is not over. Individuals, young and old, are still contracting the virus. I believe education is still the key to conquering this disease. Over the past 20 years, we have presented educational programs to over 7000 students and adults in area schools, churches and civic organizations.

It is my hope that someday soon St. Philip House and all the programs like it will not longer be necessary because a cure has been found. But until that day comes, in the words of Hubert Humphrey, "We live by hope. We do not always get all we want when we want it. But we have to believe that someday, somehow, some way, it will be better and that we can make it so."

Rich



For tickets please call 860-793-2221, ext. 11 or visit our website at [www.stphiliphouse.org](http://www.stphiliphouse.org)

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