



Bringing a healing touch

The organization Project HOME is strongly motivated by its insight that we all need healing. In north Philadelphia, for a large segment of the city's downtrodden, it's leading the effort to bring healing to the community through the new Stephen Klein Wellness Center.

The neighborhoods served by the center once were vibrant, but now are worn and weary. Residents there are nearly twice as likely to live in extreme poverty as people elsewhere in the city. The unemployment rate, too, is twice the city's average. Domestic violence, child neglect, and homelessness are part of life's daily struggle there.

In this section of Philadelphia, many previously went without health care, or when they did get care it was in an emergency room and occurred only because some illness had reached a critical stage. That put people's lives at risk, and it over-burdened the health care system. The wellness center, opened in March of 2015, brings a preventative approach to care.



Janet Stearns, Project HOME's vice president of real estate development and assets, explains the wellness center's proactive mission: "We have primary care, behavioral health, dental care and a pharmacy. We have the YMCA as part of the facility. We have stress reduction and yoga classes. We have a food pantry. We have a teaching kitchen where they do demonstrations of how to cook fresh vegetables, for instance. It's really this integrated care that's so unique, having all those services under one roof."

The new wellness center is providing a focal point for change in the community

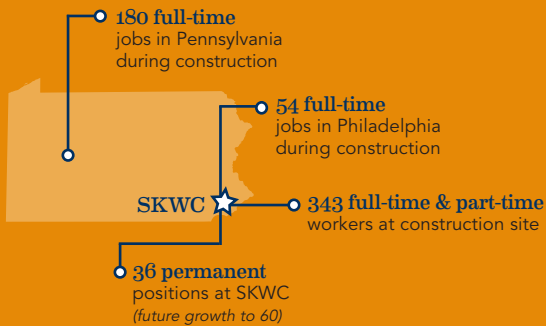
Walk through the doors of the wellness center, and something immediately becomes clear. Everyone who enters is treated with respect, and no one is turned away.

"It's pretty amazing to walk through on any particular day," Janet explains. "You may have some people in primary care. There may be some children [playing] in the lobby. Then you may see a homeless person being cared for, tenderly, who really just needs a shower, some clean clothes and a sandwich. We have this very homey, not institutional feeling. That was a big goal of the design of the facility."

Another goal was to have the wellness center provide a focal point for change in the neighboring area by attracting more investment. That's why Commonwealth Cornerstone Group got involved, awarding \$8 million in New Markets Tax Credits critical to the project's completion. Created as a community development entity by PHFA, CCG provides tax credits for revitalization projects across Pennsylvania.

"This building sitting here on the corner really sparks the vision for investment in the neighborhood," Janet confirms. "I think this neighborhood feels poised to reap the benefits of that investment."

ECONOMIC IMPACT



Projects like the Stephen Klein Wellness Center, funded by Commonwealth Cornerstone Group with New Markets Tax Credits, not only bring critically needed programs and services to the regions they serve, but they also create jobs and spur additional community investment.

more ►



“This building sitting here on the corner sparks the vision for investment in the neighborhood.”

— Janet Stearns, Project HOME

The founders of Project HOME in Philadelphia, Sister Mary Scullion (left) and Joan Dawson McConnon, have created an organization that serves the frequently overlooked homeless and under-employed people in the city, with its outreach now extended through the construction of the new wellness center.

Bottom: Artwork like the sculpture "Woven Sanctuary" hanging in the center's entrance reflects Project HOME's goal of healing patients' mind, body, and spirit. 🏠

