Jerry, a vendor with RHD’s One Step Away, was about to sit down to watch Richard Gere’s new movie when Gere walked up and asked about Jerry’s story first.

One Step Away was invited to a VIP screening of Time Out Of Mind, an indie film in which Gere movingly plays George, a man experiencing homelessness and grappling with his existence in a world that has seemingly discarded him. It’s a project close to Gere’s heart; the iconic actor famous for movies such as Pretty Woman, An Officer and A Gentleman and American Gigolo is a passionate advocate for homeless causes.

When Gere and director Oren Moverman were making appearances to promote Time Out Of Mind, Gere insisted that homelessness providers and most importantly people who’d actually experienced homelessness have a chance to see the film first. In Philadelphia, at an event hosted by Comcast and Project HOME, Gere premiered the film for an audience that included One Step Away — and Gere seemed most anxious to hear what Jerry thought of it.

Gere is a supporter of the street newspaper movement, and was excited to find that Philadelphia — where he was born, although his family left Philly shortly thereafter — had a street paper. Asked if he had any message for people who were working to break the cycle of homelessness in their own lives, Gere laughed and said: “I don’t give them advice, they give me advice.”

“I think these guys are the heroes, they’re the survivors,” Gere said. “Your vendors are out there, they have done something heroic. They’ve pulled themselves out of a very deep ditch and they didn’t do it by themselves.”

On the red carpet: Richard Gere (center) talks with One Step Away vendor Jerry (left) and One Step Away Director Emily Taylor (right) about the experience of homelessness. Describing the work of RHD’s street newspaper serving people who experience homelessness, Gere said: “Your vendors are out there, they have done something heroic.”
GERE

from front page

Gere asked Jerry about his experience, and they talked about how Jerry broke the cycle of homelessness in his life (Jerry has been able to secure and maintain housing thanks in part to his ability to work as a vendor for One Step Away). Gere told Jerry: “So, Thank God. You’re heroic.”

When Jerry said: “I try to encourage other guys who are out there on the street, because if I can do it they can do the same thing,” Gere excitedly punched the air and said: “Yes! Absolutely! That’s the most important thing, it’s the community isn’t it?”

“You can go to them and say look I’ve been there, I know,” Gere said. “Thank God you had help around you and that you also had the energy to reach back and take that hand — because I know there are a lot of times when you don’t even have the energy to accept that help.

“It’s very hard for us, people who don’t know, to engage. There’s a book that meant a lot to me, The Land of Lost Souls. The way he wrote his book of stories very much informed how we wrote the movie. He’s not a writer, he wasn’t trained, but because he was honest with telling his story he wrote a very powerful book and it meant a lot to me and it meant a lot to a lot of people and I’m sure his story wasn’t that different than yours. And you have a venue for it.

RHD founded One Step Away, Philadelphia’s street newspaper, in 2010. Since then, One Step Away has grown to be a thriving program that offers meaningful income opportunities for people experiencing homelessness or joblessness, providing more than 65 vendors each month with work that allows them to make strides toward self-sufficiency.

For 82 percent of One Step Away vendors, working with the street newspaper is their only source of income.

In its history, One Step Away has distributed more than 700,000 issues, serving as an important voice of advocacy on issues of poverty and homelessness. The newspaper has won North American Street Newspaper Association and International Street Newspaper Association awards for journalism.

More than 100 writers — including people experiencing homelessness, volunteers in the community, and other homelessness providers working in partnership with One Step Away — contribute to the newspaper each year.

Perhaps most importantly, One Step Away vendors are a visible presence on the streets. Homelessness has in many ways become a national crisis people have learned to ignore and not see, and the visibility One Step Away brings to the issue has garnered praise from across the spectrum of homeless services.

Gere himself reported that the most impactful part of his experience portraying a homeless man was the way he became invisible on the streets.

“I was invisible in New York,” Gere said. “Because I was this character, people decided within two blocks of seeing me that I was a homeless guy, and didn’t look any further. This guy you’re talking to right now is the same guy who was on the street then — and no one made any eye contact.”

“It was confusing, and profound,” he said. “As a filmmaker, I was very happy, because it meant we could make the movie. If everyone had recognized me, we would have had to shut down. We couldn’t make the movie; it would’ve been impossible.

It was a deeply profound and existential moment of how completely surface our experience of each other is. We go primarily with what we see — but our senses lie to us continually because we’re living in an echo chamber of our own minds and prejudices. Now, if Richard Gere, who has money and fame and in this situation everyone thinks kindly about me, if I can stand on a street corner and be treated like garbage? That’s a profound lesson for me personally, but I think for an audience it should be as well.

“I try to verbalize it, and I don’t think I can get there. But it radically changed my view of myself and of the social fabric around me.”

A previous winner of Philadelphia’s Marian Anderson Award, Gere established the Initiatives Foundation to raise funds and funnel resources to disadvantaged communities worldwide. Gere has received the Media Spotlight Award for Leadership from Amnesty International, the prestigious Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award, and he’s worked for years with the Coalition for the Homeless in New York. Time Out of Mind is a passion project for him, and it shows.

“I find myself saying this all the time — our deepest yearning is to be in touch with that thing that is precious and magnificent inside of ourselves,” Gere said. “But we’re social beings, to be in a community of people who, when they look at us, we know they think we are precious, is deeply important to all of us.

“We are all of us, deeply, in this together. And I would hope that is what it feels like.”

One Step Away vendors Jerry and Jeff were able to see the movie and they reported in the newspaper’s October issue that the film rang very true.

“That’s what it’s really like to be homeless; people turn their backs on you,” Jerry said. “It reminds me of what I went through, that’s how it is.”

Jeff’s review of Time Out of Mind was published on Philly.com, the web portal for The Philadelphia Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News, and the largest news aggregator in Pennsylvania.

“I was struck immediately by the realism of Time Out of Mind; it is blindingly accurate about the conditions and troubles and the delusional behavior that accompanies homelessness,” Jeff said. “When I saw this, I didn’t expect to see it quite the way I did.

“My end feeling is one of gratefulness, not only to One Step Away, but that now I want to get up in the morning, I want to do my job, I want to thank whatever powers that be that I have a set of keys in my hand, and I don’t have to worry about being evicted or any of this stuff, not anymore — and I want to make sure it stays that way.”

How you can help

More than 43,500 people each year gain the support and encouragement they need to build better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities through RHD’s many human-services programs. Their milestones and successes, large and small, are made possible through the generosity of people like you.

Your support helps provide the resources people of all abilities need as they work to build better lives for themselves, their families and their communities. You can help support caring, effective and innovative programs that emphasize the person in the service, with a belief that each human being, no matter what their challenges, should be treated with dignity and respect. You can help give people the opportunity to develop to their full potential, improving the quality of life and creating brighter futures for all RHD clients.

Please use the enclosed envelope to send a check or visit us at www.rhd.org to donate online.
Ella, a client with intellectual disabilities at RHD's DeFuniak Springs program, took to her job at a local hospital with so much passion that she was named Employee of the Year.
Rahiem is graduating from RHD's Children's Acute Partial Program (CAPP), and returning to his school after having completed the short-term partial hospitalization program that helps children develop self-regulation skills that minimize challenging behaviors and increase healthy, wise behaviors. For his graduation ceremony, he'll make his handprint on the wall ("I want blue; that's my favorite color," he said).

It's a ritual many RHD children's programs embrace to show that each child who passes through them has left their mark on the program.

CAPP is just one example of how RHD has been a pioneer in creating unique programs for children. Thousands of children and their families have found care, effective support at RHD that has helped them achieve their behavioral and educational goals. As they've achieved success, they've found that RHD left a mark on them, too.

"RHD really helped me and my family tremendously," said Jerkisha, whose daughter is in an RHD program called High Fidelity Wraparound. "When my daughter first started the wraparound process she was making F's in everything. Now she's making As and Bs. HiFi helped me be a better parent to help my daughter. All the services were just great. I would recommend them to everybody!"

"RHD's children's services continuum is very diverse," said Sebrina Harrison, RHD Corporate Assistant Director for children's programs. "We've developed a good network of resources and we have the ability to provide different services based on the needs of different populations. Look at Mastery, an outpatient therapy program within Mastery Charter Schools, which is a unique service that's not being done anywhere else. Or HiFi Wraparound, which was the first of its kind in Philadelphia. We've been able to pioneer effective and therapeutic services for children.

"But there are some ways in which RHD programs are similar, because of the way we want to deliver services. Family engagement is a huge initiative in all our programs, because we know we can't treat the child in isolation. And being trauma-informed is extremely important."

RHD's Children's Services have four main cornerstones:

**Training:** RHD staff receive the best and most up-to-date trainings available, so that RHD programs for children are always delivering most informed and highest quality service.

Staff at CAPP, for example, go through a series of trainings with the Philadelphia Department of Community Behavioral Health (CBH) that focus on crisis prevention/intervention/management, as well as clinical course formulation, treatment planning and clinical documentation. CAPP is one of three acute partial hospitalization programs in the city, and with the help of CBH makes sure its staff is prepared to provide services for children who often have acute behavioral health challenges. CAPP staff goes through continuous trainings to best support the children the program serves.

"In all RHD educational programs, our teachers are certified teachers, and receive trainings and support through the school district just like every other district employee," Harrison said.

**Family Engagement:** "When a child is in crisis, the family is in crisis," said CAPP Director Zeliece Brown-Roache. "We have parent workshops that teach our model, so that we move the children and their families from crisis together. We teach how to de-escalate, and self-sooth." In fact, CAPP has begun an alumni workshop where families come back after their child has graduated from the program to offer support for other families and receive support if they need it.

"RHD's School Therapeutic Services program also has parent meetings in the schools, as a support to the traditional STS services we provide," Harrison said. "We work to make sure families are aware of the service through ongoing meetings so when that a need arises they are already familiar with the program. The staff at STS goes out in the community and engages the family, provides evaluations in the homes and in the communities. We want families to be part of the process from the start."

RHD's HiFi Wraparound reports that children who stay with the program for 180 days or more achieve 80 percent of their behavioral and/or educational goals, and engaging the family is a primary reason.

"HiFi has a much better connection between the school and family life, and brings resources to help connect us to each other," said Rebecca Delvin, a therapist at Roberto Clemente School. "Working with HiFi has helped resolve problems by getting everybody involved on the same page."

**Psychiatric services:** "Child psychiatry is a unique service that we're able to deliver in children's services," Harrison said. "We have built a team of psychiatrists that are able to support our programs.

"Our chief psychiatrist really sets a tone for that service for all of our psychiatrists, and provides supervision and oversight of that process. That collaboration provides a level of consistency of care. Our child psychiatry department is very involved with the staff in providing clinical support."

**Educational and scholastic advancement:** "Where kids enter an RHD program, we have collaborated with school officials to make sure we're teaching grade-appropriate material, and we obtain Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) from the school district so we know what supports the children need to ensure continuity in their education," Harrison said. "We work closely with the school district to make sure children maintain their grades. We don't want kids to go back to their schools feeling like they missed something academically just because they had to deal with a crisis."

Stepping Stones is the only long-term Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) in Philadelphia that serves children with a history of emotional and behavioral challenges. Last year Stepping Stones was able to add a new a new Interactive Learning and Technology Center thanks to a gift from National Penn, and saw significant dividends. Student vocabulary and comprehension increased by 1.0 grade levels and math scores increased 0.8 grade levels.

"That record of success is why RHD Children's programs keep expanding, growing both in terms of the number of children RHD is able to serve and the kinds of supports RHD can offer. Early Intervention began as a program that provided treatment for infants and toddlers, birth to three years, with
developmental delays. With a family focus on skill training to enhance developmental skills of the child, Early Intervention has expanded in terms of the ages it can serve and received consistently positive feedback from families.

That doesn't come easily, or quickly. Sade Edwards, Program Supervisor at Early Intervention, spent weeks working with a child named Anthony who needed assistance with speech but was reluctant to engage with her.

“When I tried to interact with him he would shut down,” Edwards said. “I decided I would sit within Anthony’s eyesight and engage in activities with his classmates while using them as intermediaries to get responses out of Anthony. Over time Anthony would interact with me periodically, but always seemed to need time to warm up.

“Then one day when I walked in, Anthony came right up to me, said “Hi,” took my hand and said “Come on,” and then directed me to sit on floor with him to play. He and I played and talked together for the entire session. With patience and time, you can make great achievements happen. If you give Anthony time, he can now respond to any request. He’s engaging with his teachers and making great strides.”

For more information on RHD’s Children’s Services, including information on referrals, treatment methods and admission criteria, please visit us online at: www.rhd.org/rhdkids
Marcus Notaro, winemaker at Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars, was touring RHD’s Center for Creative Works and was particularly excited to see the new woodworking area. Marcus is an elite winemaker, but his background is in engineering. He chatted with one artist about her work and her process and said: “You’re an engineer — just like me!”

Marcus was here to host RHD’s annual Main Line Wine Gala, which celebrates the world’s most innovative winemakers in an event that benefits RHD’s innovative human services. We were thrilled that Marcus could be our honorary chair this year, and that he wanted to see the Center for Creative Works (one of the RHD programs that would benefit from the gala).

I always love to see people’s reactions when they walk in the door of one of our programs — they often don’t know what to expect, but they always find something they connect with on a personal level.

“It is a humbling honor to be here,” Marcus said. “I’m very, very proud to help support RHD’s work. The creativity and the energy at (the Center for Creative Works) is amazing to see.”

Center for Creative Works Director Lori Bartol, after giving Marcus a tour of the art studio, presented him with a gift of one piece he’d admired. Marcus purchased another piece he liked.

At RHD, we’re thankful that thousands of people each year find services, people and experiences in our programs that they like and want to support. This year’s wine gala fundraiser benefited single mothers and their children, as they work to break the cycle of homelessness, veterans who need support reintegrating into society after serving our country, and artists with intellectual disabilities in a unique creative arts studio. Because RHD has sought to serve a very diverse population over the years, all of these programs look very different. But they all represent RHD’s commitment to highest quality service.

At RHD we take great pride in focusing on the person in the service, and creating unique, innovative and effective services that support that person.

The people we are honored to serve rely on the generosity and support of people who believe that every person, no matter what challenges they face, should be treated with dignity and have the opportunity to develop their full potential.

Whether it is a wine gala fundraiser or the generosity of a single donor making a gift, the people who support RHD help create brighter futures for others, and allow RHD to continue developing caring, effective and innovative programs that support people as they build better lives for themselves.

RHD has been, and will always be, a place that asks every day: “What else can we do for our community?” In this way, RHD effects change, one community — or even one person — at a time.

No one does it alone. At RHD, you’re our partner. We work together. And together, we’re better.
RHD’s Healing Ajax finds supporter in Ken Casey of Dropkick Murphys

Ken Casey of the Dropkick Murphys and an array of celebrity guests gathered at the Woodcrest Country Club September 9 for the Fourth Annual Claddagh Fund Celebrity Golf Tournament. This year the Claddagh Fund selected RHD’s Healing Ajax as one of its veterans’ charities.

Casey founded the Claddagh Fund in 2009. Casey is the bass guitarist, primary songwriter, and one of the lead singers of the Boston Celtic punk group, which he started in 1996 with guitarist Rick Barton and singer Mike McColgan. Casey is the only original member of the Dropkick Murphys left in the band. Casey, his bandmates and their families have supported charities throughout the history of the band. Understanding the power of their position to harness the passion and generosity of their fans, the Claddagh Fund was created to raise funds for, and broaden their impact on, worthy nonprofits that support the most vulnerable individuals in our communities.

Using a grassroots approach to fundraising, the Claddagh Fund supports community-based nonprofits, focusing on children and veterans organizations and programs that support alcohol and drug rehabilitation in cities across the country and around the world.

RHD founded Healing Ajax in 2009 to respond to the needs of veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan. The Healing Ajax peer-to-peer model lends itself to all veterans who are dealing with PTSD, depression, or other behavioral health challenges as a consequence of their military service. “This is a great program that really makes a difference,” Casey said. “We’re proud to support it.”

“We’re honored to be part of the Claddagh Fund’s support of our nation’s veterans,” Healing Ajax Director Tom Wagner said. “Ken Casey’s generosity and commitment to veterans will have a lasting impact at Healing Ajax.”

The Claddagh Fund is making a five-year commitment to Healing Ajax, with a total contribution of $25,000. This generous gift will help fund vital services including initial one-on-one assessments, periodic reassements, participation in a weekly psycho-educational trauma-informed peer group (TREM), and referral to other services, if needed, such as substance abuse treatment and veterans’ benefits.

Tim, a combat veteran who served in Iraq, said: ‘I’ve gone to a lot of different places for a lot of different treatment. With Healing Ajax, I’ve found a home and a place that really works for me.”

Led by Wagner, a trauma-trained Army veteran, Healing Ajax is an innovative approach to helping Iraq, Afghanistan and other war veterans reintegrate into society. At Healing Ajax peer support groups, veterans successfully share their traumatic events and coping skills with their comrades who are going through similar experiences.

It’s veterans helping veterans, making sure their brothers and sisters don’t feel alone, giving them a support network, and helping them get the assistance they need through trauma-informed, veteran-to-veteran support groups that focus on a variety of topics such as trust, anger, loss, hope, positive problem solving and more.

“In many cases veterans find that only a fellow veteran can truly appreciate what they’re going through,” Wagner said. “Our only goal is to serve those who have so selflessly served our country.”
Giving thanks with RHD

Stephanie Dowd, Director of RHD Tri-County Supportive Housing, and Kristen Tahaney, Assistant Director, were able to create a Thanksgiving feast for the individuals they support thanks to a unique collaboration in their community. RHD Tri-County Supportive Housing offers community-based flexible services in an attempt to help people develop and maintain the life skills required to sustain successful living in the community. Read more on how the staff at RHD Tri-County made this holiday celebration happen at www.rhd.org/thanksgiving.

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About Resources for Human Development

A national human services nonprofit founded in 1970, Resources for Human Development serves tens of thousands of people of all abilities with caring, quality services. Whether taking the lead or partnering with local government and community leaders, RHD builds better lives, families and communities.

RHD Children’s Services help create new generations of ‘Comeback Kids’

Ken Casey of Dropkick Murphys supports RHD’s Healing Ajax.

Ella, a client at RHD’s DeFuniak Springs, earns employee award.

Your vendors have done something heroic.

Richard Gere meets RHD’s One Step Away.

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