

## A Day in the Life of Gerry Granelli A-HOME Property Manager

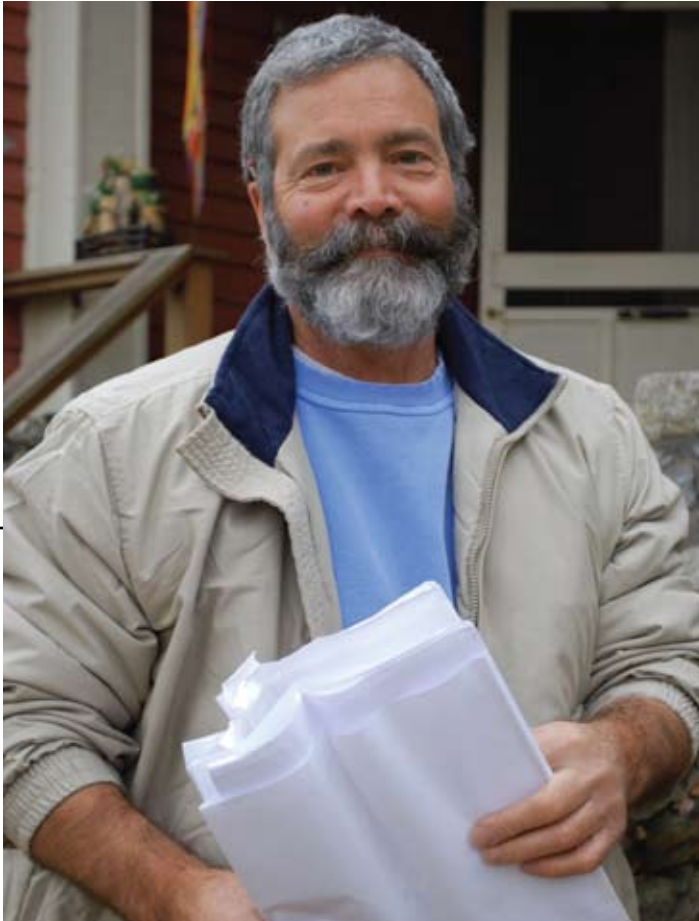


Photo by Nancy Gold

It is 8 am. Gerry Granelli, A-HOME's property manager, is checking voice mail and email as he reconfigures his day. By 8:15 he is on the phone with his staff coordinating the day's emergencies. The morning rendezvous takes place at a home with a heating issue, one of the most common problems this time of year. "Heating systems take time, are costly and impact the quality of life of our residents" said Gerry. "If we could replace our older units with ones that are more energy

efficient, easier to maintain and require less outside support, we could save money, enhance the quality of life and allow staff to concentrate on other maintenance issues."

Once the heating issue is dealt with, it is time to visit another house and fix a leaky faucet. Then it is off to the office, check email, voice mail and check in with other staff who hear from residents on a regular basis and might have information that the maintenance team could have missed.

Then it is back on the road, rearranging furniture, getting leaves picked up, cutting grass, making sure that last of the air conditioners has been removed and bringing in a few packages and grocery deliveries.

"It gives us a great sense of accomplishment and makes us feel good when we have made a resident happy, when we know they are living in a safe and secure home and when they look at us as a member of their extended family," says Gerry. "Many of these folks come to us when they are most vulnerable and it is our job to make them feel a sense of stability. They like it when they see the same person mowing the lawn every Thursday, they like it when they know they can ask us to stop the lawn mower and carry in the groceries, change a light bulb or just take a minute to talk."

"I will visit most of our houses today, check in on staff and contractors, make sure everything is put away and that we are on schedule for regular maintenance and on projects," Gerry says. "By the end of the day, it is pretty clear what has to be done for tomorrow, although it is always subject to change when you are dealing with real people's lives." As Gerry gets ready to go home he checks messages once more, touches base with his staff and coworkers and then closes down the computer.

"It's all in a day's work," he says as he gets in the car and heads for home, knowing that his beeper can go off at anytime calling him back to make sure his extended family is taken care of.

### FIRST CAROLINE BEEBE AWARD

Becki Fleischer of Pound Ridge became the first recipient of A-HOME's Caroline Beebe Award, presented to her at a reception on November 5 in the carriage house of the Waccabuc Country Club.

Saluting her were leaders from the Junior League of Northern Westchester, A-HOME board members and members of the board of Northern Westchester Hospital, Bedford Supervisor Lee Roberts, former County Legislator Ursula LaMotte and a host of others.

Joined by her husband Ari Fleischer, Becki seemed deeply

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Beebe Award Winner Becki Fleischer

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touched by the turnout and the warm wishes. She said that she wished she had met Caroline, but felt she was carrying on in the Beebe tradition by helping younger women make their way professionally and in volunteer service to the community. Becki was also presented with a proclamation by Westchester County Legislator and Majority Leader, Peter Harkham, a former president of the A-HOME board of directors.

Caroline, a long-time board member of A-HOME and a mentor to executive director and co-founder Joan Arnold, was a well-known community leader in Northern Westchester until her death in 2009. She was a bright light who told it like it was and pushed people to be their best, offering help every step of the way. Caroline loved a good party and the night lived up to her exacting expectations, with excellent food and an amazing array of people.

There were smiles all around and a new A-HOME tradition was launched...hope to see you next year! For bio information on Becki Fleischer and Caroline Beebe and to see additional photos, please visit us at [www.a-homehousing.org](http://www.a-homehousing.org)

## From the Executive Director

**Joan P. Arnold**



**A**s a teenager, it was a challenge to go clothes shopping with my mother. She believed that you shouldn't purchase something simply because you wanted it, but rather because you needed it. So I tailored my wardrobe into what I needed, not wanted, and boy, did I need a lot! On a recent episode of ABC's "Grey's Anatomy," the Chief of Staff challenges his staff with the prospect of winning a one million dollar grant competition. He asks each resident to give him a proposal for the grant, but he tells them to give him not what each department needs, but what is wanted.

Each department responds in a different way. One frames the proposal in terms of what is needed for pediatrics, one asks for what is needed to fund a novel orthopedic

procedure, another asks for funds to repair existing facilities, one asks for funding to cure Alzheimer's, and another, the ultimate winner of the competition, asks for funds to train the entire medical staff in emergency medicine.

When I ask A-HOME managers what they need, they come up with many things – all related to the residents and how best to ensure their safety and affordable living. When there are so many needs, it is hard to think about what is "wanted." A-HOME's property manager, Gerry Granelli, wants funds that will secure the safety of all of A-HOME's residents and the creation of new housing. What he needs for these properties is very immediate and direct. A list follows.

## SUSTAINABILITY NEEDS

**A**-HOME is working on becoming the most sustainable and environmentally-sound organization of its kind in the nation. For us to achieve this goal, we need your help. Here are some of the items we are looking to purchase over the next five years.

- Energy-efficient insulation in some of the older homes.

And perhaps:

- Solar panels and geothermal pumps.

We are hoping to install new windows and doors through a weatherization grant. With your help, we can be energy-efficient sooner, saving funds and saving our planet.

## GERRY'S LIST OF A-HOME NEEDS – CAN YOU HELP?

- a 48 inch commercial mower machine, as we cut nearly 10 acres of lawn weekly with a 21 inch mower
- a salt and sand spreader as many of our long driveways need repeated doses of salt and sand
- tree work done – each property has about \$1500 of tree work needed
- marking of electrical panels and transfer switches for generators in many of the houses
- one generator replacement and one portable generator

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## ERIN CHAVEZ DISCOVERS INDEPENDENCE AT A-HOME



If you had told Erin Chavez 7 or 8 years ago that she would soon be living on her own and working on a degree in marketing and management, she might have said that would never be possible! But here she is, enjoying her cozy apartment on the top floor of A-HOME's Wildwood Road house in Katonah and commuting by train to classes at the College of Westchester in White Plains.

Erin was first an A-HOME resident in South Salem while

she held various jobs working with children. She hurt her back and could no longer do childcare and had to go on disability. She left A-HOME for a while but moved into Wildwood in October, 2009,

"A-HOME has given me the confidence I've needed to become an independent person," says Erin. "With support from the staff at A-HOME, I've learned that I really can do things on my own and create a life for myself."

Erin says she loves living at Wildwood (A-HOME's newest property) because of its natural surroundings. "The other residents are friendly and I can walk everywhere – to the park, to the train and to shopping in Katonah."

This determined young woman dreams of opening her own day spa, using her college education to create her own business. Chances are good she will do just that.

## Heffner House in Mt. Kisco Provides A Good Home Base for "Oscar"

A long-time resident of Heffner House, who we will call "Oscar," knows Mt. Kisco like the back of his hand. He walks from one end of the village to the other, greeting old friends and making new ones.

"Oscar" worked at Northern Westchester Hospital for many years, but a series of three strokes ended his active work life. Since 1999, he has lived at A-HOME's Heffner House, which enables him to live independently with six other men in the home, while receiving support from A-HOME case management staff.

Having lost much of his ability to speak, "Oscar" needs help from A-HOME in dealing with his medical needs and with getting paperwork done to get government assistance with his rent and his health coverage.

One of A-HOME's oldest properties, Heffner House is located in a residential neighborhood in the heart of Mt.

Kisco. The house gives "Oscar" a great jumping off point for his walks to see doctors, friends and people all around Mt. Kisco who watch out for him. He agrees that he likes A-HOME because "they are always here for you."

See where Erin and "Oscar" live on A-HOME's website, [www.a-homehousing.org](http://www.a-homehousing.org).



Photos by Nancy Gold

## YOUR GENEROSITY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Is it possible that 2011 is just around the corner? April and the annual Gala celebrating our 25th anniversary seems like only yesterday. Recently the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* announced that charitable giving is down by the largest percentage in over 20 years, just when social and human services are most in need. The demand for our services is greater than ever and your support enables us to meet it.

A couple of weeks ago you should have received the A-HOME Annual Appeal. PLEASE respond to our request and make your contribution now – an envelope for your use is included with this newsletter.

Your investment in A-HOME gives hope to the many people we serve in Northern Westchester. By contributing now, you make it possible for us to plan for 2011 and ensure that the needs of our residents and our communities for affordable housing will be met.

On behalf of the staff, board of directors and our residents, we thank you for your continued generosity.

# At Home with A-HOME

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**PAID**  
White Plains, NY  
Permit No. 14178

*A Quarterly Newsletter*

*Winter 2010*

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In an effort to be more cost-effective, A-HOME is moving toward an e-newsletter. Please help us save money by receiving news from us electronically. Send your e-mail address to [info@a-homehousing.org](mailto:info@a-homehousing.org) with "Newsletter address" in the subject line. We promise not to share your e-address with anyone else. Thanks very much!

*A-HOME's newest project is "The Manse" in Briarcliff Manor. Read more about it in our next newsletter or soon online at [www.a-homehousing.org](http://www.a-homehousing.org).*



**A-HOME  
Spring Gala**

**A-HOME On Track!**  
Creating Homes to Rebuild Lives

**Save The Date**

**March 26th, 2011**  
Grand Prix New York  
Mount Kisco, NY

