

The Life of Paint Your Heart Out: 1991 – 2014

By Don Marske, September 2014

1 - Introduction

On April 28, 2014, as a result of a continuing decline of donations, the Paint Your Heart Out (PYHO) Board voted to shut down effective September 30, 2014. The purpose of this paper is to document the history of PYHO, Inc. We will review the founding of PYHO, the scope of the program, volunteers, donors, and most importantly - the clients we served.

2 - Founding

PYHOA was founded by Carolyn Griebe who served as its Executive Director until 2008. In 1991, PYHO began with a 3-year HUD grant through the City of Anaheim to refurbish homes of low-income elderly or disabled Anaheim homeowners. At that time, PYHO Anaheim (PYHOA) was launched as a program of Anaheim Beautiful, a charter organization of the City of Anaheim.

In 1994, PYHOA moved under the umbrella of the Anaheim Community Foundation (ACF). In 1999, due to its growth, ACF requested that PYHOA establish separate 501(c) (3) status. That status was accomplished in July 2000 with the formation of a private nonprofit corporation: Paint Your Heart Out Anaheim, Inc.



Carolyn Griebe

Mission and Vision

Throughout its 24 years, PYHO has been guided by a simple mission and vision.

Mission: Paint Your Heart Out is a volunteer-driven nonprofit organization that helps low-income seniors, the disabled, and veterans maintain their dignity, safety, and connections to the community by painting and providing homeowners with essential repairs and upkeep to their homes.

Vision: Paint Your Heart Out will further enhance and change those in our care – Restoring Hope... One Home at a Time.

Governing Board

Over the years, PYHO has been governed by a Board of leaders from the cities served. Charter Board members Poole, Star de Lucia, Judy Jurman, Tom Hollywood, Dave Seastrom, Pam Starr, Bill Taormina, Tom Vogt, and Tony de Lucia. as its President until 2008 and continues to serve as a Director 2008, Don Marske has served as President.



Tony de Lucia

the lives of

community included Jim Nunley, Dave Tony served today. Since



Staff

PYHO staff typically included an Executive Director, a Director, an Administrative Assistant, and part-time needed. As noted earlier, Carolyn Griebe served as Director until 2008. Since 2006, Debbie Schultz has served

Director and, since 2009, as both the Executive Director and Director. Andrea Manes served as the charter Program Director from 2002 until 2005, and continued to

serve PYHO in a variety of resource development activities until 2014.



Andrea Manes

Program handymen as Executive as Program Program

3 - The Program

Program Services

PYHO strived to maintain the dignity, safety, and connections to the community for the people we served. To achieve these goals, our primary service was to paint their house or mobile home. In addition, we also:

- Repaired gates, garage doors, and fences
- Performed lead abatement where needed
- Facilitated fire and environmental safety inspections
- Installed smoke carbon (CO) detectors
- Facilitated and appliance inspections



alarms and monoxide

energy audit efficiency

primary maintained where we

In addition to our services, we also an **AfterCare** program continued to do much more at each home, including:

- Cleaning up yard, landscape, and trimming trees
- Repairing trip hazards, wheel chair ramps, and hand rails
- Providing community luncheons for past clients to celebrate the program
- Facilitating access to other help agencies

Christmas luncheon for past clients – Anaheim White House

In doing all of this, we helped our clients preserve their independence and to be a better neighbor by improving the appearance and value of their homes.

Program Performance



PYHO originally served only the City of Anaheim. Since 2005, service was incrementally expanded to other Orange County cities now include homeowners in

Anaheim, Brea, Orange, Placentia, and Santa Ana.

The work of our volunteers has provided a significant physical improvement to the communities we serve. In recent years, it has been estimated that PYHO volunteers produced \$1.75 in community improvements for every \$1.00 of donor contributions. Over the 24 years of service, it is estimated that this has resulted in over \$10 million of real physical improvements to the communities served. Some of the improvements have been quite dramatic and appreciated by the neighbors as illustrated in these *before* and *after* photos.

The efficiency of our operation was an important metric to those who invested in PYHO. For nonprofits, the Better Business Bureau's standard for efficiency is having at least 70% of total expenses devoted to direct program activities. Thanks to the skilled efforts of our staff, PYHO has dramatically improved our performance to an audited 77% of our expenses consistently being spent on direct program activities.

Perhaps the most important performance metric has to be the number of homes painted. As of June 30, 2014, PYHO painted 1,130 homes, an average of 47 homes per year! That represents 1,130 homeowners who felt renewed hope and appreciation for themselves, their neighbors, and the volunteers who gave them a couple of weekends of help.

4 - Our

PYHO
50 houses
without the
over 1,500
volunteers.

Each team
20 to 30
lead by a



Volunteers

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teams came from a wide range of companies and organizations throughout the community. In the early years, all 50 homes were painted in the City of Anaheim over two weekends, the first to prep the house and the second a week later to paint the house. On prep and paint days, the teams were supported by several Area Supervisor volunteers. Later, the 50 homes were painted over several weekends and the cities served were expanded to include Placentia, Orange, Brea, and Santa Ana.

5 - Resource Development



Bruno Serato

The development of resources is the life blood of any nonprofit organization. As noted earlier, PYHO was launched with a grant from HUD. However, it took the hard work of the Board and staff to raise the funds necessary to sustain PYHO over the following 24 years. These funds were developed from fundraisers; foundation grants; corporate and individual donations; and, in the later years, Community Development Block Grants from the Cities of Placentia, Orange, Brea, and Santa Ana.

Of the many faithful donors, PYHO's anchor donor was Bruno Serato, owner of the Anaheim White House Restaurant. For many years, Bruno hosted an annual Celebrity Waiter Gala that was very popular and successful for PYHO, raising an estimated \$500,000 over the life of PYHO.

About 2007, our donors were hit with the recession resulting in a significant reduction in donations. In response, the Board acted to reduce staff time and utilize dwindling reserves to maintain the program. However, in the end, the prospect of resurrecting our donor base was deemed dim, which resulted in the decision to close down PYHO.

6 - The Clients

The whole purpose of PYHO was to serve our clients: the low-income elderly or disabled homeowners of the cities we served. As stated in our Mission... maintain their dignity, safety, and connections to the community.

The need for a service like PYHO is real. Our homeowner clients were low-income senior/disabled/veterans. The average client was 70 to over 90 years in age. They were living on a fixed income, usually \$800-\$1,200 a month, which placed them in the low- to extremely low-income category. A majority were widows. Several were so embarrassed by the condition of their home that they did not get out and talk to their neighbors.

A few of our homeowners were cited enforcement to make the necessary improvements to their homes. Yard peeling paint are the most common. Some of our clients were taken to court. Realtors have turned homeowners in to enforcement so the home they are in a nice neighborhood.

With so much stress, it is no wonder we were so appreciative of the work of our volunteers. For many, they first enjoyed having a

young people to visit with for a couple of days. Many prepared the noon meal for the paint team. Prep day usually resulted in a patchwork look to the home. But, by about 2:00 in the afternoon of paint day, the house was transformed into the beautiful house they remembered. It invariably brought tears to their eyes. Following are a couple of excerpts from Thank You notes.



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our clients volunteers. group of

".... Many attempts have been made over the past several years to get my father to accept help but all attempts failed. Your organization succeeded where we as a family have failed. You

allowed him to accept help and still maintain a sense of independence and dignity.” - *John T., son of a 93-year-old Anaheim homeowner*

“...‘Someday I am going to get my house painted,’ was a constant beat in my head. Since my husband’s death, other things seemed so much more important...Today, when I returned from church, I drove down my street slowly to delight in my lovely, clean little house ... Thank you, all you kind people who worked so hard. Thank you for the feeling of friendship that you relayed to an old woman who thought the best years were all behind her.” - *A Brea Homeowner*

7 - Summary

PYHO was founded in 1991 by Carolyn Griebe with a 3-year HUD grant through the City of Anaheim to refurbish homes of low-income elderly or disabled Anaheim homeowners. Over the years, PYHO has been governed by a Board of community leaders from the cities served. PYHO staff typically included an Executive Director, a Program Director, an Administrative Assistant, and part-time handymen as needed.

PYHO strived to maintain the dignity, safety, and connections to the community for the people we served. In achieving these goals, the work of our volunteers has provided significant physical improvements to the communities we served. Over the 24 years of service, it is estimated that this resulted in over \$10 million of real physical improvements.

The efficiency of our operation was an important metric to those who invested in PYHO. Thanks to the skilled efforts of our staff, 77 percent of our expenses were spent on direct program activities. However, the most important performance metric was the number of homes painted. As of June 30, 2014, PYHO painted 1,130 homes, an average of 47 homes per year!

PYHO couldn’t paint 50 houses per year without the support of over 1,500 enthusiastic volunteers. Each team consisted of 20 to 30 volunteers lead by a captain. The teams came from a wide range of companies and organizations throughout the community.

The development of resources is the life blood of any nonprofit organization. It took the hard work of the Board and staff to raise the funds necessary to sustain PYHO over the past 24 years. These funds were developed from fundraisers; foundation grants; corporate and individual donations; and, in the later years, Community Development Block Grants from the Cities of Placentia, Orange, Brea, and Santa Ana. About 2007, our donors were hit with the Great Recession resulting in a significant reduction in donations. In response, the Board acted to reduce staff time and utilize dwindling reserves to maintain the program. However, in the end, the prospect of resurrecting our donor base was deemed dim, which resulted in the decision to close down PYHO.

The whole purpose of PYHO was to serve our clients: the low-income elderly or disabled homeowners of the cities we served. The need for a service like PYHO is real. Our homeowner clients are low-income senior/disabled/veterans. The average client is 70 to over 90 years in age. They are living on a fixed income, usually \$800-\$1,200 a month, which places them in the low- to extremely low-income category. A majority are widows. Several are so embarrassed by the condition of their home that they did not get out and talk to their neighbors. With so much stress, it is no wonder our clients were so appreciative of the work of our volunteers.

On behalf of all of our donors, volunteers, staff, and Board members, I declare Mission accomplished... but interrupted. Fortunately, after launching PYHO 24 years ago, Anaheim Beautiful has agreed to pick

up the mission of PYHO to serve those in need in the community. It will no doubt be on a smaller scale; but, gladly, PYHO will continue live and serve.