Alonda is seeking treatment for drug abuse, but as a transgender woman, she struggled to find a recovery center sensitive to her unique health needs. Fortunately, she discovered RHD’s Morris Home, where Alonda said she’s gaining “the confidence to live in my true self.”

This year Morris Home celebrates five years as the first residential recovery program in the country to offer comprehensive services specifically for trans- and gender-variant individuals. Today the pioneering facility continues to navigate new territory in trans-affirming care.

“We are the only inpatient rehab specifically for the trans community, and now more than ever it’s important that people have a space they can define as their own and know that they are safe,” Morris Home Director Laura Sorensen said.

This year Morris Home was honored by the Mayor’s Drug and Alcohol Executive Commission with the Treatment Provider Award, and Morris Home clients raised the Pride flag over City Hall to kick off LGBTQ history month.

“These experiences “really help our members reintegrate back into the community with a little support by their side,” said Sorensen.

For more on Morris Home, please visit: www.rhd.org/morrishome

RHD’s Morris Home celebrates five years
Angel’s story is an example of how the right support can make a difference. When Angel’s family found COSP (Corrective, Offender, Sexual Predator), things turned around. “It was very difficult trying to figure out what to do,” Kim said. “Angel was diagnosed with Cri-du-chat syndrome, a rare genetic chromosome condition characterized by cognitive, speech and motor delays, hyperactivity and aggression, as well as poor growth development. Angel is nine years old, and Kim said her condition was placing a toll on the family — and that COSP had made a tremendous difference. “It was very difficult trying to figure out what to do,” Kim said. “Angel’s behavioral issues made things so hectic for our family. Angel had a lot of head bashing. She was doing a lot of kicking, hair-pulling and spitting. We were just trying to love her and get past the denial, hurt and pain.”

When Angel’s family found COSP, things turned around. Angel has been working with a team led by Behavioral Specialist Consultant Gbolo Kowou and Therapeutic Staff Support Crystal Bachau-Sweat. “Angel was unable to effectively communicate when she first started with us,” said COSP Project Director Cheraghvand Satchell. “Since then, Gbolo and the team have introduced sign language with her. They’ve helped her eliminate screaming and Angel can withstand being in social situations. Her mom is also more aware of Angel’s triggers and how to address them. I’m proud of the progress Angel has made thanks to the hard work of the COSP team, especially Gbolo and Gboko.”

Angel’s story is an example of how the right support can make a huge difference for families of children with behavioral health needs. At RHD’s Children’s Services, thousands of families have found the support they need through RHD’s unique, effective children’s programs. RHD has a diverse continuum of services, with a solid network of resources and the ability to provide different services based on the needs of different populations. COSP provides intensive community-based services to children and adolescents (birth to age 21) who are emotionally or developmentally challenged. Service needs and treatment recommendations are based on team decisions to ensure that all clinical, educational, and social issues are identified. Master’s Level and Bachelor’s Level Professionals provide intensive support to children and adolescents with psychological, behavioral, and emotional needs in the home, school, and community. COSP’s multi-disciplinary approach to mental and behavioral health services includes psychological evaluations, case management, behavioral specialist consultations, mobile therapy and therapeutic staff support. Services are delivered to clients in a comprehensive way — after an initial psychological evaluation to assess the child’s mental and behavioral health needs, treatment recommendations are determined. The case manager then develops and implements a service coordination plan. The service plan is implemented by a mobile therapist who works with children and their families in a range of settings, and by a behavioral consultant who provides clinical direction and planning. The behavioral consultant also monitors the child’s progress, assesses the success of interventions, and if needed, modifies the child’s treatment plan. Finally, the therapeutic staff support person provides behavioral reinforcement and emotional support, along with time-structuring activities. In every program in RHD’s Children’s Services, a premium is placed on parent involvement. RHD believes that when a child is in crisis, the family is in crisis. Many RHD programs have parent workshops that teach how to de-escalate, and self-sooth. RHD’s approach is to move the children and their families from crisis together.

“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,” RHD regional director Selena Hartsen said. “We want families to be part of the process from the start.”

COSP currently supports 250 families, including Kim and Gregory, whose daughter Angel has been a long-time participant in the program. COSP participants are re-evaluated every six months to determine what kind of ongoing care they need, if any. As with most clients, the goal for Angel is to slowly transition out of the program, allowing her and her parents to use the skills they’ve been taught.

“I think about just having her walk beside me like any other child out there,” said Kim, talking about her future hopes for Angel. “It’s going to take a little while, but I believe it can happen.”

Making a difference at RHD

Genuardi Foundation is one of the generous donors impacting their community with support of RHD programs like CHOC

Larry Genuardi, President of the Genuardi Family Foundation, visited RHD’s Coordinated Homeless Outreach Center to see firsthand the impact of the foundation’s support for the program. Genuardi found himself in the community room at a round table talking with residents of CHOC. Genuardi leaned into the circle and asked the assembled group, “How long have you been here?” As he listened to their answers, additional residents tricked in and took seats. They were all eager to share their stories — and to say thank you.

“I appreciate everything you do,” said a current CHOC resident. “I thank God for this program and the meaningful contributions the Foundation has made.”

House on the old Norristown State Hospital grounds, CHOC is the only year-round emergency housing service to Montgomery County for single adults experiencing homelessness. The goal for residents of this 36-bed facility is to stay for three to four months while permanent housing is acquired. CHOC provides additional services, including street outreach, service counseling, transportation, rapid rehousing, meals, clothing, life skills, and behavioral counseling.

The Genuardi family owned Norristown-based Genuardi’s Family Markets until it was purchased by Safeway in 2001. With earnings from the sale of the Safeway, the Genuardi Family Foundation was created with a mission to give back to the communities that it served within a broad range of human service areas. In 17 years, the Genuardi Family Foundation has donated more than 17 million dollars to more than 408 charities.

The Genuardi Family Foundation has been a dedicated and consistent supporter of CHOC over several years. “It’s been very important to get to know the organizations that you’re giving to,” said Genuardi. “Supporting CHOC is important because it deals with daily needs within our community; to support people who need a little assistance so they are able to get on with their lives.”

“The Genuardi Family Foundation’s contributions to CHOC have had a tremendous impact; said CHOC director Genny O’Donnell.

“One of the things that helps people that lose housing is having stability,” O’Donnell said. “Knowing that there is some stability is strengthening. The Genuardi Foundation has contributed to creating a stable base for CHOC throughout the years.

“The support of the Genuardi Foundation has helped provide people with a safe place, where connections and healing can happen, where relationships can be born and where lives can be rebuilt.”

After the open forum with the residents concluded, O’Donnell spent time with Genuardi touring the newly renovated space. He listened intensely as she described how CHOC hopes to expand services and complete additional renovations. The Genuardi Family Foundation’s support of the many improvements at CHOC has given the program a brighter future, O’Donnell said.

“Genuardi has done phenomenal work taking care of the residents and running the program,” said Genuardi. “But like anything else, they have to keep looking at themselves to make sure they are achieving their goals and the meetings of the community as well as they can.”

The people RHD serves rely on the generosity of those who believe that even despite their challenges, should be treated with dignity and have the opportunity to develop their full potential. Donors who support RHD programs like CHOC are having a lasting impact on their communities, and allow RHD to continue developing caring, effective and innovative programs that help people in need build better lives for themselves.
RHD is transforming services in Nebraska, adopting a new residential model that places a premium on dignity, respect and independence.

When Michael was house-hunting for the home he’d move into with Son and Tony, two RHD clients who would join him in the Extended Family Home program at RHD Nebraska, he brought them with him to help make the choice.

“I wanted Son and Tony to see if it would work for them, to see where their rooms would be, because we want to be inclusive and make sure people have a choice,” Michael said. “It’s not so much they’re moving in with me; we’re moving in together. This is their home as much as it is my home."

“One of the benefits that they both enjoy is a sense of consistency. They don’t have to worry about which staff is coming here tomorrow, which staff is coming for the overnight. It’s all one. And that allows them to function as a family unit. It’s a good thing for them, and makes them comfortable.”

“Michael helps me, and I help him,” Son said. “It’s really my family. He’s in my heart.”

RHD’s Extended Family Home (EFH) model in Nebraska develops housing and community-based support services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. RHD combines housing and a full array of community supports to help individuals achieve stability and live successfully in the community. The RHD Extended Family Home program offers individuals the opportunity to live with a caregiver of their choice within the community, placing a premium on their quality of life.

Individuals supported in RHD’s Extended Family Home program gain the stability and independence that comes with living in the community in a family-oriented model, and receive support in expanding their circle of friends and family, pursuing community interests, and becoming active, full members of their communities.

“Tchatchasse-Ali had previously worked as staff in a group home, but said she appreciated the freedoms that working in the EFH model afforded her. "I am really grateful for this opportunity," Tchatchasse-Ali said. "In the EFH program, Zoey has been an incredible outlet for creativity and self-expression through visual arts, music, and community involvement."

"When we first heard about a day program that emphasized art and music, I thought: That sounds wonderful and amazing, but I don’t see how it would fit Billy," Dianne said. "But it’s been such an incredible blessing. We’ve been amazed and pleasantly surprised at what RHD and Valiant has been able to do with him. He’s the most successful artist of the bunch," Bill said. "It’s perfect for us. We’re a good fit.""

Billy and his family find a supportive, caring community at RHD Nebraska

Billy is autistic and nonverbal, and his behaviors can be very challenging. His parents, Dianne and Bill, went through a number of different providers before coming to RHD.

"RHD saved our family," Dianne said. "We were at the end of our rope," Bill said. "RHD stepped in at a very difficult time and picked up the load. It was a big weight off our shoulders, that we knew he was somewhere that was safe and where people were looking out for his interests."  

Most important, they said, is the support the family has gotten at RHD. "Let your Billy suffer a severe seizure and end up in intensive care on a ventilator, and see didn’t know if I was going to make it or not," Dianne said. "And one by one, all of his staff showed up. They all cared and stayed with us, just quietly hung out and kept vigil. We just realized we had this army for Billy, this army of loving caregivers.”

With support from staff at RHD’s Valiant Studios, a creative arts day program in Omaha, Billy now creates art that he sells at local shows — much to the delight of his family, many of whom are artists as well:

“I keep thinking my family — Billy has been the most successful artist of the bunch,” Bill said. “Everybody is amazed at what he does. I can’t emphasize how much his mood had changed; you see the joyfulness back.” At Valiant Studios, the staff introduced Billy to music classes, theater class and painting to see where his interests might lie. When Billy walks around the studio, every staff member reaches out for a high five. "At our studio, every 10 steps, it’s a different environment," studio director Jason Ackland said. "It’s constantly changing, it’s environment.

RHD Nebraska is home to two of RHD’s creative arts-based day programs: Low Yes Studios in Lincoln, and Valiant Studios. RHD creative arts studios broaden the horizons of people with intellectual disabilities and offer them the tools to define themselves as artists.

In those programs, RHD staff works to create an environment where people are safe and cared for, but also engaged and energized. All RHD people can take ownership of their work and that place in the community while being celebrated for their own unique style of outer art.

"We teach every kind of art that you can think of — pottery, oil painting, acrylic painting, woodworking, sculpture — and the vast majority of our staff has degrees in art," said Craig Casados, director of RHD’s Low Yes Studios. "We open up people’s eyes to what’s possible, to see the beauty in the world around them and in themselves — and how they can show that to other people through shows or in galleries, where they can be successful, earn income and be a shining part of their community."

"It’s not just our staff coming up with classes and things to teach — it’s sitting down with the clients and saying: What do you want to learn? And how can we help you?"

The work of RHD Nebraska artists is featured in local and national shows and galleries, where they earn income through the sale of their work and gain an outlet for creativity and self-expression through visual arts, music, and community involvement.

"When we first heard about a day program that emphasized art and music, I thought: That sounds wonderful and amazing, but I don’t see how it would fit Billy," Dianne said. "But it’s been such an incredible blessing. We’ve been amazed and pleasantly surprised at what RHD and Valiant has been able to do with him."

"Billy isn’t verbal, but we can tell how he feels, and we can see that things are going well. We can tell that he’s prospering here," Bill said. "If we stay here, there’s no way he’s going to leave."

"We’ll always be thankful for RHD, and mainly the people who are part of RHD and Valiant Studios and their willingness to make a place for Billy that meets his needs," Bill said. "It’s the people here; they’re special.”
believe that every person, despite their challenges, should have…

Each year, RHD serves tens of thousands of adults,…

We're always proud to share the stories of the people who…

Every effort is made to include all gifts. If we have inadvertently omitted yours, please…

WhenLarry Gernandi, President of the Gernandi Family
Foundation, came to RHD's Board of Directors, he
wanted to support the organization in a way that
honors his mother's memory and recognizes the
impact of the programs served by RHD. This gift,
voted to by the board, is a testament to the
commitment of one of RHD's biggest supporters.
This year we are especially grateful to Ms. Patricia
G. Krist for her support of the Lice Treatment Program.

Thank you for your support of RHD's services to your community.
Philly Pours

Special thanks to legendary NFL coach Dick Vermeil and celebrity chef Sylva Senat for serving as hosts for Philly Pours, a unique wine and food event that benefits RHD Children’s Services like RHD’s Children’s Outreach Services Program (see story, page 2). You can see more photos of the Philly Pours event on RHD’s website.

In this edition …

About Resources for Human Development

A national human services nonprofit founded in 1970, Resources for Human Development serves tens of thousands of children, adults, and families with a wide range of programs and services. Our work empowers individuals with disabilities, our families, and those we serve. RHD builds better lives, families, and communities.

1 Genuardi Foundation sees the impact of its generous support of RHD’s CHOC

2 RHD’s Morris Home celebrates five extraordinary years

3 RHD’s Children’s Outreach Services helps families heal

4 RHD Nebraska transforms services, placing a premium on dignity and respect

Plus more …