

# **Thresholds History**

Thresholds was originally developed by Milton "Mickey" Burglass while he was incarcerated in a Louisiana prison in the mid-1960s. While teaching literacy to his fellow inmates, Burglass observed that many inmates had great difficulty solving problems and making personal decisions. This inability affected all aspects of their lives and often led to arrest and incarceration. He also found that these inmates learned to read more quickly if they were taught decision-making skills. The acquired decisional skills allowed them to decide how to pronounce a word rather than be intimidated by guessing wrongly.

After Burglass' release he attended Harvard University where, for his doctorate, he formalized his decision-making process into the highly successful program known as Thresholds. He founded his own



organization called Correctional Solutions, Inc. and helped to establish the first Thresholds in Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1972.

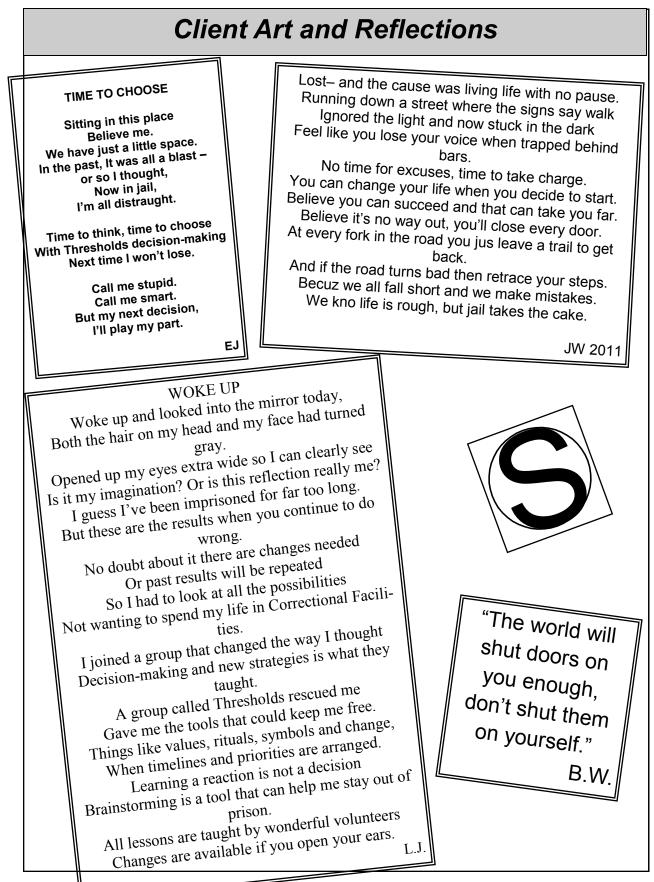
"There is no greater teacher than the jailhouse. I wouldn't want to go back for a hundred million dollars, but I wouldn't trade my years in prison for all the money in the world. If I hadn't gone to prison, I would have lived in one of my own making for the rest of my life. To remain a human being in the midst of this is the toughest task any-one ever undertakes. I feel for people who have never had the good fortune to hit bottom, as a result of their own doing, and recreate themselves from the dust.

All the things I have, and all I do, came with the realization that I could decide about my life. I'm still intoxicated with the thought that I am unique, important and irreplaceable, and that I have the power to decide. The deepest level of what it means to decide, and not to react, is that you are not a bit player in someone else's movie...not just a passenger, but an active participant...hooked up to something that has no beginning and no end...part of the process..able to create the future.

Thresholds came out of my experience in the jail, but I don't want to own it. It belongs to you; not from me but through me, and through you as a teacher, so that finding life can happen to others as it did to me. The way to say 'thank you' is to pass it on." - Dr. Milton Earl Burglass.

2011 Annual Report





4

#### Thresholds in Delaware County

## <u>Thresholds in Delaware County</u> <u>Volunteer Teachers for 2011</u>

Jerry Nowell\*

**Bob Rieck\* Tina Stanton\*** Christing Anneching Anna Becker Pat Cahill Fran Cook Gale Rankowski Gerry Young Tom Kane Maureen Sullivan **Richard Guariglia** Jeff Diksa Marty McCormack Terry Doyle Susan DiCerchio Lewis Gordon Michael DelVacchio James Drake Patricia Lewis Stacy O'Leary Stephen Tumolo Jen Carpenter Jim Holman **Bob Ashenfelder** Peg Fraatz

**Richard Miller** Bill Murphy\* **Connie Roggio\*** Barbara Kosierowski Joan Devine Fred Struckmeyer **Mike Prentice** Paige Morrison **David Wolovitz** Gudrun Weinberg Alisha Moses **Beth Kane Robin Thomas** Christina Crouse Pat McKinney **Rose Harper** Zakiya Islam/Sayida Ed McAndrews Gina Ruggieri Cindy Cooper Jen Shepper Joanne Prazenica Kim O'Rourke Stan Hyman

Maggie Arbuckle **Terry Reed** MaryLu Stephens\* Doug Williamson Andrea Damm Carmen Wilson Sr. M. George O'Reilly **Carol Colombo** Ron Burns Mary Ann Pezick **Elek Fenyes** Anthony Scott **Carolyn Snape Richard Smyth** Mary Ellen Goldfarb Patricia Bakey Barbara Hoegar Adele Malloy Key Murray **Shirley Salter Diane Eichler** Jessie Burcat Anna Maria Beatty Linda Johnson

Eddie, Tee, - lifers at SCI-Chester

\*taught at more than one facility

Total Teaching Hours for 2011 5,125 hours

# THRESHOLDS IN DELAWARE COUNTY

# Awards for outstanding service to Thresholds in 2011:

2011<u>Volunteer of the Year</u>: Mary Lu Stephens

<u>Volunteer of the Year, George W. Hill</u>: Carolyn Snape

<u>Volunteer of the Year, SCI-Chester</u>: Jerry Nowell

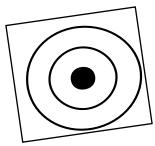
<u>Volunteer of the Year, Juv. Det. Ctr.</u>: Stacey O'Leary

> <u>New Volunteer of the Year</u>: Diane Eichler: SCI Chester

<u>Service to Thresholds:</u> James Swiggett, Program Manager Juvenile Detention Center

> <u>Terrie McKay Award:</u> Bob Rieck

#### **President's Report-2011**



Our organization is strong because of the commitment of our volunteers and supporters. Thresholds in Delaware County provides inmates with the six-step program that helps them change their thinking, and, therefore, can help them change their actions. In Step One, "Defining the Situation," we help our clients step back and develop subjective self-awareness. We, as an organization, also need to step back and look at what we do well, or need to do differently, to keep our organization strong.

This year we continued our work at SCI-Chester, George W. Hill Correctional Facility, and the Juvenile Detention Center, increasing the number of youth served at the detention center and the number of women who graduated at George W. Hill. Outreach programs were launched with a local school district and the Chester Library, and we began sending an electronic newsletter to acknowledge and inform our volunteers and supporters. Curriculum revision is on-going, as we continue to make improvements in instructional booklets and the *Re-Entry Directory*.

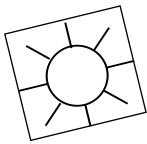
We need to increase the numbers of inmates served, recruit more teachers to do that, and continue our outreach. We need, always, to secure funding to continue with our work, and we need to better publicize our efforts. Our program gives inmates a thinking process that will afford them better lives, helping to stabilize families and communities, and we need to get that message out there! Our volunteer teachers, the heart and soul of Thresholds, are doing wonderful work, making the Thresholds mission a reality.

While we have been consistent in our mission, change is inevitable, and it certainly came to our organization this year. Connie Roggio, Program Manager and Coordinator of Thresholds in George W. Hill Correctional Facility since 2007, retired at the end of the year. At a celebratory dinner in December, we thanked Connie for the dedication and passion she brought to our organization, honoring her accomplishments. That evening, Connie passed the torch to Jerry Duffy, our new program manager, who started in January. She also serenaded us with George Jones' song, *Choices*, which she believes has special meaning for our clients as they prepare for re-entry.

I have also been using song lyrics as an artform with clients. So, at the end of this year of change, I'll quote from a song by Ashford and Simpson that I think describes what our Thresholds volunteers and supporters are doing: "Reach out and touch somebody's hand, make this world a better place, if you can . . .Take a little time out of your busy day to give encouragement to someone who's lost the way." When there is only despair, Thesholds volunteers help by extending a hand, offering a way to make life better. Together, all of us who contribute to this organization help our clients use change as a basis for moving forward and improving their lives. We can, and we do make this world a better place.

#### Mary Ellen Goldfarb President, Thresholds in Delaware County

# The Delaware County Juvenile Detention Center 2011 Summary



Every weekend at the Juvenile Detention Center presents a new challenge: Ivonna is 15 and pregnant; Ryan does drugs & his father is in jail; Angela has been abused by an uncle; Anthony's parents were both shot & he's a dealer; Sherry hated talking to adults until she joined our group.

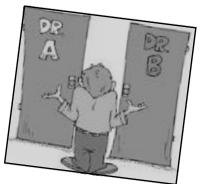
We are not about to change these kids' lives in two days. We will listen to them, help them deal with their problems and give them hope.

Jim Swiggett, the Program Manager, and other staff members provide a supportive environment, and select boys and girls who are open, respectful and serious.

Thirteen volunteers taught with us last year, including: Mary Ellen Goldfarb, Fran Cook, Connie Roggio, and Allison Murphy from Chester County Thresholds. Maggie Arbuckle had been forced to take a leave of absence because of the grave illness of her husband Joe. He has recovered and she's back! Stacey O'Leary and Charles Ruderman have become invaluable additions to the fabulous five: Chrissy, Bill, Bob, Mary Lu and Doug.

All together, we taught 55 young people in 2011, 15 girls and 40 boys. All graduated! I think it's safe to say that our team found teaching at the Juvenile Detention Center to be a most rewarding experience.

*Jerry Nowell* Program Director



#### 2011-2012 Thresholds Board of Directors

#### **OFFICERS**

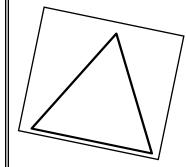
President—Mary Ellen Goldfarb Vice President—Bob Reick Secretary—Chrissy Annechino Treasurer—Bill Murphy

#### MEMBERS AT LARGE

Ron Burns Doug Williamson Carol Colombo Vanessa Bullock Charles Strickler

# George W. Hill Correctional Facility

#### 2011 SUMMARY



In December, when I first sat down with Connie to learn the requirements of my new position, the level of passion and dedication that our volunteers have became immediately clear to me. And when we started to discuss the highlights of 2011, I was surprised that so many people seemed to care so much about what happens to the men and women in our prisons.

Connie told me that the most important part of my position will be "the care and feeding of our volunteers." This was her way of saying that we have an amazing group of people who volunteer their time each week to come out to the prisons, so the least we can do is make sure that their experiences are as posi-

tive and convenient as possible. That has been my primary mission since I started.

When I first started working at Thresholds, I was introduced to so many of our teachers. Now, after being on the job a few months, the fog has lifted and I am really starting to get to know these volunteers and what they have meant to our organization. I'm inspired when I see people like Carolyn Snape, who not only teaches clients every cycle, but also teaches on Tuesday evenings in our Macro sessions and helps organize and present our Re-Entry program. Then there is Paige Morrison who, not only teaches, but is dedicated to making our Re-Entry program the most useful and beneficial that it can be for our clients. And I can't help but smile when I see Ron Burns and Pat Cahill who volunteer their time to teach both Micro and Macro every single week...that's quite a time commitment! And I know I can count on Gale Rankowski, along with Ron and Pat, to not only teach every cycle but to help me interview a whole new set of potential clients who want to enter the next Thresholds cycle.

Then I found out there were volunteers who have dedicated decades to Thresholds. People like Jerry Nowell and Fran Cook who have done so much for this organization that trying to detail it in this writing would be an effort in futility. And then there is someone like Dick Bergesen, who worked with both Thresholds in Delaware County and Thresholds in Chester County, at the same time, helping to ensure that each group was as great as it could be.

I'm amazed by our volunteers and couldn't possibly acknowledge every person who makes Thresholds what it is today, but I can say that they are not going unnoticed. In 2011, out of the 115 clients who storted Thresholds, our volu

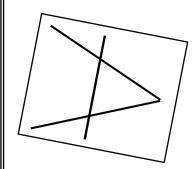
out of the 115 clients who started Thresholds, our volunteers taught and graduated 78 clients. That's a graduation rate about which our volunteers can be proud. It couldn't have been done without them.

I understand the importance of my mission, "the care and feeding of our volunteers", and I hope that I can continue to make sure that their time teaching in the prisons is as rewarding an experience as it can possibly be for them.

*Jerry Duffy* Program Director, GWHCF



## SCI CHESTER—2011 SUMMARY



The most common "do differently" comment in exit interviews from Thresholds graduates at SCI-Chester is to have more of it. At the same time, we consistently have more possible clients than available teachers and what clients say they like best is the oneon-one teaching. The policies of the Pennsylvania De-

partment of Corrections (DOC) makes it difficult at times, but the SCI administration is helpful and staff generally cooperative, though at times we wish they understood our program better, and that is something we are working on.

In 2011 there were five cycles of Thresholds classes at SCI-Chester. We received 101 new requests for the program, interviewed 84 men for participation, and 41 of these graduated and received certificates. Class sizes tended to be smaller than what we might wish for this past year. At times this was because numbers of requests were down as the men's stay at the institution were shorter and their time filled up with required programs. At other times we had fewer teachers available as former teachers retired from volunteering and the DOC was very slow to approve and clear our new volunteers to teach.

However, our waiting list is again a long one, and we have several new volunteers ready to serve: Diane Eichler has already taught a cycle at SCI-Chester, and Mark Ash and Marian Melchiorre who both trained in January are taking clients in the this April's cycle. Pat Derry who also trained in January is

still getting DOC requirements completed, but we hope will be teaching Thresholds soon. That is good news for Thresholds as well as for the men at SCI-Chester, and we give all these dedicated volunteers a warm welcome.

*Tina Stanton* SCI-Chester

# **Development Committee**

# 2011 Summary

As the new Development Coordinator of Thresholds in Delaware County, it has been my pleasure to work with the funding committee members including Mary Ellen Goldfarb, Fran Cook, Bill Murphy, Tina Stanton and our newest member Jerry Duffy. The committee members have been submitting requests to past supporters and new contacts to secure funding for materials for our classes, keep our staff and develop new creative ways to get our program to those who can use the information.

The City of Chester Economic Development Authority and United Way of Southeastern PA. continue to be our largest contributors. We were pleased to receive generous donations from several foundations and churches. A representative from The Brook Lenfest Foundation sat in on a Re-Entry Session at the DUI Building at The George W. Hill Correctional facility. After joining in on the discussion with the students, Mr. Richards commented on the importance of the program and emphasized that foundation would continue to fund Thresholds.

Funding is a challenging and rewarding aspect of any program. The Funding Committee would like to expand our contacts with resources and enter into new relationships with supporters and the community. We would appreciate any help you can provide, either by attending funding meetings or making your own contribution.

Thank you for all you give to Thresholds! And if you would like to join the Funding Committee, please contact the Thresholds office.

#### Carolyn Snape

Development Coordinator

# **Curriculum Committee**

# 2011 Summary

#### Two major accomplishments in 2011:

(1) The complete revision and update of the <u>Macro Teachers' Handbook.</u>
(2) The revision of, and additions to, the <u>Re-Entry Directory.</u>

We are very proud of these accomplishments

*Jerry Nowell* Chairman



#### The Terrie McKay Award

The Terrie McKay Award is presented to a Thresholds volunteer who has: taught both micros and macros, uses the decisional model in his/her own life, is an inspiration to other teachers, and embodies the "spirit and attributes of Terrie McKay."

So who is Terrie McKay? Terrie was a member of Delaware County Thresholds in most of the 1990s. She taught both micro and macro classes at the Hill, and was an important part of our Volunteer Training Workshops. She re-organized the macro schedule and was President of the Board. She died of cancer 11 years ago: March 14, 2001.

As a young person Terrie lived a wild and eventful life. She then found her soul mate (her husband Matthew), raised three children, was a school bus driver, and operated the family's painting business.

Terrie was truly one of a kind. Her clothing was unique and her hair styles ranged from

shoulder length to bald. She had strong opinions: despised the death penalty and believed fervently in the goodness of every person. She used the decisional model in her daily life and was devoted to meditation.

Terrie is remembered for her free spirit, her loving nature, originality and devotion to Thresholds. She often said, "Thresholds changed my life." She was unquestionably unique, important and irreplaceable.



Since 2002 the Terrie McKay award has been given to nine Thresholds volunteers. They are: Betty Green, Gerry Young, Jerry Nowell, Alan Stapleton, Fran Cook, Maggie Arbuckle, Terry Reed, Bill Murphy and Chrissy Annechino. This year we are proud to add the name of Bob Rieck to this list.

#### Thresholds in Delaware County 2011 In-Kind Contributions

The County of Delaware — Office space CEC—Technology and Supplies Neumann University — Training facilities Media Fellowship House— Meeting space Tom Sims—Communication Development Phil Damiani—Directory Assistance David DeKnight—Technology Assistance

# Thresholds Re-Entry at George W. Hill

## 2011 SUMMARY

"It isn't going to be easy." That's a given. But when men and women graduate from Thresholds and are armed with the tools to get a handle on the **situation**, focus on a **goal**, **develop** and **evaluate the possibilities** and, finally, to **decide** and **implement** their decisions, then they begin to make things happen! In 2009, the volunteer- led "Thresholds Reentry Program" was developed to assist our clients to do exactly that in planning for their release.

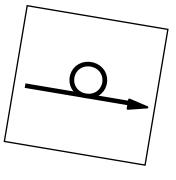
Every eight weeks, after the completion of the Macro/Micro cycles, volunteers meet with graduates and provide valuable information to help them see a goal through to its' fruition. By using the skills they have gained in Macro and Micro, combined with the Reentry resources, the men are encouraged to begin NOW to "connect the dots" between their lives "on the inside" and their new lives in the community.

With the help of the Thresholds Resource Directory, the Department of Corrections Subject Modules, and handouts we've gathered to address more personal and specific questions, the graduates are encouraged to expand their action plan, adding specific detail and keeping in mind that meeting their essential needs will take priority over their short term wants. One gentleman told us of how he used the Thresholds Directory to find housing. "It wasn't easy", but he made phone calls and wrote numerous letters to housing options describing his situation and developing relationships until, finally, he had lined up exactly where he would go upon release.

During the Reentry session, graduates are provided an opportunity to role play a difficult situation, such as discussing their criminal record with a potential employer or responding to a challenging situation that could lead to re-arrest. Also on the agenda are suggestions about scheduling, dealing with frustration, pacing oneself, and how to make the best first impression. Thanks to the feedback we receive from participants and the work of dedicated volunteers, the Reentry program is constantly evolving. We continue to update and make additions to the Directory, based on current knowledge and client input.

Thresholds is committed to giving our graduates the decision making skills necessary for success – to help them make the most of their time on the inside and to have every opportunity for fulfilling lives in the community. Reentry offers a "hand up" and our clients say "Thank you, thank you!" to the volunteers and funders who make it possible.

Paige Morrison Re-Entry Coordinator, GWHCF



## Gifts from Foundations, Churches and Associations in 2011

MA Brunner Fund (Sisters of the Precious Blood) St. Christopher's Episcopal Church City of Chester Economic Development Authority **Chester Monthly Meeting of Friends Delaware County Community Foundation Delaware County Medical Society** The Douty Foundation Ethel Sergeant Clark Foundation Grove Methodist Church **HBE** Foundation The Patricia Kind Foundation The William King Charitable Trust The Brooke Lenfest Foundation The Thayer Corporation United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania (Thresholds in Delaware County is a proud member of United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania Community Impact Partner Agencies)

We would also like to thank all individual contributors for their donations.

Working together we have made and continue to make changes in the lives of our students and our community.



Letter to a Teacher Mary LU; 3.25-12 I hope when this letter reaches your hands you find yourself in the very best of health mentally and physically. As for me, I'm doing pretty good thanks to all the threshold teachings you and Mr. Jeric beat into my head (Low). Life seems to be alot smoother ever since I started using the six step Model and that includes "card" situation as well. I now practice the whole threshold program in my every day living. Reople around me notice the changes in my attitude, and at first held there breath to see it it was a fluke but after they eventually turned purple, passed out and seen me still standing strong, they started to accept the new me. I'm just very appreciative and humble to have met you and Jerry. sometimes prison can be a place to meet some very wonderful person's such as you. I only wish that we could have met before I came to prison because God knows I need some positive influences in my life, and I still do. I hope that everything continues to work out for you and that you can continue blessing others with your knowledge and wisdoms cause you surely blessed me. Thank you so much and I pray that You " I can cross path's once again. Take care and stay strong because I will be doing the same.

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