

Open Doors

Volume 41 Issue 1

Spring 2025



HomeSharing®

Building Bonds and Changing Lives: Hakim and Gerard's HomeSharing Journey

by Joseph Lewis, MSW, Program Coordinator

Provider Hakim was referred to the HomeSharing by one of our current providers. Initially, he was unsure about participating due to his disability and homeownership status. He also felt hesitant since he had no family in the area and wanted to understand more about HomeSharing before making a decision.

To address his concerns, I scheduled a one-on-one in-person intake meeting with him. During our conversation, Hakim became more confident as I explained how HomeSharing works. He shared that he had been paralyzed due to a major stroke and was looking for companionship at home. When I informed him that HomeSharing could help him find a compatible match for companionship, he expressed great interest in becoming a Provider.

We proceeded with the intake, application, and interview processes. After carefully reviewing his request, I was able to find a suitable match for him. His new companion, Gerard, was thrilled about the opportunity.

Seeker Gerard Davies, originally from Seaside Heights, is a retired, wheelchair-bound, disabled widower and father who was searching for affordable housing. Facing the challenges of being both disabled and retired, Gerard hoped his family would assist him. At the time, he was living in an apartment in Seaside Heights with his daughter; however, their relationship had begun to drift apart, leaving him feeling worried and uncertain about his living situation.

Gerard learned about HomeSharing through the Ocean County Board of Social Services, but initially felt apprehensive about reaching out to us. Encouraged by the information he was provided, he eventually contacted HomeSharing, where I explained the program's process. As the conversation progressed, Gerard became noticeably more at ease and comfortable with completing the intake process.

I provided him with comprehensive information about HomeSharing, and guided him through the intake and application process. Throughout December, we diligently worked through the application, background check, and intake procedures to find him a suitable match. During his



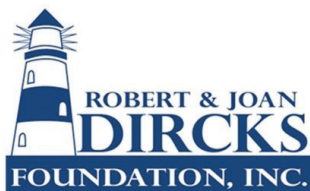
interview, I conducted a thorough assessment and identified a match that aligned with his preferences—someone who was also disabled, as he had requested.

Gerard connected with his match, Hakeem from Neptune, and after an initial coffee meeting, they bonded instantly. Gerard had specifically requested a placement in Neptune to remain close to his doctor and essential resources in Monmouth County.

When we conducted the match meeting, I observed a smooth and seamless transition between both parties and HomeSharing. The joy they shared was evident, and both expressed immense gratitude for being brought together. Ultimately, they successfully moved in together.

The match is successful, and both Hakim and Gerard are happy together. Both clients are overjoyed with the support HomeSharing provides to them, and grateful for the positive change it brought to their lives.

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From Our President

Colleen McCarthy



At the end of February, our long-time Social Worker, Jill Stein, left HomeSharing to pursue other ventures. We are grateful to Jill for all her work over the past several years on behalf of our HomeSharing clients.

We are very fortunate to now have Lena Suarez-Angelino on staff as our new Social Worker. Lena joined us in late February and has been

doing an amazing job for our clients. She is a bilingual Licensed Clinical Social Worker who obtained her Master of Social Work from Monmouth University in 2016. Since that time, she has worked as a mental health consultant and a mentor to social work students at Rutgers University as well as a private practice therapist.

Lena is working to expand the reach of HomeSharing matches and we are happy to have her on board..

Colleen McCarthy,
President Board of Trustees

From Our Executive Director

Steven Nagel



Welcome to the Spring 2025 Newsletter! Change is a constant, and HomeSharing is evolving along with it.

Farewell and Best Wishes

We extend our best wishes to Jill Stein, MSW who stepped down as our Director of Client Services on February 28th after eight years of dedicated service. Jill has made a lasting impact on our clients and community, and we wish her all the

best in her future endeavors!

Welcoming New Team Members

We are excited to introduce Lena Suarez, MSW, LCSW, who joined us on March 3rd as our new Social Worker/Case Manager. Lena earned her Master of Social Work (MSW) from Monmouth University in 2016 and brings a wealth of experience, including roles as a Psychiatric Social Worker, Bilingual Therapist, Mental Health Consultant, and Field Liaison for Rutgers University. She also runs her own private therapy practice. You can reach Lena at lena.suarez@homesharing.org.

We are also thrilled to welcome Ella Taylor to our Board of Trustees as our second Provider Representative. Ella has been a HomeSharing Provider for more than 30 years, making her our longest-serving provider. Her deep understanding of our mission makes her an invaluable addition to the board.

Joining our Development Committee is Rekha Parthasarathy, Vice President and Regional Manager at BCB Bank in Edison. Rekha is eager to contribute, particularly in supporting HomeSharing's efforts to meet the needs of senior clients in our community.

Joining our Advertising and Branding Committee is Candice Sparks. Candice is the Monmouth ACTS Coordinator for the Monmouth County Department of Health & Human Services. She also has a real estate background and her assistance to outreaching to these diverse communities will only help grow HomeSharing!

Navigating the Funding Landscape

As we progress through 2025, the role of federal funding continues to shape nonprofit organizations. While HomeSharing does not receive direct federal funding, many of the counties that support us do. We remain proactive and adaptable, ensuring that we can secure the resources necessary to fulfill our mission, no matter how funding landscapes shift.

The Power of Individual Giving

Your generous contributions make our work possible. Every donation, no matter the size, helps us continue serving those in need. Thank you for your past support — we appreciate your continued commitment to HomeSharing's mission!

Steven Nagel, Executive Director



Ramona D. and Virginia are one of HomeSharing's newest matches!

Lena Suarez Joins HomeSharing



My name is Lena Suarez, and I am a Master of Social Work, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and the proud new Case Manager at HomeSharing.

Beyond my role at HomeSharing, I am a bilingual international speaker, author, and burnout consultant, working with nonprofits, schools, and companies to foster well-being and resilience. My expertise has been featured in over 40

publications and guest interviews.

As a dedicated disability advocate for my son, I founded the Central Jersey Special Needs Community, a supportive network for caregivers and care providers.

Joining HomeSharing, Inc. allows me to further my commitment to community support by collaborating on initiatives that provide stable housing solutions for individuals and families in need.

Feel free to reach me at the office phone number or via email at lena.suarez@homesharing.org.

Welcome Our New 2025 Board Member

We are thrilled to welcome Ella W. Taylor to our 2025 Board of Directors!

Ella is retired from Rutgers University, where she dedicated 22 years to the Department of Faculty Affairs as a Database Administrator and Computer Programmer. In this role, she provided critical support and training to the President's Office, university faculty, and all six schools under the Rutgers umbrella. She was one of two programmers responsible for maintaining the Faculty Information System (FIS), a vital tool used across the university.

A long-time resident of Hillsborough, Ella has been a dedicated HomeSharing Provider for over 30 years, generously opening her home to numerous successful matches. Her deep understanding of our mission and unwavering commitment to the community make her a valuable addition to our board.

Please join us in warmly welcoming Ella to the board!



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HOMESHARING'S MISSION

HomeSharing's mission is to create affordable housing solutions. We match those seeking housing with those who need additional income or services to maintain their homes, while fostering independence and dignity.

HOMESHARING, INC.

The PeopleCare Center
120 Finderne Avenue, Bridgewater, NJ 08807
Phone: 908 526-4663 Fax: 908 526-6342
<https://homesharing.org>

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John and Shantoya are another of HomeSharing's newest matches!



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HomeSharing Veterans Pilot Initiative

HomeSharing is proud to announce a new partnership with the Northfield Bank Foundation, whose generous support is funding our new Veterans Pilot Initiative.

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by veterans —particularly as they age — HomeSharing has identified this group as a priority population in need of housing stability, support services, and social connection. Through this initiative, we are committed to helping veterans age in place or, when facing housing insecurity, find safe and supportive shared living arrangements with fellow veterans.

The program's primary goal is to establish a veteran-to-veteran matching system that promotes stable housing, enhances financial security, fosters companionship among those with shared life experiences, and connects participants with essential community resources.

The HomeSharing Veterans Pilot Initiative will focus on serving veterans in Central and Northern New Jersey. In collaboration with veterans organizations such as the VFW, the American Legion, and local Veterans Affairs facilities, we aim to reach those who are precariously housed or socially isolated.

We anticipate launching the initiative in May 2025 with the hiring of a part-time social worker to lead this important work.



Executive Director Steven Nagel is joined by provider Fran M. and Diane Senerchia, Executive Director of the Northfield Bank Foundation, at Fran's home to present the funding for the Veteran's Initiative.





Spring 2025

Dear Friend of HomeSharing,

These are uncertain times for non-profit organizations. HomeSharing depends on grants, fundraising events and Individual contributions to continue its work of providing affordable housing solutions to seekers and providers. At HomeSharing, we believe that everyone deserves a safe, stable and supportive place to call home. Day after day, we work diligently to connect individuals — seniors, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with financial difficulties, and those in need of companionship — with compatible housemates, creating life-changing shared housing arrangements.

There are still many individuals who need our help. The demand for affordable housing solutions is growing, and we cannot meet the need without the assistance of caring people like you. Please continue to assist us in our work by sending a donation via mail in the enclosed envelope; online through our **PayPal** link on our website www.homesharing.org/donation. or remember us while you shop through **RaiseRight** for your online purchases and in your local stores such as ShopRite, Home Depot, and Macy's. Your generosity enables us to facilitate matches, conduct community outreach, and provide resources that make successful home sharing arrangements possible.

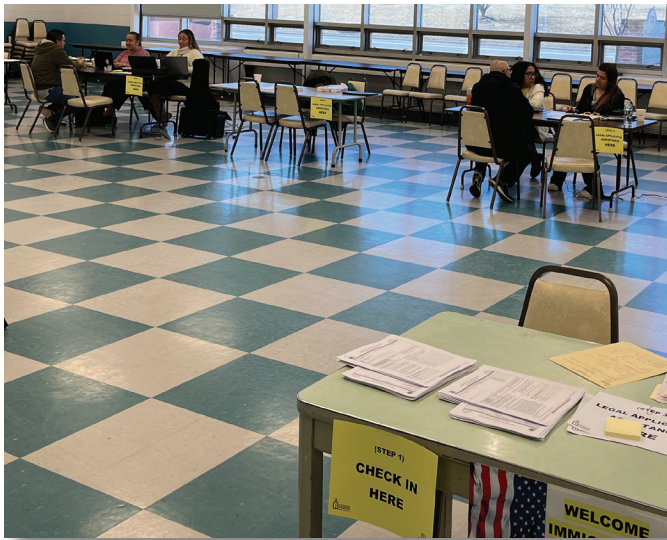
Please feel free to call us at 908-526-4663 or email us at info@homesharing.org with any questions or suggestions you may have or if you are interested in becoming one of our volunteers. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Colleen McCarthy
President, Board of Trustees

HomeSharing, Inc.
908-526-HOME (908-526-4663) FAX: 908-526-6342
The PeopleCare Center, 120 Finderne Ave., Bridgewater, NJ 08807
www.homesharing.org

HomeSharing in the Community



HomeSharing hosted an Immigration Forum with Catholic Charities — helping people with immigration issues and teaching them about our program.



Executive Director Steven Nagel presented to the Westfield Service League and thanked them for their support. He is pictured with League member Donna Risberg.



Somerset Regal Bank's CEO William P. Taylor (right) and President and COO Christopher Pribula (left) visit the HomeSharing office to personally deliver the Foundation's contribution.

Executive Director Steven Nagel accepts a gift from the Junior League of Summit and thanked them for their support.



HomeSharing hosted its second annual Senior Housing Expo at the Ocean County Library. Presenters included HomeSharing staff member Joseph Lewis, MSW, staff from the Affordable Housing Alliance, and a HomeSharing client.