

# Rebuilding Together Philadelphia

Fall/Winter 2006

Steve Seweryn, Executive Director

## EYES ON THE PRIZE: NEIGHBORHOODS REVIVED



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A year ago Jen Wootten, RTP's Administrator, wrote about RTP's "tipping point" based on Malcolm Gladwell's book of the same name. He illustrated that small changes can create an epidemic. In RTP's case, a number of small changes are leading to an epidemic of big results. Throughout this newsletter you will read about mega sponsorships, generous donors, and strong volunteer teams. We hope you will be impressed. The quality and level of interest in RTP is amazing. At the same time, we hope you will be inspired to throw your support behind RTP more than ever.

Stay with us as RTP grows its capacity. We still need gifts of every size and volunteers of every skill level. There are so many low-income homeowners in Philadelphia who

could benefit from RTP's special brand of service.

Also, join us in reading *The Old Neighborhood: What We Lost in the Great Suburban Migration, 1966-1999* by Ray Suarez—designated as the *One Book, One RTP* for 2007. The book is a poignant reminder that in the midst of all of these great gifts, we must remain focused on what will make the greatest impact on a homeowner. The ultimate reward for a volunteer is seeing a homeowner regain his or her confidence, a family living in a safer environment, and a neighborhood revived.

Thank you for being a part of RTP.

**Jennifer Shropshire**  
President, Board of Directors

## WELCOME SYDELLE!

RTP recently hired Sydelle Zove as External Affairs Associate. The initial year of this new, part-time position was made possible by Delaware Investments (see page three) through its golf outing.

Board member Angelique Harris reports, "We are excited to have Sydelle join the team. She brings a wealth of experience in fund development, public relations, and community outreach as well as a passion for neighborhood revitalization."

Indeed, Zove's curriculum vitae includes serving as Policy Analyst/Advocate for PathWaysPA; Advocacy Coordinator for the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger; Associate Editor of The Jewish Publication Society; and Director of Institutional Advancement for Stapeley in Germantown.

## 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.

**REBUILDING DAY IS  
APRIL 21, 2007**

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**Jennifer Wootten,** Administrator

**Tony Chan, Esq.,** Pro Bono Counsel

### CONTACT US

for more information on the  
Board and other committees  
[board@rebuildingphilly.org](mailto:board@rebuildingphilly.org)

## OTs AS CATALYSTS FOR BLOCK CLEAN UP

The Thomas Jefferson University chapter of the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) joined RTP this past spring. Stephanie Stein, a third year OT student, was a RTP volunteer in high school and led the recruitment of her fellow students. "I thought this would be a great opportunity for SOTA to get involved with community service," says Stein, "especially because OTs have a special eye for the layout of a home. I knew we could make some changes that would benefit any homeowner."

Thirteen first- and second-year OT students and five other volunteers formed the SOTA House Management Team. They helped Engreth Davis, a 21-year-old single mother, and her two young children. Ms. Davis applied to RTP because she wanted a better home for her children. In addition to making essential repairs, volunteers painted as well as cleaned inside and outside the house. One volunteer donated and installed new kitchen cabinets and a stove.

"We had a chance to help out a woman who couldn't complete these

tasks on her own," Stein says. "In turn, as neighbors saw what was going on, they too started cleaning out their backyards and disposing of trash. Children were helping their parents. We saw a great chain effect that ended up helping a whole neighborhood, not just one family."

It's no surprise that Stephanie Stein won RTP's *2006 Outstanding Service Award*. Her leadership motivated a strong corps of volunteers, and as Stein reports, "Everyone worked really hard, through upcoming tests and their own busy schedules, to give the homeowner exactly what she needed. It was a team effort to leave the home with her smiling. We all look forward to working with RTP in the future."

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## GERHARD'S APPLIANCES

Appliances are fundamental to every home. While some homeowners may focus on choosing the right color, newest style, and high-level function, RTP homeowners are simply grateful when their stove or refrigerator is in good, safe, working condition. Gerhard's Appliances of Glenside understands that many low-income homeowners can ill afford even the least expensive model. For the past two years, the company made significant gifts by providing appliances for a number of RTP homeowners. The Gerhard family's generosity stems from understanding the predicament that these homeowners find

themselves in. According to Rich Gerhard, "I've heard about situations from Steve [Seweryn]. A family's money runs out quick, so we try to do what we can." He's modest—the impact that his family's gift has on the daily life of other families is tremendous.

Gerhard's Appliances is a third generation, family-owned and family-operated business. They offer the full range of appliances to customers within a 60-mile radius around Glenside. Service is the cornerstone of the business; they are keen on customer satisfaction and building relationships over time, generation after generation.

# DELAWARE INVESTMENTS HELPS HOMEOWNERS BY HELPING RTP

Many thanks to Delaware Investments for selecting RTP as one of the recipients of its 2006 Charity Classic golf tournament on Monday, October 23. Monies raised by the event (more than \$119,000!) will be divided equally between RTP and Neighborhood Bike Works—a youth development organization.

President Patrick P. Coyne expressed the company's support of grassroots efforts: "Delaware Investments is dedicated to the Philadelphia community, our home for more than 75 years. The two beneficiaries from this year's golf outing are not only receiving financial support, but also personal commitments from many of our staff, who are giving their time to volunteer." Coyne learned of RTP as a Wharton graduate student. Years later, he became the catalyst for helping RTP leap to a new level. Specifically, the outing will support:

**Special Projects**—helping homeowners throughout the year with urgent needs such as leaky roofs, heating systems, and emergency security

**External Relations**—hiring a part-time independent contractor to provide greater continuity for community

outreach, fund development, and public relations

**MLK Build Day**—conducting a major work project for New Creation Community Center in Lower Kensington.

The 2006 Delaware Investments Charity Classic was sponsored and organized by Delaware Investments. BMO Capital Markets, DST Systems, GR Group, and Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young were gold-level sponsors. Bank of New York and J.P. Morgan Bank, NA were silver-level sponsors. In all, 28 companies and a dozen individuals contributed to the event, which was held at Fieldstone Golf Club in Greenville, Delaware.

## About Delaware Investments

[www.delawareinvestments.com](http://www.delawareinvestments.com)

[www.lfg.com](http://www.lfg.com)

Delaware Investments, an affiliate of Lincoln Financial Group, is a Philadelphia-based diversified asset management firm with more than \$150 billion in assets at September 30, 2006. It offers a broad range of investment services to individual investors and to institutional investors such as private and public pension funds, foundations, and endowment funds.



Sixteen Delaware Investments employees painted a deck and ramp, and landscaped outside the offices of Families Are Victims Too on September 30, 2006.

## MEET ROCCO STUMPO SKILLED VOLUNTEER

A behind-the-scenes look:

**Volunteer:** Rocco Stumpo **Age:** 41

**Family:** Wife and two kids

**Education:** New Hope-Solebury High School

**Occupation:** Formerly Plumbing Foreman, now Project Manager for Worth & Company

**Current Day-to-Day Responsibilities:** Manages several job sites

**Construction Background:** Built custom homes, took up plumbing, and has been with Worth for 12 years

**Why He Helps RTP:** "I'd hope someone would help me or my family if we ever needed it. If I can give a little of my time to make someone else's life easier, why not!"

## MORE ON WORTH

[www.worthandcompany.com](http://www.worthandcompany.com)

In 1976 with only 40 employees, Stephen and Mark Worth created a company that would become synonymous with top quality mechanical contracting. Today, with more than 400 employees, Worth & Company is the leading mechanical contractor in the region and is focused on large scale commercial construction of public schools, hospitals, and hotels. Worth & Company has been one of the Best 100 Places to Work in Pennsylvania for the past four years. Proof that they belong in the top 100—the company is involved with RTP and other programs in response to an annual survey in which Worth employees indicated that they wanted the company to do more in community relations. Worth & Company received RTP's *Outstanding Skilled Volunteer Team Award* in 2006 for their work in addressing the plumbing and heating needs of several homeowners.

*Many thanks to all the skilled volunteers for lending their expertise to ensure high quality needs assessment and repairs.*

## GAPSA HMT KEEPING PROMISES

The spirit of camaraderie within the GAPSA team and with homeowner Sandra Register last spring was palpable. Indeed, Adrian Pasricha won RTP's 2006 *Above and Beyond Award* for his leadership as House Manager for the GAPSA volunteers.

GAPSA (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly of the University of Pennsylvania) has been working within the Wharton graduate student operational activities for a number of years. Volunteering with RTP fits squarely within two of the Assembly's major goals 1) to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and interschool interaction and 2) to create an impact on the broader community beyond university walls. According to Pasricha, RTP is GAPSA's "signature community service activity" each year.

In 2006/2007, the Assembly contributed \$5,000 to RTP, and for the first

time, took on the role of a House Management Team, assuming full responsibility for the planning and execution of all of the repairs. Being a successful team requires strong interpersonal and project management skills. To thwart unmet expectations, RTP volunteers are trained to "under promise and over deliver."

The GAPSA team took this pledge to heart. Pasricha reports, "At first, Ms. Sandra seemed surprised when the volunteers even showed up. But, we were ready. We came with smiling faces each morning. We took a very personal approach and were collaborative. We respected her and her possessions." Consequently, the team gained Sandra Register's trust and respect and developed a friendship with her pre-teen son who happily served as the team's runner, carrying tools and other materials from floor to floor.



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## 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL DUCK FOR COVER DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT

*Dodge Ball: The Tournament* was held on November 19. The third annual "Duck for Cover" event was organized by nine freshmen from the University of Pennsylvania as the community service component of their Management 100 class. The students are responsible for all aspects of the

Tournament's design and execution. All proceeds from the Tournament will benefit RTP's work with low-income homeowners. In addition, the student team is working with the Penn Undergrads to utilize the Tournament as an opportunity to build awareness of RTP on campus.

## BUILDING AN ELDER-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

RTP has been part of the Senior Collaborative—16 academic departments at Penn and 12 community organizations—since 2004. Through an interdisciplinary approach to effect both individual and systemic change, the Senior Collaborative advocates for the integration of senior-specific needs into the community planning process.

Participating in the Senior Collaborative enables RTP to extend its impact in West Philadelphia. In turn, RTP is helping to make the group relevant and effective. Lucy Kerman\*, an active member of the Collaborative, expresses her appreciation for RTP's involvement. "RTP is a critical partner in the Collaborative because it has a strong record of working to prevent homelessness among elderly homeowners and has the expertise to understand the needs of older homes—and older homeowners—in our communities."

The first initiative of the Collaborative was a focus group of senior homeowners who shared their challenges and concerns about aging in place in West Philadelphia. Not surprisingly, the homeowners expressed many of the same things that all age groups want: walk-ability, good public transit, safety, nearby retail opportunities, and a variety of housing choices. To respond to these concerns, the Collaborative will not only work to integrate senior-specific needs into community planning efforts, but also create an integrated system of resources in neighborhoods.

\* Lucy Kerman is a consultant at the Fels Institute of Government at Penn and Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition (GPUAC).

# NATIONAL SPONSORS SUPPORT "WARM AND SAFE"

## HONEYWELL HOMETOWN SOLUTIONS HELPS RTP HELP CHILDREN IN NEED



[www.honeywell.com/sites/hhs/](http://www.honeywell.com/sites/hhs/)

Helping RTP help the children of St. Mary's Villa is an ideal project for Honeywell. The company has been a leader in developing and applying innovative technologies that keep people safe and secure where they live, work and travel for decades. While safety and security is a priority for every

family, "safe" takes on a myriad of dimensions for children in need.

St. Mary's Villa for Children and Families in Ambler provides residential care, and education for special-needs children who are dependent victims of physical or sexual abuse, abandonment or neglect. Through the sponsorship of Honeywell Hometown Solutions and the volunteer efforts of the Fort Washington Employee Club of Honeywell, RTP is transforming the living quarters of 30 children at St. Mary's Villa. Initial work took place on October 4 and future work will fully equip the children's apartments and common areas.

Building on a century-old tradition of corporate citizenship, Honeywell is a national sponsor of Rebuilding Together.

Supported by significant sponsorship dollars, Honeywell employees make life better for low-income homeowners in more than 25 hometowns all around the country.

Debbie Orrock, Community Relations Specialist for Honeywell Hometown Solutions, explains, "We focus our community outreach efforts on important societal needs that align with Honeywell's heritage, products and people. Working with well-regarded national partners such as Rebuilding Together, we can make a great impact."

Locally, this impact is profound, affecting children who truly need stability and a comfortable living environment in order to grow into strong, contributing adults.

## API-CONOCOPHILLIPS/TRAINER REFINERY ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES INITIATIVE



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The partnership between Associated Petroleum Industries of Pennsylvania, ConocoPhillips/Trainer Refinery and Rebuilding Together Philadelphia is "warm" in action. Last winter, homeowner Rachel Bush used 1,600 gallons of oil trying to stay warm in her home in Chester. In many ways it was an exercise in futility—much of the heat was escaping through her windows, doors, leaky roof, and poorly insulated walls and ceilings.

Thanks to the *Energy Efficient Homes Initiative*, launched by the national

offices of the Associated Petroleum Institute (API) and Rebuilding Together, Inc., this will be a much warmer winter for Ms. Bush, and she will save an estimated 20% in heating costs. On October 28 more than 40 volunteers from the ConocoPhillips/Trainer Refinery (a member of API Pennsylvania) came with a lot of energy, serious skills, and even a backhoe to execute one of the most successful one-day projects in RTP's history. "Employees and contractors from the Trainer Refinery really enjoyed the opportunity to be involved with this

worthy project," said Bill Tyson, the refinery's Community Relations Coordinator. "At the end of the day, we could really see a difference in the home."

The energy-efficiency work was extensive, addressing the oil furnace, installing new insulation, and undertaking interior and exterior work for all windows and doors. This was in addition to more typical RTP projects such as patching, painting, plumbing and roofing. Volunteers installed handicapped-accessible items throughout the house and cabinetry/shelving in Ms. Bush's kitchen and pantry.

Giving low-income homeowners the tools to improve energy efficiency supports a group of people for whom most energy efficient products are out of reach. It also enables them to apply scarce resources to other urgent needs such as food and healthcare.

Nationally, API is leading efforts to train the more than 250 local RT affiliates on how to include energy efficiency as a core component of their work for the 10,000 homeowners helped each year. Visit [www.conocophillips.com](http://www.conocophillips.com) and [www.api.org](http://www.api.org) for more information.

## ANNUAL STATISTICS 2005-2006

RTP volunteers helped 45 homeowners and 5 community agencies

**Homeowner Characteristics:**  
100% had low, very low, or extremely low income

76% were women who were the sole provider for their household

56% had a physical disability or medical hardship

29% were 65 years old, or older

58% had children under 18 living with them (54 children total)

31% lived alone

	Homeowners	Agencies
Montgomery Cty	4	1
North Phila	18	3
South Phila	1	
West Phila	22	1

## REBUILDING BLOCK BY BLOCK

### DAY ON, NOT DAY OFF

Volunteer with RTP on January 15, 2007 to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and honor his legacy of community service and civic engagement. For more information on RTP's work day in North Philadelphia, contact:

**Margo Mocarski**  
volunteers@rebuildingphilly.org

RTP's 2007 spring program will take on a new dimension of neighborhood revitalization as volunteers realize a long-held vision of Block Builds—helping a concentrated area of homeowners.

ALL of the homeowners to be helped in West Philadelphia live in Mill Creek. Graduate students from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania will continue to focus the efforts of graduate and undergraduate students from Wharton and Penn as well as other teams working in West Philadelphia.

ALL of the homeowners to be helped in North Philadelphia live in Lower Kensington. Through a partnership with Lutheran Settlement House (LSH), the North Philadelphia Block Build will be anchored by major work on New Creation Community Center. LSH works with the Center to carry out its mission of empowering individuals, families, and communities to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency through an integrated program of social, educational and advocacy services.

RTP volunteers will make repairs for more than a dozen neighbors of New Creation as well as the Center itself. As many of these homeowners are Spanish-speaking, RTP's partnership with LSH is crucial. LSH has been an important liaison with community members, translating RTP's homeowner application and other communications from English to Spanish.

## THANKS TO OUR EARLY 2006-2007 SPONSORS\*

**Civic Leaders—\$50,000+**  
Delaware Investments Golf Charity Classic

**Community Sponsors—  
\$10,000 to \$24,999**  
API/ConocoPhillips  
Honeywell Hometown Solutions

**Neighborhood Sponsors—  
\$7,500 to \$9,999**  
Liberty Mutual Surety

**House Sponsors—\$3,000 to \$4,999**  
Robert Bellinger  
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Jones Apparel Group, Inc.

**Builders—\$1,500 to \$2,999**  
Michelle Carr  
Margo and Rich Mocarski  
Laura Seweryn

**Neighbors—\$1,000 to \$1,499**  
Pete Beale  
Donaldson Company, Inc.  
William R. May Funeral Home

**Friends—\$500 to \$999**  
Building Owners and Managers  
Association of Philadelphia  
The Glenside Pub  
Barbara Mas  
Maureen McDermott  
Talon Solutions, LLC  
The Scullin Group  
Edward F. Swenson & Associates, Inc.

\* as of press time.

## NEWS FROM RT NATIONAL

Just as a RTP volunteer working in a row home in North Philadelphia might forget that she is part of a larger, citywide effort to rehabilitate the homes of approximately 50 Philadelphians each year, it's easy to forget the impact that RT volunteers are making nationally. Rebuilding Together, Inc. is the nation's largest volunteer-based provider of home-repair services, with more than 240 affiliates nationwide. RT National has just launched a six-month celebration to mark the 100,000 home rehab!

Board members Beth Goodell and Margo Mocarski joined staff members Steve Seweryn and Jen Wootten at the national conference, which was held in Washington, DC in October. While they all attended training sessions on a diverse set of topics such as energy efficiency and homeowner relations, the conference was really an opportunity to share stories with other like-minded volunteers and staff.

"I was greatly moved by the stories from New Orleans and by the recovery program RT National pulled together. Because of this country-wide network we're part of, RT National was able to get resources down there and get to work. The network also turned out to be a set of friends to support the RT directors and staff whose own homes and lives were devastated."

**Beth Goodell**  
RTP Board Member

Steve had the opportunity to meet Gary Officer, who became the new President and CEO of RT National in August. Representatives from New Orleans and other Gulf Coast affiliates updated conference attendees on their progress since Hurricane Katrina.

All from RTP were inspired by the dedication and perseverance of various affiliates, and Beth, Margo, Steve, and Jen came back with a fresh perspective on RTP's mission as well as tangible ideas on how to help RTP grow.

# PHILANTHROPIC LEADERSHIP KEEPS RTP ALIVE

A thousand books have been written trying to describe the characteristics of leadership although most everybody knows it the instant he or she sees it in action. Philanthropic leadership is even easier to recognize than business or military leadership. Gifts have a tangible effect, directly helping to sustain and shape an organization.

For RTP, philanthropic leaders come in all shapes and sizes. "Leadership Donors" are individuals who make a gift of \$1,000 or more. Donors at this level not only generate \$5,000 worth of home repair services through volunteer efforts, but also attract the attention of others who subsequently are inspired to make large gifts.

Margo Mocarski, a new RTP Board member, is already flexing her leadership muscles. Her first gift to RTP was at

the Builder gift level. She explains, "It's about putting your money where your mouth is—I believe in the mission of RTP, that "warm, safe, and dry" are critical elements to living with dignity, and I believe that every person deserves that. I am thankful that RTP has attracted and retained a group of people who have spent years carrying out this mission, and I want to be supportive of that however I can, which includes providing financial support."

RTP also relies on the donors who give year after year though each gift may be far less than \$1,000. These donors show their leadership by their steadfast support. Being able to count on these "bread and butter gifts" as well as a number of leadership gifts enables the Board to be not only efficient, but also strategic in its decision making.

## GIVING TRADITIONS

It's never too early to lay the seeds for philanthropic leadership. Interested in instilling a spirit of giving in a young person? This time of year provides many opportunities for teachable moments.

Engage children in conversations about the circumstances of others.

Encourage children to give of themselves to help other children.

Enable children to be part of making decisions on what nonprofit the family supports.

Ask Jen Wootten (jenw@rebuilding-philly.org) if you would like information on RTP to share with your family and friends.



## 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)   |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for helping to improve the lives of our neighbors!**  
**Please mail your gift to: Rebuilding Together Philadelphia**  
**P.O. Box 42752, Philadelphia, PA 19101-2752**

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

11/06

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*The official registration and financial information of Rebuilding Together Philadelphia may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.*

# DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL 2006

## A ROOKIE'S VIEW FROM THE BACK OF THE BOAT



Photos © 2006 R. Schaub



Like the other novice members of RTP's first-ever Dragon Boat team, I didn't know what I'd gotten into. My personal goals were modest: don't fall out, pull my own weight, and finish the race.

I sat towards the dragon's tail, with a view of the other 19 paddlers and our dragon-clad drummer. After the starter's gun—difficult to hear over the wind—all I could see and hear was my teammates, driving the boat forward in unison (sometimes). Less than three minutes later (it feels A LOT longer) our heat was over. Despite the wet and windy weather, the energy and excitement in the boat was matched only by that of the RTP spectators who watched and cheered from the river bank.

It was fun, and just a little tiring, to be part of the lively and colorful tradition that is Dragon Boat. In all, the day was similar to time spent with a RTP house management team—a wonderful experience based on camaraderie, dedication and a "can-do" attitude.

**Joan Burnes**  
RTP Volunteer

*P.S. In addition to recruiting new volunteers, Team RTP took home a bronze medal in its division!*

### CONTACT US:

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Call 215.568.5044  
Check out our website:  
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