It’s not every day that an organization turns 40. What better way for PPL to acknowledge such a major milestone than by throwing a party? That’s exactly what happened at the PPL 40th Anniversary Gala on September 29th. Hundreds of guests enjoyed a night of dinner, dancing, and story-sharing at the historic Depot Minneapolis. More than just a party, the Gala was also an opportunity to thank the community of donors and supporters who have, year in and year out, helped bring PPL’s mission to life.

It was a thrill to see so many familiar faces, but there were also plenty of people who were new to PPL. Guests mingled as they participated in a silent auction throughout the night. After a few rounds of bidding, it was time for a dinnertime program. Former Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton gave a keynote reflecting on

Story continued on page 3
2012 is coming to a close with more hopeful signs about the economy compared to the recent past, and one big cloud. The much discussed “fiscal cliff,” if unresolved, could set employment back in a significant way, experts tell us. The consequences are predicted to be so severe that it seems most likely a solution will be found. So I’m assuming our slow but building recovery will continue, and asking myself what that will mean in coming years for the people PPL serves through our employment and training programs.

In broad terms, the answer is that there is some good news, and many continued challenges.

One of our central strategies has been to partner closely with employers in key sectors of the economy, starting with healthcare in the late 90’s. This healthcare focus was an outgrowth of the “Phillips Partnership,” a premier public – private – community initiative still active in south Minneapolis. Initial employer partners in our Train to Work program—Abbott Northwestern and Children’s hospitals—have since been joined by North Memorial, Park Nicollet, Hennepin County Medical Center, Allina corporate offices, social enterprise ventures, and Augustana. Collectively, they have hired nearly 1,000 community residents trained by PPL. While healthcare is changing with demographic trends and pressure to contain costs, everyone expects substantial employment growth in this area. So there are more placement opportunities ahead.

A steadfast partner in this effort is the Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC). Today, we are working together to equip disadvantaged jobseekers with post-secondary credentials and soft skills training that reflect workforce demands. This is valued in healthcare and many other sectors of the economy showing signs of life these days, and gives some of the people we work with a valuable leg up in the labor market.

But we know MCTC and like institutions aren’t for everyone walking through the doors of our Learning Center at Chicago and Franklin. Limited academic attainment, poor language skills, or life circumstances like a past criminal history remain significant barriers to employment success. A steady but modest recovery won’t change that reality, especially as the trend toward higher order skills required even for entry-level jobs accelerates along with the overall economy. With this group of people PPL serves—who by the way, often demonstrate tremendous motivation and resilience in their quest for better economic circumstances—we all have our work cut-out for us. The community must find ways for these folks to earn a living, not get along supported by a fraying safety net.

Direct employment by “social enterprise” ventures run by our affiliate Project for Pride in Living Enterprises (and other like organizations) is one way to help men and women facing the hardest road to employment get started. And a stronger economy should help create more such opportunities as business activity increases. This equation is simple: more revenue, more training slots to fill.

Ultimately, in an economic system driven increasingly by knowledge, critical thinking, and service excellence, we face a dual challenge. We need to help people who today are ill-equipped for this job marketplace gain these skills, while ensuring that our education and training system fully prepares young people for a successful future in the economy they will face.

PPL staff know this is hard work because we do it every day, most often with success. So returning to where I started, I am feeling hopeful as the year ends. And I’m feeling thankful for your support which makes PPL’s work possible! Have a joyous holiday season.

Steve Cramer
40th Anniversary Gala

Celebrating 40 Years of Service
(from page 1)

PPL's positive impact — both in the community and, as a past PPL homeowner, in her own life. She was joined on stage by Carolyn Roby of the Wells Fargo Foundation; and Neeraj Mehta, a passionate north Minneapolis community-builder who got his start at PPL as a program manager. As the current director of community based research at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, Neeraj talked about the ways PPL helped him develop professionally. After the program, a commemorative video presentation, and a champagne toast, the dance floor opened up to the live music of Davina and the Vagabonds. From beginning to end, the Gala was a success.

Forty years is considered a long time in certain circles, but PPL is by no means over the hill! A yearlong celebration has energized our commitment to helping individuals and families out of poverty, contributing to a more vibrant Twin Cities. In addition to the Gala, part of our ongoing celebration has been the 40 Stories online storytelling project. Launched in early 2012, the website is a showcase of PPL participant successes and organizational milestone moments. Read all of the stories by going to www.ppl-inc.org/40stories and consider adding your own.

PPL has so much to be proud of: more than 2,000 units of quality affordable housing built; hundreds of jobseekers earning living wages thanks to our employment training programs; and countless families using skills gained through our responsive support services and youth development programs. It is important to recognize these accomplishments — especially considering how none of them would have been possible without contributions from staff, volunteers, interns, donors, and other partners.

Support PPL
Into the Next
40 Years

Ron Poole
PPL Advocate, Former Board Member

Like many other organizations, PPL is in the midst of our year-end annual appeal. This appeal brings to mind the many ways people choose to give their time, talent, and treasure to organizations they support.

One way is to make a bequest to an organization in your will—leave a legacy. Typically, an individual indicates that an organization, such as PPL, should be given a gift of a certain amount at the donor’s death. The amount of the taxable estate is usually reduced by the charitable bequest.

Another popular option is naming a charitable organization as a beneficiary of an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). There are various ways to do this and often involve some tax advantages. If this type of gift appeals to you, consult with your accountant, attorney, or financial planner to set up an IRA in a way that is most advantageous to you.

If you would like to include PPL in your estate planning, please contact our fundraising director Sara Garry at 612.455.5137.

We cannot thank our Gala sponsors enough: Wells Fargo, Thrivent, General Mills, Carlson Printing Company, Minneapolis/St. Paul Magazine, Caliber Foundation, Flowers in the Park, Thomson Reuters, BMO Harris Bank, Bremer Bank, Marquette Transportation Finance, Shaw-Lundquist, Travelers Insurance, US Bank, and Xcel Energy. Your generosity truly made the night a memorable one.
There’s excitement in the halls of Partnership Academy, a PPL-authorized charter school, long after class lets out for the day. In a moment of inspiration, an afterschool program teacher closes a book and brings the student he was tutoring into the long hallway.

“Look,” he says with excitement. “The book said that a spider can jump as far as 40 times his body length. That would be like you jumping the entire length of the hall. Isn’t that incredible?”

The student nods in stunned agreement, as taken aback by his teacher’s enthusiasm as he is by the jumping prowess of arachnids. They return to their classroom, which is filled with other students putting in extra time to achieve academic success at PPL’s afterschool program.

PPL has partnered with Partnership Academy to provide afterschool programs since the school’s inception in 2002. The program offers students literacy tutoring and help with homework. A sizeable expansion in the afterschool programs this year, funded in part by a Reading by Third Grade grant from the Greater Twin Cities United Way, is helping more of the school’s students who are performing under grade level get the extra academic help they need.

“The afterschool program only had 50-60 kids in it, but the need was much greater than that,” said Partnership Academy principal Lisa Hendricks. “With some new grants and funding, we are able to expand.” The program now serves over 100 students from first to fifth grade.

“The opportunity to work with caring adults on a daily basis gives the students joy and confidence to do their school work,” notes second grade teacher Allison Pint. “Students are always so excited to go to the afterschool program.”

Students approach the work of the afterschool program with childhood enthusiasm. Damaris, a second grader, approaches a new volunteer with a book, proclaiming, “I can read it all by myself!” Then she begins to read out loud to him.

“A student at PPL’s afterschool program at Partnership Academy gets individual help with reading from a volunteer.”

“There’s a lot of energy and personality with this group,” Aleisha, a volunteer from Normandale College, observes. “The students are really interested in their books, and in having someone helping them read.”

The combined efforts of teachers, parents, and the afterschool program has helped students achieve academic gains that are being noticed. Partnership Academy was recently listed as a ‘Beat the Odds School’ by the Star Tribune in reference to their recent test scores.

“The afterschool program has been instrumental in the success of our students,” Pint adds. “Reading levels and test scores have increased because of the tutoring in the afterschool program.”

“It’s great to be a resource for struggling kids,” PPL Youth Program Manager Shannon Siegfried Floe said, “and to partner with teachers in their efforts to help them.”

The goals of the program don’t seem to be lost on Henry, a fourth grader. “This is my favorite book, but he,” referring to a teacher walking by, “doesn’t let me read it anymore.”

“That’s because you have it memorized,” the teacher replies, “and you need a new challenge.” Henry looks at him, perhaps aware of what’s at stake, and smiles.
Kim and Tania took very different roads to get to PPL. After graduating PPL’s Train to Work in Healthcare class, both women are moving successfully down the same career path.

Growing up, Kim went to a school located across the street from a nursing home. She went often to visit residents and enjoyed being around the elderly. Kim decided to pursue a career in healthcare and has worked with seniors as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) for over 25 years. She recently began to look for work at a hospital, which would offer a more regular schedule than her current job allowed.

Tania worked 80 hours a week in a restaurant to provide for her family. She wanted something more and dreamed of working in a hospital. Tania began taking nursing classes at MCTC while working long hours at the restaurant. With a full schedule, Tania began to look for a new job that offered a living wage that would allow her more time at home.

Both women found PPL’s Train to Work in Healthcare class while looking online for their next job. For both, it was an important step on their career path as healthcare professionals.

“I knew it was hard to get a job in a hospital,” Kim said. “The internship was a great opportunity.”

“By partnering with PPL’s Train to Work program, both PPL and North Memorial benefit,” North Memorial’s Marcel Allen explains. “The individual participant receives valuable, real-life experiences in a healthcare setting. North Memorial is supplied with qualified candidates to meet our staffing needs and provides employment opportunities for those in the communities we serve.”

Six months after graduating the Train to Work class, both women have seen their new training and successful internships lead to the new hospital jobs they wanted. Both now work at North Memorial—Kim works as a CNA in neuroscience, Tania works in registration—and both have goals of finishing nursing school. For now, they are enjoying the additional benefits of their new jobs.

“My life feels much more stable with a set schedule at the hospital,” Kim said.

“I have more time for my family now, and less stress,” Tania said. “My 5 year old sees how working in a hospital makes me happy, and now he wants to be a doctor. I’m thankful for everything PPL taught me to accomplish this goal.”
Every day PPL staff strive to further the mission: to work with lower-income individuals and families to achieve greater self-sufficiency through housing, employment training, support services, and education.

New Housing Opens in St. Paul
Construction in St. Paul has been completed on PPL’s 44-unit complex of affordable housing called Fort Road Flats. Set in the Highland Park neighborhood, residents will have access to PPL’s onsite support services and youth development programming. Ten units at Fort Road Flats have been reserved for families who have experienced long-term homelessness, with case management provided by Catholic Charities. Residents begin moving in this December.

New For-Sale Homes Coming to Hawthorne EcoVillage
Situated on a four block cluster in north Minneapolis, the EcoVillage is the incubator for our sustainable affordable housing efforts, making “green living” affordable. PPL has already completed and sold four single family homes in this multi-year development, including one that is Platinum LEED certified. Construction has begun on two new single-family homes in the Hawthorne EcoVillage, scheduled for completion in Summer 2013.

PPL is also partnering with the City of Minneapolis’ Green Homes North program to develop additional new homes in the EcoVillage. The program provides homebuyers with newly constructed homes on City-owned vacant lots that incorporate environmentally-friendly design elements. In total, five homes will be built in the EcoVillage through the Green Homes North program: three by PPL and two by Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity.

PPL Continues Foreclosure Recovery Work Across Twin Cities
PPL has begun renovations to another four previously-foreclosed properties in north Minneapolis as part of the national Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), which restores foreclosed properties into livable housing. This round of construction will make an additional 24 apartments available for rent in the Spring of 2013. PPL recently completed NSP renovations to 24 units of affordable housing in Minneapolis and 12 units in the Frogtown neighborhood of St. Paul.

Open Streets
On September 29, PPL participated in Open Streets Minneapolis. Organized by the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition, the event closed off a stretch of North Lowry Avenue to motorized traffic, encouraging people to experience neighborhood businesses and organizations in a more personal way. PPL’s Hawthorne EcoVillage, located along Lowry Avenue, made the perfect spot for staff and volunteers to set up an interactive booth. Nearly 100 visitors—EcoVillage residents, north Minneapolis neighbors, and other friends—stopped by to play a game of “Name That Vegetable” as they strolled along the streets and got to know their community.

"Name That Vegetable" featured produce from the Hawthorne EcoVillage community garden.
Lifelong Learning Starts Young

Early Wonders Preschool is PPL’s full-day, year-round licensed preschool program. This fall, Early Wonders was once again recognized for excellence with the five-year renewal of accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Early Wonders is also a Hennepin County Strong Beginnings site and a four-star Parent Aware program. Other fall highlights include:

- Staff are excited about the children’s literacy strides they can already see from the support of our first AmeriCorps member for preschoolers. This member from the Minnesota Reading Corps is focused on bolstering early literacy skills to ensure that children are reading by third grade.

- Children's Theatre Company has selected the preschool as an Early Bridges site. This artist residency from October through January is helping children connect creativity to reading and culminates with a field trip to see a theatrical production.

- With a recent donation of coats and an upcoming book fair, families are ready for winter outdoor and indoor fun.

Early Wonders Preschool provides quality early childhood care and education that inspires curiosity and lifelong learning. To learn how to register your child, call 612.872.2764.

Voter Registration Efforts Serve Hundreds

Earlier this year, the PPL Board took an official position opposing the voter ID constitutional amendment. The amendment would have required all voters to present a valid photo identification to vote. A first for the Board, PPL’s decision to oppose the amendment was made in keeping with our mission to provide disadvantaged people with as much access to resources, processes, and tools that promote empowerment and growth, as possible.

Additionally, PPL took an active role in voter registration and education efforts, connecting with our affordable housing residents and program participants. Across the Twin Cities, program staff at service sites connected with participants joined forces with our Public Policy Team to knock on PPL residents’ doors to raise awareness about where and when to vote. On Election Day, onsite services staff coordinated rides to and from the polls for residents. At our housing in St. Louis Park, two vans carried 20 residents to the polls, including first-time voters. One woman in her mid-forties, said she was voting for the first time as a birthday present to her mom—the only gift she’d asked for from her daughter at her recent birthday party.

Ultimately, PPL delivered 244 completed registrations to the Secretary of State’s office, and empowered residents to make their voices heard through the power of the vote.

Mission Moment

Allina Program Makes Holidays Bright for PPL Participants

Thanks to an ongoing partnership with Allina Health, PPL is able to brighten dozens of family celebrations across the Twin Cities through the Adopt-A-Family Program. Now in its fifth year, the program invites families on very limited incomes to share their holiday wish lists with PPL staff. Completed lists are given to Allina staff, who donate their time and resources to purchase, wrap, and deliver gifts to PPL. At that time, families are notified to pick up their presents, just in time for their holiday gatherings. The Adopt-A-Family Program has grown significantly in recent years and will serve 40 families this year.

Staff at MERC Alternative High School nominated one of their students for the Adopt-A-Family Program, a young man with a solid attendance record and positive attitude towards his studies. When his mother found out about it, she called MERC staff in gratitude, saying that she and her husband were about to cancel their Christmas celebration because of limited resources. This year, they will be able to enjoy the holiday thanks to the generosity from our partners at Allina.
Together We've Made History

You’ve been a part of it, the 40-year history of PPL and its impact on the community. Whether as a donor, staff, volunteer, community partner, participant—or some combination of these—we all make a difference in the success of PPL. As we celebrate our four decades of achievement we know that given the right tools at the right moment, people can achieve self-reliance that lasts a lifetime.

While there is much to celebrate, there is no time to rest. Help us reach our goal of $250,000 to continue to respond to community need. Please use the enclosed envelope to give a gift today, or visit www.ppl-inc.org/donate to give online. Thank you for your support!

Steve Cramer
Executive Director

13,731
People served in 2011; most in PPL’s history.

1,014
Housing units owned or managed.

6,277
Received work readiness and job training.

3,190
Adults received family stability services.

989
Children and youth benefited from schools and enrichment programs.