

# Living & Working

Empowering individuals to create the lives they want and reach the goals they set.

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## JEVS' Community Homes Accommodate Changing Needs of Those They Serve

**O**n a cold morning in mid-December, Murielle, Gerry and Rose relax in cozy armchairs in the living room of the ranch-style home they've shared since 2002. All three sport freshly manicured nails, painted a festive red. Rose leafs through a catalogue, from a large collection she keeps nearby, while Murielle and Gerry take in the music and ambiance of the moment. Murielle occasionally moves in rhythm to music.

The bond they share runs deep. The three ladies, each of whom has a visual impairment, are the sole residents in one of JEVS Community Homes for people with intellectual disabilities. Their ages range from 69 to 79. All three have been companions and housemates since arriving at JEVS 19 years ago. Seven years ago, when their current home became available, the ladies moved from a larger JEVS home they shared with others, to gain more privacy and accommodate their



needs as they reached retirement age.

All three are non-verbal, yet they communicate with each other on many levels. For example, Gerry will often reach out to hold Murielle's hand—a gesture of reassurance and fondness. When traveling, the three women support and guide one another by placing a hand on the shoulder of the woman in front. Rose, who has sight in one eye, always leads

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### On the Job: JEVS Matches Jobs to Skills & Interests Bruce Tastes Success on the Job!

“Step right up! Step right up and get your Chick-fil-A nugget.” If the fragrance of freshly cooked chicken wafting from the Chick-fil-A storefront doesn't get your attention, Bruce Griffin surely will. Holding a tray of crispy bite-sized samples, he beckons to passersby in the food court at Liberty Place. His enthusiasm, gentlemanly manners, and winning smile are hard to resist. And few people do.

Bruce, who started attending JEVS Psychiatric Rehabilitation

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# JEVS Takes Home Two Brighter Future Awards

**Twanda Neblett** inspires her peers by speaking about the importance of a positive attitude and good appearance on the job.

During breaks, and before and after work at the Acme, she often helps new trainees learn bagging techniques.

"I love my job," says Twanda.



*Award recipients and their guests were honored at a luncheon hosted by Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation Services. Twanda Neblett (left) attends JEVS Employment Network and works part-time in the community. Marnisha Henry (second from right) is a JEVS Life Sharing provider, and an Associate Director at JEVS where she helps oversee JEVS In-home Supports program and the Funds Department.*

**Marnisha Henry** is recognized as extraordinary by the people whom she supports, their families, and her peers.

"The most significant opportunity for hope is the possibility of making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve," says Marnisha.

## JEVS Community Homes

*Continued from page 1*

the way. Knowing that someone familiar is always there for them, they move comfortably throughout their home and in their community.

This sense of security and connection extends to the staff who care for them. Each lady needs a different level of support to complete activities of daily living and enjoy the greatest level of independence possible. On this day,

three direct support staff, Sabrina Johnson, Miranda Clement and Mary Ereforokuma, take turns adding ornaments to a Christmas tree, in between preparing for a meeting and engaging with the ladies.

It is a dance of sorts, the way in which staff move between rooms, turning their attention from acknowledging Gerry's humming, encouraging Murielle's dancing, invit-

ing all three to pose for photos, then turning their attention back to decorating and routine tasks.

Staff eagerly stop to speak with their visitor and help the ladies tell some of their stories. On a typical weekday morning, Rose and Murielle might attend the senior day program at JEVS' Community Collaborative. "Rose especially enjoys the "Coffee Clutch," manicures, head massages, and dining out," says Charl-

ton Parker, Community Collaborative Director. "Murielle loves music. She loves to sing and dance. Although she is one of our oldest members, she is quite spry."

Gerry, who is retired, often assists with shopping, running errands, and spends part of her day relaxing and listening to music. All three enjoy going to the movies, walking through the mall, and

walking in the park on a nice day. On this day, they were all looking forward to attending a live production of the Nutcracker.

The ladies eat out frequently. Ruby Tuesday's is a favorite haunt. All three need their food pureed, but the staff dismisses this extra step as no big deal, explaining "most restaurants do have blenders." Apparently, advocating for the ladies is second nature.

Sabrina, who has worked in this field for many years in different agencies, stresses the importance of insuring that program participants have plenty of options for how they spend their time. "At JEVS, it's easy to form a good team. Everyone gets close," she says. "I like the relationships between staff and residents."

The three staff exclaim at once, "It's like home away from home!"

"At JEVS, it's easy to form a good team...I like the relationships between staff and residents."

-Sabrina Johnson  
Direct Support Professional

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

about JEVS Community Living & Home Supports email [clhs@jevs.org](mailto:clhs@jevs.org) or call 267-350-8600.

# Mentoring Means Better Outcomes for the People We Serve

*"Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person."*

*...Mother Teresa*

**M**ost of us can think of ways we could work more efficiently on the job or improve the services we offer. Problem is, we're waiting for others to make the changes.

"We want to make the most of the diverse skills and perspectives staff bring to the workplace."

-Clara Thompson

Senior Executive Director

Oftentimes we don't speak up, believing we won't have the skills or support to initiate needed change.

Imagine a work environment where you could share your ideas or discuss your struggles—without fear of criticism. Imagine you could count on getting the needed support or training, just by asking.

Well, JEVS Community Living and Home Supports (CLHS) imagined, then created it. It's the premise of their new Mentoring Culture.

In September 2007, staff began attending a series of onsite *MENTORINGMEans*® workshops to learn to be both a mentor and a protégé. Like traditional mentoring, it's a means for staff to learn from one another's experiences, and build skills through modeling and coaching.

But *MENTORINGMEans*® takes things a step further and creates a new work culture. The main un-

derpinning of the mentoring culture is personal accountability and adaptability. Staff learn to accept and give feedback in a positive, respectful manner to encourage accountability and adaptability.

"With today's dynamic and rapid-fire changes in how we do business, we have to work hard to keep up with technological changes and stay in touch with the heart of our organization—our people," says Cynthia Francis, who developed *MENTORINGMEans*® training. "A mentoring culture helps staff recognize opportunities and take initiative to improve the service they and their colleagues deliver on a daily basis."

Unlike traditional mentoring which benefits a select few within an organization, JEVS CLHS mentoring benefits everyone—most especially, the people JEVS serves. Staff choose when they want mentoring, and select their own mentor. Mentors are never assigned. Mentoring can be a one-time encounter to address a specific issue

The main underpinning of the mentoring culture is personal accountability and adaptability.

or gain a skill, or it may become an ongoing relationship. What's more, there are "no stripes." Staff can mentor a peer, a supervisor, or someone they supervise.

"We want to make the most of the diverse skills and perspectives staff bring to the workplace. When people feel their input is valued,

they strive harder to make a positive impact," says Clara Thomp-

"It meant a lot that all staff, managers and direct support staff were there together to learn about mentoring."

-Miranda Clement

Director Support Professional

son, Senior Executive Director. "Ultimately, that results in better service to our customers."

The leadership hierarchy is still critical for establishing policy and critical decisions. However, a mentoring culture emphasizes one of JEVS' five core principles: "leadership at all levels."

Direct Support Professional, Miranda Clement, who describes herself as quiet and shy, says the training gave her confidence to speak up. "It got me talking," she says. "It meant a lot that all staff, managers and direct support staff, were there together to learn about mentoring."

While a mentoring culture helps staff at all levels, a primary focus of the training is on the outcome for the people JEVS serves. House Manager, Sharivah Haynes, affirms the training has made a noticeable and positive impact. "It has helped staff realize how much their work is valued," she says.

And that, of course, increases their pride in their work.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

about JEVS Community Living & Home Supports email [clhs@jevs.org](mailto:clhs@jevs.org) or 267-350-8600

Serving the Delaware Valley since 1941, JEVS HUMAN SERVICES helps people from all walks of life overcome quality of life challenges by focusing on individuals with physical, intellectual and emotional challenges as well as those facing adverse socio-economic conditions.

JEVS Community Living and Home Supports offers programs to assist people with psychiatric/intellectual disabilities to live and participate in their communities, while achieving their highest level of independence.

JEVS Work and Recovery Programs assist people who face challenges in obtaining/maintaining employment due to physical, intellectual or psychiatric disabilities, or conditions; services are available to support the recovery of people with psychiatric disabilities.



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### WORK & RECOVERY PROGRAMS

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Community Employment Services: [workincommunity@jevs.org](mailto:workincommunity@jevs.org)

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Services in January of last year, enrolled in JEVS Community Employment Support Services this past June, and started working as a greeter at Chic-fil-A in November. "During the vocational assessment we saw Bruce has terrific people skills," says Gary Lachow, Job Development Manager. "So, we helped him find a job that focuses on those skills. Finding the right match is key to the success of those enrolled in our program. And it makes employers happy."

After helping Bruce find the job opening and prepare for the interview, Job Developer, Leslie Yuille, traveled to the job site with him by public transportation several times until he was comfortable traveling independently.

"He'd never traveled by Septa before," she says.

For the first month of his employment, a JEVS Job Coach worked with him onsite. "They had a few lines prepared for him to say when he greeted people," says Anita Rhoden, Job Coach. "But Bruce came up with his own greeting, and everyone liked. it"

On the days he isn't working, Bruce continues to attend JEVS Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services where he says he enjoys working on his computer and math skills, and helping out at the JEVS Ashton Road site kiosk selling snacks and prepared lunches.



*Bruce works on computer skills at JEVS Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program.*

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

about JEVS Community Employment Services, email [workincommunity@jevs.org](mailto:workincommunity@jevs.org) For JEVS Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services email [recovery@jevs.org](mailto:recovery@jevs.org) or call 267-350-8600.