

Trying to Break Homelessness Cycle

By Stefanie Appel

ALLENTOWN, PA – Studies show that if a parent experiences homelessness or addiction, their children have a higher risk of suffering the same afflictions. That was the case for father and son, Kevin C. and Kevin E. They both experienced addiction and homelessness, but thankfully they both chose the Allentown Rescue Mission to help turn their lives around.

Kevin C. grew up in Delaware with his mother and siblings. He had a happy and active childhood attending family reunions, amusement parks, basketball games, and concerts. Meanwhile, his father, Kevin E., lived in Philadelphia. And although they did not live under the same roof, they maintained a relationship. If Kevin needed something, his father was there for him.

In his teens, Kevin's life started to parallel his father's. He began partying with older friends and family. He allowed peer pressure and the allure of the partying lifestyle to lead him down a path of self-destruction. Both men lived with their addiction for many years, living day-to-day, house-to-house. Until finally, they reached the same conclusion, six years apart. They were tired, tired of living a life without purpose. "It was time to grow up and be a responsible man. No more hurting my loved ones, like my mom or myself. I wanted to be a good example for other people to see", said Kevin C.

In 2015, Kevin E. was ready to put his life back together. With the help of his son, he found the Allentown Rescue Mission, where he flourished. In the shelter, Kevin saw how the Transformation Program restored homeless men. He joined the program, worked hard,

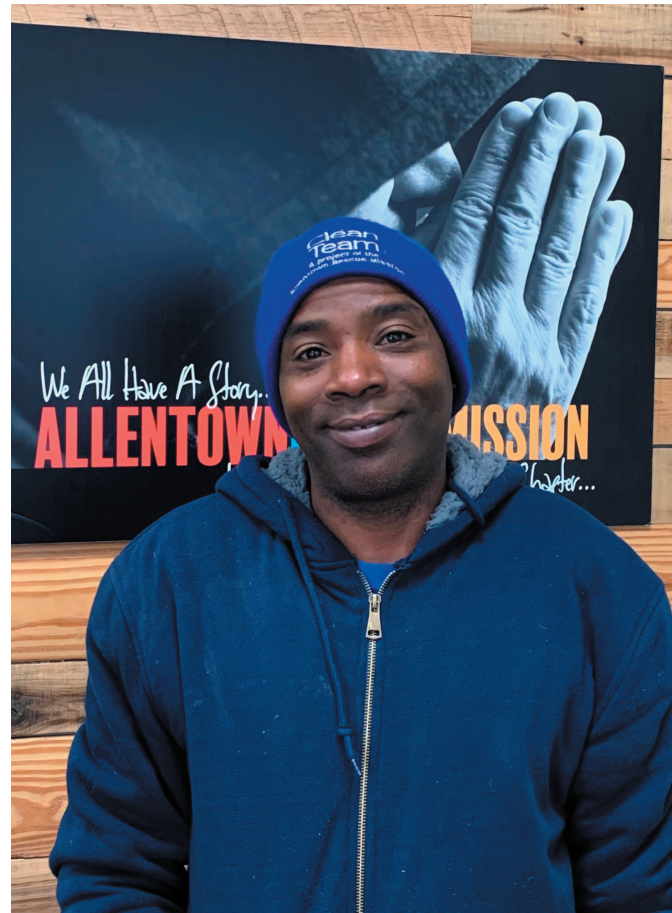
faced his demons, and graduated from the program. Afterward, he worked on the Clean Team Workforce until he saved enough money for an apartment and received a permanent job outside the Allentown Rescue Mission. His positive experience would go on to help his son. In 2021, the younger Kevin hit rock bottom. And this

time, it was the father who helped his son find the Allentown Rescue Mission. Having been there himself, Kevin E. trusted the Allentown Rescue Mission to help his son.

He told his son, "The Allentown Rescue Mission has everything you need. It's Christian-based, close to family, and after completing the program, you will be able to work for the Clean Team Workforce." Kevin C. currently works for the Clean Team Workforce while continuing to work on himself. He wants to be responsible and humble, the opposite of the man he used to be. Father and son share a stronger bond today than ever before. They have a more profound respect for each other, knowing what they have overcome.

The Allentown Rescue Mission, a 501c3, 123 bed non-profit homeless shelter has been providing shelter for homeless men since 1900. In addition to emergency shelter services (365 days a year), the Allentown Rescue Mission offers a residential life skills program, and transitional employment on the Clean Team Workforce that's available for hire to the community. The Clean Team Workforce pays the men above PA state minimum wage— helping them save a nest egg to transition back into the community. In a typical year, the Allentown Rescue Mission provides shelter services for over 946 men per year, and serves over 42,000 meals a year to men in need.

To refer someone to the Allentown Rescue Mission for services or to learn ways you can help make a difference please visit www.allentownrescuemission.org



PA MLK Day Continued from page 1

"The GIANT Company's generous donation to these nonprofits will give them the boost they need to continue to be good neighbors to our local community," said Representative Patty Kim, Central PA MLK Day of Service chair. "We are grateful for the investment and appreciate GIANT's partnership."

The GIANT Company is also donating \$10,000 to Eastern Minority Supplier Development Council (EMSDC) to promote and recruit

new minority businesses for certification and development through a new certification grant program, named after The GIANT Company, which will focus on food retail, consumer packaged goods, and support services companies. In addition, The Greater Harrisburg Area NAACP ACT-SO Program will receive \$5,000 to help encourage African American high school students through coaching and enrichment in the areas of sciences, humanities, the performing arts, the visual arts, and business entrepreneurship.

"Dr. King's dream of racial equality still resonates today throughout our local communities and with the work being done by organizations such as the ones we are supporting today," said Aaysha Noor, head of diversity and inclusion, The GIANT Company.

"The GIANT Company is committed to working together to effect long-lasting change and make a difference. In addition to supporting local community efforts, we are also funding internal efforts within our organization to create a culture of inclusion for all team members, supplier partners and customers with efforts focused on diversity and inclusion education, awareness, training and professional development."

Today's donations are part of The GIANT Company's overall \$500,000 commitment announced last fall and part of a \$5 million commitment made by parent company, Ahold Delhaize USA, to support racial equality and diversity and inclusion efforts. To date, local recipient organizations have included Urban League of Philadelphia, Boys & Girls Clubs, HACC – Central Pennsylvania's Community College, NAACP Pennsylvania, five YWCA Pennsylvania chapters, and the Borough of Steelton for its Steelton Unity Park.



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