Why did you join Project Renewal in 1976?

I was the chief social worker at Beth Israel’s substance use disorder treatment programs. I saw how the standard five-day hospital detoxification did nothing to help people break the cycle of addiction—and it was expensive. When I heard that Project Renewal (then Manhattan Bowery) received funding to start an experimental detox program, I jumped at the opportunity to become the director. The goal was to create a warm, engaging non-medical setting, with a strong support team of people in recovery to demonstrate that many individuals could safely withdraw from alcohol and drugs outside of a hospital. Its success led to New York State establishing crisis centers modeled after our approach.

How has Project Renewal evolved over the decades?

As the homeless population grew and changed, and we were seeing clients with more complex challenges, we needed to offer more programs. We started buying real estate and opening transitional and supportive housing to

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Project Renewal Deputy Director Stephanie Cowles (left) will retire in January 2020, after 44 years of service. Today, she oversees our substance use treatment and workforce development programs—including five programs at Third Street.

MILESTONES at our Third Street Men’s Shelter

1967
Decades before it becomes a men’s shelter, we open the city’s first voluntary medical detox for “public inebriates” at 8 East 3rd Street.

1968
We launch the Recovery Center, the city’s first outpatient clinic for homeless adults struggling with addiction.

1976
We add The Crisis Center, the nation’s first non-medical detox center.
**A Mother's Story:**

**NEXT STEP AT THIRD STREET**

When we first met Kelli, she couldn’t land or keep the kind of job she needed to provide for her young twin daughters. The Brooklyn native had what felt like insurmountable obstacles: she dropped out of high school and spent time cycling through shelters and jobs throughout her adult life.

"Coming in to Third Street every day for my internship taught me discipline," Kelli says. "It was amazing to be able to help people who struggle with the same challenges I went through."

When a residential aide position opened at Third Street, Kelli was offered the job and accepted. She joined a staff that included six other Next Step Internship Program graduates, all using their new skills—and empathy grounded in their own experiences—to help clients get back on their feet.

"There’s so much room at Project Renewal to grow," Kelli says. Her own story proves it. In August, she was offered a case manager position at our In Homes Now program, helping formerly homeless individuals thrive in their own apartments.

"Nothing for me has been easy, but I’m ecstatic about the growth I’ve seen in myself," she says. "There’s so much room at Project Renewal to grow." Kelli says. Her own story proves it. In August, she was offered a case manager position at our In Homes Now program, helping formerly homeless individuals thrive in their own apartments.

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"The Recovery Center has shown me that wellness can be a million different things—eating right, exercising, listening to music when I need to calm down, even learning to breathe the right way," he notes.

Now drug-free for over three months, he has a steady job delivering food and he has signed up for our Next Step Internship Program to pursue a career in human services. He plans to move into his own place in Queens.

"I’m a very proactive person and Project Renewal helped me be very proactive about recovery," Andrew says.

**A Veteran’s Story:**

**RECOVERY AT THIRD STREET**

Andrew’s promising career as a sonar technician in the Navy was cut short when he became addicted to crack cocaine at age 25. He lost not only his job, but also friends, financial stability, and the roof over his head.

Now, our Recovery Center at Third Street is helping Andrew get his life back in order. Founded in 1969, the Recovery Center was the nation’s first outpatient clinic for homeless adults struggling with addiction. For Andrew, who is still homeless, it is a welcoming place where he learns to cope with substance use disorder, bipolar disorder, and PTSD.

"The Recovery Center has shown me that wellness can be a million different things—eating right, exercising, listening to music when I need to calm down, even learning to breathe the right way," he notes.

Now drug-free for over three months, he has a steady job delivering food and he has signed up for our Next Step Internship Program to pursue a career in human services. He plans to move into his own place in Queens.

"I’m a very proactive person and Project Renewal helped me be very proactive about recovery," Andrew says. "The Recovery Center has shown me that wellness can be a million different things."
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provide clients with services where they live, on an on-going basis. Increasingly, our clients also needed jobs, so we expanded on our pioneering workforce development services with new initiatives, like our Culinary Arts Training Program at Third Street.

That’s the story of Project Renewal. As new needs emerged, we developed innovative, replicable and scalable programs to address them – like our shelter-based ambulatory detox unit, mobile medical vans, parole support program, shelter for homeless LGBTQ young adults, and many others.

What makes the Third Street Men’s Shelter so unique?

Aside from its history, the number of services all in one building sets Third Street apart. It’s really a one-stop shop, with shelter, case management, a primary care clinic, medical and non-medical detoxes, an outpatient recovery program, and a culinary arts training program. We talk about renewing lives with health, homes, and jobs and you really see all three of those elements at Third Street.

2016
We launch the Pre-Employment Program, which has helped nearly 200 residents of Third Street and our Kenton Hall Shelter find jobs.

2017
We unveil a new community garden and greenhouse to provide fresh vegetables and herbs for our Culinary Arts Training Program.

2018
We start a gut renovation of the Third Street kitchen to grow City Beet Kitchens’ operations.

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