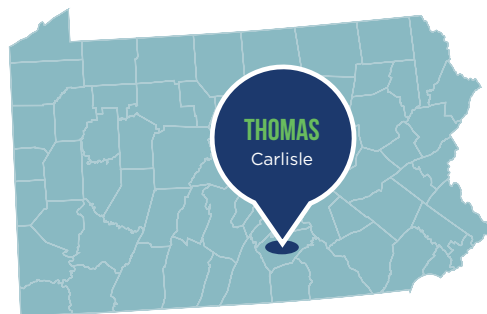


FINDING HIS WAY HOME



The Historic Molly Pitcher Apartments in downtown Carlisle—the middle building with the brick and green façade—was rehabilitated to provide affordable rental housing using tax credits provided by PHFA.



+ WHEN:

Summer 2015.

+ WHO:

Thomas Baker, age 67, divorced with no children.

Following four years in the Navy, Thomas spent most of his career working as a dishwasher at various restaurants. For many years he was homeless, unable to afford a place to live even though he was working. He struggled with drug and alcohol addiction in his early 30s. But Thomas has been clean and sober for 31 years. In fact, he's now a mentor for other people recovering from addiction.

+ WHERE:

Born in Hershey, Thomas worked for many years in the mid-state and in Philadelphia.

+ WHAT:

Seven years ago, Thomas was fortunate to find an affordable apartment. But once there, his health declined to the point where he needed a walker to get around, and the hardwood floors proved hazardous. He was falling once or twice a day, sometimes sustaining concussions.

The bathroom also was not safe for someone with diminished mobility. To protect himself, Thomas would put half of his walker in the shower to provide some stability, since there were no grab bars.

To add to his fears, that apartment was on the ground floor, and three attempted break-ins left him feeling vulnerable.

One might ask why Thomas would continue living there? But for someone who spent 20 years without a place to call home—with eight of those on the street—Thomas' challenging living situation was still better than what he'd experienced for much of his life.



There's a lot Thomas likes about his new apartment, including friendly neighbors like Sophie Kosinski who have made him feel welcome. Another plus is the carpeted floor in his unit that makes it safer for him to get around with his walker.

+ OUTCOME:

A year ago, life improved dramatically for Thomas when he moved into the Historic Molly Pitcher Apartments in Carlisle. The apartments provide affordable housing in a building rehabilitated, in part, with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits from PHFA. The Cumberland County Housing and Redevelopment Authorities oversaw the building renovation and manage the apartments, coordinating helpful supportive services for the residents.

Thomas raves about his new apartment.

"I knew right away...I was home.

"Here, I'm on the second floor. The security is much better than at the other place, and the hardwood floors—there aren't any. It's wall-to-wall carpet. It helps a great deal. The bathroom has handrails, and I can take showers without any worry about falling."

Thomas' story vividly illustrates how appropriate and affordable housing changes lives.

"I want to tell you, my health has improved 100 percent. In fact, all my friends tell me I look better and sound better.

"This place is paradise. I don't want to ever move again." 



"I CAN'T EMPHASIZE ENOUGH MY GRATITUDE TO THE PEOPLE WHO RENOVATED THIS APARTMENT BUILDING. THIS PLACE IS 100 TIMES BETTER THAN THE PLACE I WAS LIVING BEFORE."

—Thomas Baker,
Senior renter on a fixed income