

# 'You're the real hero'

## Richard Gere talks with RHD's *One Step Away*

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."

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**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."



### THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NONPROFIT RESOURCES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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RHD is a pioneer in creating unique, effective children's services that have helped thousands of children and their families achieve their behavioral and educational goals





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MyRHD is published quarterly, mailed to supporters, donors and government officials. It is meant to inform about RHD's activities, innovations and successes in the more than 160 human-services programs it operates throughout the country. If you wish to unsubscribe to MyRHD, please email [info@rhd.org](mailto:info@rhd.org) or write us at the address above.

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## 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."



Al B. For | photo



**One step away the street:** (Top) *One Step Away* Director Emily Taylor and vendor Jerry Tucker pose with actor Richard Gere at the premier of the film *Time Out Of Mind* in which Gere stars as a man experiencing homelessness. (Bottom) Richard Gere and director Oren Moverman were part of a panel that discussed the current state of homelessness before the premier of the film.



# Employee of the year



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

Everybody knows Ella.

When Ella walks into the Healthmark Regional Medical Center for her job in the hospital's kitchen, people at every step along the way wave and say hello. This summer they added "Congratulations!" Ella got a job in the hospital's dietary department 20 years ago with the help of RHD DeFuniak Springs, but she went above and beyond to make the job her own. And this year she was recognized as the hospital's employee of the year.

"If I had two Ellas in here, I wouldn't need anybody else," said Dietary Supervisor Pat Pryor. "She's so hard-working — never grumps, never gripes, always smiling. We love our Ella.

"Her original job was washing dishes, but she does everything. She mops, she does stock, she puts everything up, she cooks, she cleans the fryer, she serves on the line. She'll tell you her job title is 'dishwasher,' but she shouldn't have that job title. She does way more than that. She does everything."

Ella has been a client at RHD DeFuniak Springs, a community-based clubhouse model and day program serving adults with developmental disabilities, since RHD founded the program.

DeFuniak Springs includes training in activities of daily living, pre-vocational skills, job exploration, volunteer services, work enclaves, community resource utilization, community organization participation, recreation skills, residential rehabilitation, respite care, and personal care services. In 2002, the program expanded to provide supported living services.

"We've seen her grow so much. Everybody's proud of her," said DeFuniak Springs Co-Director Sandra Spann. "She went from living with her mom to living in her own place. She raised her son, and supported him through high school. She's always had this job, always liked to work.

"At the start, I was out there all the time. We helped a lot when she first got the job, because it was a special training and job program. But finally her boss called me and said: Ella is doing an awesome job, can we just go ahead and hire her as a regular employee? That point where Ella didn't need us so much, that's what we want."

Ella needed support in everything from social skills to job skills, from how to dress appropriately to showing up on time. The staff at DeFuniak Springs worked diligently to support her, and her job offered opportunity for independence. Ella threw herself into it. The harder she worked, the more responsibility she got — and as she became empowered at work, Ella grew in her personal life as well.

"RHD helped me a lot, and I'm so glad I have my job," Ella said. "I love working at the hospital. I like working with the patients. People in the hospital, you want to help make them feel better. I like taking them their food, and I talk to them. I like working with everybody. I love my boss, Pat. I do anything she asks me."



**On the job:** Ella, a client at RHD DeFuniak Springs, has excelled in her job in the dietary department at Healthmark Regional Medical Center.

For a time Ella was showing up on her days off, just in case she was needed ("I practically have to make her take days off," Pryor said, with a laugh. "She loves to be here"). She loved it so much, without any thought of recognition, that the day when Pryor told her the hospital administrator wanted to see her, she panicked.

"I said: Why?" Ella said. "What did I do? Am I in trouble?"

She wasn't. Gerald Beard, chief operating officer of Healthmark Regional Medical Center, was waiting with news that Ella had been awarded Employee of the Month for January. That honor qualified her for the Employee of the Year award, and in a unanimous vote of the hospital's department, Beard had the pleasure of presenting her with the Employee of the Year award at a ceremony in June. It was the first time in the hospital's history they honored a member of the dietary department. They'd kept the outcome a secret, and surprised Ella with flowers. Beard attempted to give a speech, but choked up midway through it.

"One of our managers had to help me," Beard said. "I knew I couldn't do it without breaking up."

Department director John Ard, in helping present Ella with the award, said: "Ella is one of the most dedicated people I have ever met. She often calls in to see if she is needed. She gets along with everybody, and is a pleasure to work with. Ella is a fine person and a wonderful employee. We are all very proud of her."

First among the values that guide RHD is a belief in the fundamental dignity of each human being. For many people the opportunity to attain employment is a key element of self-esteem and dignity — so RHD programs



across the country make a commitment to helping provide that opportunity, through job training and a dedication to supporting people in attaining jobs in the community.

People with intellectual disabilities, or mental health challenges, or who are re-integrating into society after involvement with the criminal justice system, or who are working to overcome any number of challenges as they seek to attain meaningful employment in their community, are finding support at RHD.

Not everyone gets an award for it, of course — but Ella's work to overcome her challenges to attain, keep, and excel in her job with the support of staff at DeFuniak Springs is something worth celebrating.

"There are not words for how much she's grown," Spann said. "She's just amazing, and we're very proud of her."





# RHD's Comeback Kids

RHD is a pioneer in creating a diverse array of unique, effective children's services that have helped thousands of children and their families achieve their behavioral and educational goals

**R**heem 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 caring, effective support at RHD that has helped them achieve their behavioral and educational goals. As they've achieved that 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 A's and B's. 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 Zelice 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-soothe."

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 that when 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 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](http://www.rhd.org/rhdkids)*





# Thank you for making this a very good year

The generous support RHD receives from many different places, including this year's Main Line Wine Gala, helps create brighter futures for the individuals RHD serves

Dyann Roth, CEO of Resources for Human Development



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.



**Main Line Wine Gala:** From top, Marcus Notaro, winemaker at Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, visited RHD's Center for Creative Works and spent time with several artists with intellectual disabilities. Marcus was the honorary chair at this year's Main Line Wine Gala, which benefits RHD programs. Among the guests supporting the wine gala was Lisa Yang, whose son Doug is thriving as an artist at the Center for Creative Works.



# CHANGING LIVES, MAKING HEADLINES

For more on these stories and other news about RHD's innovative programs around the country serving people of all abilities, please visit the media center at [www.rhd.org](http://www.rhd.org).

## Mike Gold of RHD's FaSST/Connections honored as XCEL Case Manager of the Year at 2015 national case management conference in New Orleans

Michael Gold, a supervisor at RHD's FaSST/Connections, was honored as the XCEL Case Manager of the Year at the National Association of Case Management Conference.

Michael has been providing Case Management to people experiencing homelessness in Philadelphia for more than seven years. While working in the shelter system, Michael was able to identify additional needs for individuals he was supporting. Michael identified past trauma as a common barrier for individuals who were homeless. He utilized the Men's Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (MTREM) as a successful evidence-based approach to better serve the homeless population. As a strong advocate for trauma-informed care he has successfully facilitated MTRM groups for the homeless population, veterans, and individuals in Permanent Support Housing. Michael also played a key role in the mental health system transformation in Philadelphia, providing Intensive Case Management to individuals transitioning from congregate living into independent housing.

FaSST/Connections is a behavioral health care unit that provides evaluation, linkage, and coordination of services to individuals and families living in various shelters. FaSST/Connections' primary outcome is to engage families with a history of mental health problems and/or substance abuse. Families receive linkages to various programs such as mental health, drug and alcohol treatment, housing referrals, legal services as well as counseling and consultation with FaSST/Connections staff and other agencies including shelter staff.

## RHD staff from Mainstay Community Services, Mandela and Visions recognized as 'Points of Transformation' at DBHIDS Celebration

Four RHD employees were honored with nominations for the 2015 Points of Transformation Awards by the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services.

The Points of Transformation Awards provides DBHIDS an opportunity to recognize direct support staff in provider organizations who have served as models of excellence, who show compassion, value growth and achievement of those served, and have committed their careers to supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities. This year four RHD employees were honored with honorable mentions:

Therapeutic Residential Specialist Mario Edney and Clinical Coordinator Reese Lessig of Mainstay Community Services, Medical Coordinator Margo Johnson of Mandela, and Residential Advisor Joyce Smith of Visions.

## RHD presents second annual "Working With Voices" with Ronald Coleman and Karen Taylor, pioneers of worldwide hearing voices movement

RHD held the 2nd Annual Working with Voices: Listening and Gaining Understanding, featuring Ron Coleman and Karen Taylor, two of the world's pioneers of the Hearing Voices Movement, October 28-30 at the RHD Central Office in Philadelphia. Through trainings and a public town hall-style meeting, Ron and Karen shared their work on a cutting-edge recovery model that helps people who hear voices, and their friends, families and caregivers, work through difficult situations to build better lives for themselves. The trainings featured an introduction to working with voices, along with more in-depth workshops for key workers and voice hearers to learn and work together.

RHD has become a leader in developing hearing voices trainings.

*The Philadelphia Inquirer* covered the workshops at RHD, in a story titled: "Hearing voices, and living with them."



## RHD Rhode Island holds state's first Outsider Art Fair for local artists

In conjunction with the 17th Annual Pawtucket Arts Festival, RHD Rhode Island presents the first annual Rhode Island Outsider Art Fair Saturday Sept. 19 at RHD Rhode Island's studio for artists with intellectual disabilities. Many of Rhode Island's premiere art centers, galleries and programs for artists with disabilities joined forces with RHD Rhode Island to present their work and wares at the same time, in the same place. The event was the first of its kind in Rhode Island.

The event received coverage in *The Providence Journal* and *Rhode Island Monthly*.

Nate Carroll, RHD-Rhode Island arts coordinator, told reporters that the term "outsider" has come to encompass many things.

"It's a somewhat controversial catch-all term," Carroll says. "It can mean art created outside academic art, self-taught artists, folk art, visionary art and it can be produced by people with or without disabilities. A large percentage of the artists have a disability, but the main focus is on the art itself"

Outsider art is gaining a following because it's "pure and honest and immediate," he says. "Generally speaking, you don't need an art background to enjoy it; it's often not conceptual in a contemporary way."

# RHD's Healing Ajax finds supporter in Ken Casey of Dropkick Murphys



**Support on the homefront:** Ken Casey, founder and lead singer of the rock group Dropkick Murphys (left), presents a check to RHD's Healing Ajax as part of Casey's Claddagh Fund golf tournament. Accepting are Healing Ajax director Tom Wagner (center) and Tim, an Iraq War Veteran.

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 veteran's 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 reassessments, 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](http://www.rhd.org/thanksgiving)



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## In this edition . . .



**1** RHD Children's Services help create new generations of 'Comeback Kids'

## 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 every year with caring, effective and innovative programs addressing intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral health, homelessness, addiction recovery and more. In partnership with local governments and those we serve, RHD builds better lives, families and communities.



**3** Ella, a client at RHD's DeFuniak Springs, earns employee award



**7** Ken Casey of Dropkick Murphys supports RHD's Healing Ajax

## Plus more . . .



**1** Richard Gere meets RHD's One Step Away: 'Your vendors have done something heroic'