

Stop hunger & see National treasures - all for just ten bucks

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For the Daily News



Housing giant K. Hovnanian will team up with Philadelphia-based nonprofit MANNA this Sunday to host "Tours for \$10," an afternoon of house tours at Old City's The National.

MANNA - Metropolitan Area Neighborhood Nutritional Alliance - is an organization which delivers tasty and nutritious meals to patients at acute nutritional risk due to disease. When founded, MANNA focused on HIV/AIDS patients, but has since expanded to include people with cancer.

"We were looking to do some charitable work in the city," explained Rick Buchholz, K. Hovnanian's area vice president for southeastern Pennsylvania, "so when one of our associates, who had been involved with MANNA in the past, told us about the organization, we were immediately interested. We visited the website and the more we learned, the more we wanted to help."

The company will match each \$10 ticket, which includes the self-guided tour of about 10 homes, plus refreshments.

Getting people to open their homes to the curious was surprisingly easy. The National, with its unique Old City mix of lofts and town homes, is full of charitable-minded residents. "We're still getting more interest as word of the event spreads," said Buchholz last week. "People are still signing up to host tours."

The National at Old City should attract visitors for the same reasons it has attracted its residents. Built respecting the local historic architecture, the homes offer views of the

Delaware River and Center City skylines, and are adjacent to Elfreth's Alley, the oldest continually inhabited residential street in the country.

Though this event is expected to bring in several thousand dollars, its value reaches beyond fundraising.

"The value is not just in the dollars," said MANNA CEO Richard Keaveney. "This event will introduce MANNA to a whole new group of people. The dollars are going to be great, but it's the relationships that are just as, if not more, significant in this event."

Because the founders of the 17-year-old organization are mostly in their 50s and 60s, that's the age of a majority of its volunteers and donors. Keaveney sees this event as a chance to expose younger people to its mission.

As a non-profit organization, MANNA needs to raise at least \$3.5 million a year, or \$15 per client per day, to deliver its 2000 meals daily. The organization counts on about 50 volunteers daily to supplement the 30-person paid staff. Increasing exposure, especially among young people, is essential to MANNA's continuing success.

"Our goal now, it sounds kind of corny, is to pass the torch of MANNA," commented Keaveney. "The mission of delivering nourishing meals is not going to go away, so MANNA always needs fresh blood and new friends."

"Tours for \$10" will be held at The National in Old City from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. Tickets will be available at The National's sale office, 130 N. Second Street (between Arch and Race), but advance purchase is encouraged. Call 215-627-6845 extension 210, or e-mail bclark@khov.com.

And contributions to MANNA are always accepted through its website at www.mannapa.org. *

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