

Rebuilding Together Philadelphia

Fall 2007

Steve Seweryn, Executive Director

REFLECTION & ANTICIPATION: 20 YEARS OF REBUILDING



Pastor Cruz and Gloria Bermudez in front of Centro Nueva Creacion; HQ of the 2007 Block Build in North Philadelphia © 2007 T. Vachon

This summer/fall, RTP already has invested funds to improve 15 homes, 2 community centers, 2 parks and 2 lots. This year also is notable in that it marks 20 years of RTP's efforts that instill in us the hope for a warmer and safer future for the people of our city.

RTP began in 1988 as a movement led by Robert Bellinger and other graduate students at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. They came together to make a difference in ten homeowners' lives. The 284,000 hours of volunteer service contributed since that time have not gone unnoticed. RTP has invested more than \$18.6 million in home repairs. These repairs have changed the lives of more than 750 low-income homeowners.

As we reflect on and celebrate the incredible accomplishments of the past 20 years, we also want to build

momentum for the future.

Anniversary celebrations will kick off with a volunteer project on January 21, 2008—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. They will culminate with a special event in May of 2009, which will reunite past volunteers, including Wharton and Penn alumni. Stay tuned for information on other activities throughout the year.

It is our honor to lead the anniversary celebrations. With your support and engagement, RTP's momentum will continue with the same intensity and passion as in the past twenty years. Let's help another generation of homeowners live in warmth, safety, and independence.

Wendy Klein Kean & Kelly Meissner
RTP Volunteers

ANNIVERSARY LAUNCH

We're celebrating twenty years of neighbors helping neighbors! On **January 21, 2008** RTP volunteers will spruce up the **St. Vincent de Paul warehouse** in Juniata Park and provide homeowner resources and information to the community. Join us for this one-day project on the 40th anniversary of the **Martin Luther King Day of Service**. This is a great way for an individual or family to learn about RTP's work firsthand.

To Register

Contact Patrick Cobbs
patrick@rebuildingphilly.org

OUR MISSION:

To prevent homelessness by partnering with the community to rehabilitate the homes of elderly, disabled, and low-income homeowners so that they may continue to live in warmth, safety, and independence.



RTP is an independent, local affiliate of Rebuilding Together, Inc., which supports 250 affiliates in serving 900 communities—collectively, the largest volunteer home rehab organization in the country.

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www.rebuildingphilly.org

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HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL ON 5TH STREET



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RTP's work for Martin Margolin reflects how changing someone's environment can positively affect one's interactions with people. Mr. Margolin grew up in South Philadelphia in the neighborhood where he lives today. He served in the Airforce in the Korean War. He lives by himself and faces health issues and physical pain on a daily basis. At first, like many RTP homeowners, Mr. Margolin was nervous about letting volunteers into his home.

After initial meetings, Mr. Margolin became more comfortable with the volunteers and began to assert his particular needs. RTP volunteers did a significant amount of work on his house, from deep cleaning to fixing toilets and painting. They installed a

new refrigerator and all new windows.

House Captain Debra Blum talks about her experience. "When I saw the extent of the work that needed to be done, and Martin's needs, I was a little worried that my volunteer group 'parachuting in' to work for one day wouldn't be enough. Not only were there skilled volunteers there to complement our efforts, but also Rebuilding Together made sure that all of the projects were finished, and the Stiffel Center [the neighborhood community center] continues to reach out to Martin."

Mr. Margolin has now become a regular visitor of the Stiffel Center. He comes for a hot lunch daily and is taking advantage of the healthcare services and other activities offered.

Originally, this South Philly Block Build was to help 10 homeowners. Mr. Margolin became the 11th homeowner after staff at the Stiffel Center discovered Mr. Margolin and asked for him to be included in the program.

LAST YEAR'S PROJECTS—FY 2007

RTP volunteers helped 55 homeowners and 6 community agencies and restored 2 vacant lots

Homeowner Characteristics

100% had low, very low, or extremely low income

80% were women who were the sole provider for their household

48% had a physical disability or medical hardship

26% were 65 years old, or older

39% had children under 18 living with them (51 children total)

30% lived alone

	Home-owners	Lots/ Agencies
Chester, PA	1	
Montgomery Cty	4	2
North Philadelphia	23	4
South Philadelphia	1	
West Philadelphia	26	2

CUMULATIVE STATISTICS—1998-2007

763 homeowners helped

28 community agencies served

2 vacant lots restored

22,610 volunteers enlisted

284,000 volunteer hours contributed

\$18,645,000 worth of home repairs

AARP AND REBUILDING TOGETHER PHILADELPHIA: AGING WITH GRACE, SOPHISTICATION, AND POWER

As RTP is entering into its 20th year, it also is helping AARP celebrate its 50th anniversary by undertaking a series of projects that will leave a legacy for low-income communities for generations. By working together, AARP and RTP are addressing the concern that as America ages, so does its housing stock. We share a vision of barrier-free, universal design ideas, which allow people to age in place and maintain control over their lives.

RTP is the centerpiece of seven signature rebuilding and home modification projects that will take place throughout the country in 2008. Through a generous grant from AARP, RTP will invest significant resources into the West Shore community of West Philadelphia. This area is bounded by 45th and 47th Streets and Woodland Avenue and Paschall Street.

Southwest Community Enrichment Center

With the architectural expertise of the Community Design Collaborative, RTP will install a lift, build a walkway, and rebuild the front porch to make the entrance of the Southwest Community Enrichment Center handicapped accessible and more welcoming. RTP

volunteers also will make improvements inside the building.

Located at 1341 S. 46th Street, the Southwest Community Enrichment Center is an important anchor for West Shore and Kingsessing. Having been embedded in these neighborhoods for nearly 30 years, the Center successfully provides a broad range of services. Programs simultaneously emphasize the self worth of each individual and identification with the community and community issues.

Homeowners

West Shore is a community in transition. New homeowners are changing the economic landscape, affecting long-term residents' abilities to manage basic house maintenance along with rising property taxes on a fixed income. RTP volunteers are stepping up to help 10 senior homeowners meet the challenge. Volunteers will clean, paint, repair, and address security issues. Roofs and heaters will be inspected and repaired or replaced, if needed. Volunteers from the University of the Sciences, The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, businesses, and congregations will work in the spring of 2008.

Home Modifications

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths of seniors; 78% occur either inside or near the house and 33% of these falls can be attributed to environmental hazards. Seniors throughout the West Shore community will have their homes inspected for safety and accessibility. Students of occupational therapy at the University of the Sciences or Thomas Jefferson Hospital will work in March and April. During a one-day blitz in May, AARP members will volunteer in teams to install grab bars, levered handles, handrails, and other items to ensure nonslip surfaces. Volunteers also will install smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, fans, and air conditioners for greater safety and to prepare seniors for the hot Philadelphia summer.

More on AARP-RT Activities, Nationally

Since 2006, AARP's Livable Communities Initiative and Rebuilding Together's Home Modifications Initiative have helped low-income elderly people in 50 states, including a large rebuilding effort in the Gulf Coast states that were severely damaged by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The Senior Collaborative

RTP's participation in the Senior Collaborative will augment services to the West Shore community. Established to provide interdisciplinary solutions to support elders within multigenerational communities, the Senior Collaborative is composed of two dozen nonprofits, ranging from community-based groups to universities. To help older adults access the resources they need to make informed choices about remaining in their homes or community, the Senior Collaborative will offer a workshop series in the West Shore community. Topics include information most

relevant to the residents' needs and interests, including housing counseling, legal advice, financial management, social services, health, home repair/modification, and kinship care.



Left and above: April 2007 RTP homeowners
© 2007 T. Vachon

API/CONOCO PHILLIPS: GOOD PEOPLE TO HAVE ON YOUR SIDE

Often a front door's "curb appeal" is seriously considered only when one thinks of selling the house. But, for a young teen, what your front door looks like can cause you to ask to be dropped off down the street instead of in front of your house. Before September 29, this was true for Mary Little and her two daughters; and their house not only lacked curb appeal, but also required a host of home repairs.

From September-November, volunteers from ConocoPhillips renovated the Littles' home from top to bottom:

- ** weather tight doors and storms doors in the front and back entrances

- ** high energy efficient natural gas heater, stove, microwave

- ** air handling system to supply the second floor with heat

- ** plumbing repairs and insulation in the bathroom to prevent freezing pipes

- ** windows caulked and sealed

- ** rain gutter collection header

- ** rewired electrical systems

- ** repaired and repainted rooms, front of house, and porch

- ** regraded the property on the front and side of her house

Helping the Little family marks the second year of *API's Energy Efficient Homes Initiative*. The partnership, between Rebuilding Together and America's oil and natural gas industry, was created to help draw attention to the benefits of energy efficiency as well as help residents increase energy efficiency and save money.

Several of ConocoPhillips' contractors donated items, labor, and discounted materials, including: JJ White Co., D&M Welding., LRC corp., Metzger Electric, Safeway Scaffolding, and The Home Depot of Claymont, DE.



ConocoPhillips volunteers at work for the Littles © 2007

A VOLUNTEER BEHIND THE SCENES

Volunteer: Joe Schneider **Age:** 49

Family:

Married to Donna for 28 years. Three children: one son in law. Two grandsons—Jason, 3 and Kevin, 2

Occupation:

Maintenance Superintendent

Current Day-to-Day Responsibilities:

Coordination of ConocoPhillips Maintenance and Contractor Resources.

Construction Background:

My father was a builder, I spent a good deal of my teenage weekends and summers helping him build houses.

Why He Helps RTP:

"Initially I volunteered to help because our plant was looking to help a family in the local community, and I support that concept. Upon project completion, my reasons had changed. I coordinated the project scope and alignment of resources. Our volunteers range from highly skilled craftsmen from all the building trades to the spouses and children of ConocoPhillips employees.

"The spirit and desire to help others shown by our volunteers was inspirational. I am truly blessed to work with such caring people. As we approached each repair item, we found that what was needed was never ending. The commitment never wavered. In fact, the spirit continues. A volunteer noticed that the family needed a computer work station and has committed to build one for the children. This is truly great stuff.

"In closing, the most rewarding part of this project was not the fact that we helped fix up a house, but that we gave a struggling family hope and a renewed belief in the people in our community. Thank you for providing me with this opportunity."

MORE ON CONOCO PHILLIPS

ConocoPhillips is an international energy corporation employing 38,700 people in more than 40 countries. As a result of the merger of Conoco Inc. and the Phillips Petroleum Company in August 2002, it is one of the six "supermajor" vertically integrated oil companies. As of 2006, its 12 U.S. refineries had a combined crude processing capa-

city of 2,208,000 barrels per day. According to Joe Schneider, "The people who work in [the Trainer] refinery have experienced several ownership changes in the past 15 years. The changes have helped to formulate a very strong loyalty to the plant and to the community. On a daily basis, we work hard to earn our right to operate in this community."

NATIONAL SPONSORS WITH NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACT

HONEYWELL HOMETOWN SOLUTIONS

Honeywell's fall project addressed a full range of warm, safe, dry priorities.

WHO

Anna Durham is a 69-year-old African American woman who is suffering from Rheumatoid Arthritis and needs a wheel chair to get around. Her physical disability on top of her limited income have led to her home's severe disrepair.

WHAT

Michael Carney, Joe Gallen, Mark Thrush and 12 other volunteers from The Fort Washington Employees Club of Honeywell made essential repairs to Ms. Durham's home:

** Removed damaged drywall, installed new dry wall

** Replaced ceiling fixtures in the bathroom and hall

** Repaired damaged floor areas

** Removed damaged wallpaper and repaired walls in bedrooms, hall, dining room, bathroom, and closets

RTP also paid to have the sheathing replaced and a new roof installed.

WHERE & WHEN

Willow Grove, PA; July-September 2007

WHY

Honeywell Hometown Solutions launched its partnership with Rebuilding Together in 2003 to help meet the basic human need of safe, secure and comfortable housing. "Ensuring our communities improve housing options is a part of Honeywell's heritage," said Debbie Orrock, Community Relations Specialist for Honeywell. "Honeywell's leadership provides volunteer opportunities for employees and their families as well as outfits homes with innovative Honeywell products. Since its inception, more than 4,000 Honeywell volunteers and donors have repaired 145 homes and community centers across the country."



HSBC volunteers taking a well-deserved break in the SVDP crew room. © 2007 J. Shropshire

HSBC: THE POWER OF 8,500

As a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP)—St. Luke's Conference—Steve Seweryn, RTPs executive director, has forged a solid connection between RTP and SVDP. The Society has contributed furniture, appliances, and other household goods to RTP homeowners for more than a decade. SVDP is one of the first volunteer groups Steve turns to for emergency repairs in North Philadelphia. And now, through HSBC's financial and volunteer sponsorship, RTP is returning the favor. RTP volunteers are undertaking a series of repair projects at the St. Vincent de Paul warehouse in the Juniata Park section of Philadelphia.

The improvements began during the last week of August. At a time when many people take time off to bask in the last days of summer, 8,500 employees of HSBC-America took a day off to repair the homes of families and community centers in need. This one-day project was the first initiative of a new \$725,000 partnership that HSBC has launched with Rebuilding Together on a national level. Kathryn Madison, managing director of HFC and Beneficial's Branch Retail Operations, explains the rationale behind HSBC's engagement of its employees and financial gifts.

"Rebuilding Together is a perfect partner for HSBC as we too are devoted to promoting strong neighborhoods and preserving homeownership in America."

Since SVDP was founded on the premise of "neighbors helping neighbors," putting local HSBC employees to work on this project was a natural fit. The warehouse is a resource of goods and social service information for the community.

On August 28, the sun was blazing as 80 volunteers weeded and painted the building and grounds of the warehouse property. This work included upgrading the bins used to collect material donations from the community to pass along to others who would find them useful. Carey Gibbons Roberts, the SVDP warehouse's Executive Director was "impressed by the magnitude of difference [the volunteers] made in such a short time." RTP delights in being able to strengthen community-based organizations such as St. Vincent de Paul so that our impact on low-income neighborhoods expands exponentially.

THANKS TO OUR EARLY 2007-2008 SPONSORS*

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AARP

Community Leader—\$25,000-\$49,999
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Sherwin Williams

House Sponsors—\$3,000 to \$4,999
Individuals through the United Way
KPMG, LLP and the Duck for Cover
Dodgeball Tournament

Builders—\$1,500 to \$2,999
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Neighbors—\$1,000 to \$1,499
Robert Hughes

Friends—\$500 to \$999
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* Note: list as of press time.

RTP IS THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Wharton Executive Committee

Eleanor Hsu, Adrian Ironside, and Eric Redline are building relationships both on and off campus. Outreach to Wharton's faculty and administration to date, includes the Leadership Development Office, the MBA Program Office, and the Faculty Engagement Committee. New training topics such as having difficult conversations and team/group dynamics will augment the fundamentals of proper power tool usage and general home repairs. In addition to wearing their bold red RTP t-shirts on campus, the Wharton team will promote RTP through the Wharton Journal and Jingle Bell Run and work closely with Chris Jaregui, president of the Penn Undergrad RTP Club, to insure collaboration and synergy within the Penn community.

2007 Dragon Boat Festival Recap



© 2004 G. Rahill

A good time was had by all on October 6. The RTP tents linked to those of Gung Ho and Becky's Beauties—two other Dragon Boat teams also supportive of RTP. The boat captained by Joan Burnes won a bronze medal in its division. More than \$15,000 was raised from the paddlers and their coworkers, family, and friends, funding repairs for five houses this spring! Special thanks to Jeanie Heffernan who not only served as captain of one of the boats, but also led the charge to recruit a literal boatload of Keystone Mercy Health Plan employees as paddlers. Keystone Mercy raised significant sums for the cause. Stay tuned for information as we look for new recruits.

Duck for Cover Dodgeball Tournament



With the lead sponsorship of KPMG, the 4th annual Duck for Cover Dodge Ball Tournament was held on November 10. The event was organized by freshmen from the University of Pennsylvania as the community service component of their Management 100 class. The students were responsible for the tournament's design and execution. Accordingly, they gained hands-on experience in promotion, logistics, negotiation, and teamwork. The tournament raised more than \$4,000 for RTP. In addition, the student team is working with the Penn Undergrads to use the tournament as a vehicle for building RTP's visibility on campus.

RTP, HGTV, Gerhard's Appliances— Partners in Spice

On November 13, RTP volunteers took a respite from their labors and gathered at Gerhard's Appliances in Glenside to watch the broadcast premiere of an episode of HGTV's "Spice Up My Kitchen." What made this episode special is that it featured RTP volunteers pitching in to help with the top-to-bottom renovation of the kitchen used for the Take it to the Streets Food Ministries. This project was the result of a national partnership between Rebuilding Together, Inc. and HGTV. HGTV's series—Change the World, Start at Home—also featured three other RT affiliates.

Many thanks to Gerhard's Appliances for hosting the screening party and for its ongoing gifts to RTP homeowners.

YOUR GIFT PUTS VOLUNTEERS TO WORK

RTP's mission is accomplished through the work of volunteers like Eric Redline. A native of Conshohocken, Eric got involved with RTP as a first-year graduate student at Wharton and has continued to be involved at the leadership level. He is one of 1,000 enthusiastic volunteers who are ready and willing to make the mission of RTP real in the lives of low-income homeowners throughout the Philadelphia region.

Your gift to RTP outfits Eric and his fellow volunteers to fix broken windows, repair and paint walls, install smoke alarms, and so much more. Through RTP, Eric is also able to develop a true partnership with the homeowner to accomplish what's most needed. This ranges from the

most home basic repairs to the simple yet profound changes that can make for a more pleasant living environment.

According to Eric, "My group improved the safety, comfort, and independence of a homeowner. The new hand rail gives her greater mobility. Her kitchen is awash in color and her dangling ceiling fan has been replaced. While this may seem superficial at first, the impact goes much deeper. We also boosted her confidence for making her own home improvements, and that is what RTP is truly about!"

Expectations are running high. Eric and our other volunteers need your support. **Every \$1 provides \$5 worth of home repair services.** Make a difference by making a gift to RTP this year.

GIVING TRADITIONS

Ask and you shall receive.

As so many worthy causes compete for philanthropic attention, consider that your friends and family will support YOU and what you believe in. Case in point—this year's Dragon Boat paddlers sought individual sponsors for their participation in the Festival, raising \$10,000 in addition to their own gifts!

Consider taking an activity you love and turning into a fundraiser for RTP. If you have a giving idea please contact: Susan Dietrich at susan@rebuildingphilly.org.



Yes, I'd like to support Rebuilding Together Philadelphia!

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,000 pays for work on an entire home | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 fixes basement steps (another \$25 illuminates the steps for safer access to laundry facilities) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,000 provides a new roof | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 replaces a door lock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 buys materials to build a handicapped ramp | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 installs a handrail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 subsidizes a major plumbing repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 equips a bathroom with two grab bars, a handheld shower and chair, and a toilet seat riser | (any amount you can give is much appreciated) |

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Thank you for helping to improve the lives of our neighbors!
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MITZVAH MANIA: TO BUILD AND BE BUILT



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When the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia invited RTP to be one of the core projects of its "Mitzvah Mania" initiative, RTP eagerly accepted the challenge. Mitzvah Mania is a one-day event designed to be a significant catalyst for the entire Jewish community in the Philadelphia region to do good deeds. After a year's worth of planning, Mitzvah Mania culminated on October 21, 2007. It could have not have been more successful in its engagement and impact.

The need for decent and affordable housing in Philadelphia is great. Within every low-income community, there are homeowners who are making daily compromises between food, shelter, healthcare, etc. This partnership was an opportunity for RTP to institute a Block Build in another section of the City with the support of financial and volunteers resources.

The Stiffel Center, a Jewish Community Center in South Philadelphia, was the homebase from which 240 volunteers spanned out to help 11 homeowners with home repairs. Volunteers also spruced up the Center itself, Mifflin Square Park, and a vacant lot.

As expressed by Mollie Kleinman, homeowner, significant work was done in each house. "The crew that came to my house were great and wonderful workers. They came in with

big smiles on their faces and no job seemed too big for them to handle."

Inside and out, the volunteers were engaged in meaningful tasks and were rightfully amazed and proud of what they had accomplished by the end of the day. Most important, perhaps, was the "Tipping Point" effect. One vivid example—when some residents living off Mifflin Square Park saw the clean-up project, they came outside, picked up brooms and rakes and worked alongside the Mitzvah Mania volunteers for the rest of the afternoon. Mitzvah Mania was just the beginning of this neighborhood's revitalization.

CONTACT US:

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