

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE HEALTHY ROWHOUSE PROJECT BRINGS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, FINANCIAL AND ICE HOCKEY EXPERTISE TO THE JOB

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Jill Roberts, a fifteen year veteran of Project Home, has been appointed founding Executive Director of the Healthy Rowhouse Project (healthyrowhouse.org), effective March 1. Jill brings a strong background in community development, finance and business, and personal qualities that will serve her well as leader of a nonprofit startup with very high ambitions.

The Healthy Rowhouse Project was created to help Philadelphia's poorest residents, to keep them in their homes, to keep them from becoming homeless or displaced or sick, and to revive Philadelphia's struggling neighborhoods - one house at a time. The project began as an initiative of the Design Advocacy Group and is now part of the Center for Architecture. Over the next three years, the project will create financial instruments and delivery methods to help low income homeowners, and landlords who rent to low income tenants, to repair their buildings. At the end of that time, the goal is to repair 5,000 homes every year.

"Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods. By making the houses in our neighborhoods stronger and the residents in those houses stronger and healthier, we strengthen our city", says Jill. "The most affordable house is one that has already been built. We have an amazing opportunity here to improve conditions in those homes, and to allow adults and children to succeed rather than just to survive."

At Project HOME, Jill started out working with the co-founder and CFO, learning about multiple aspects of affordable housing, the effects of disinvestment in neighborhoods and the challenges the members of such communities face. This led to an eleven year tenure as a Community Development Project Manager. In that role, Jill managed three phases of home ownership from acquiring vacant and blighted buildings from the city, to applying for funding and managing the design and construction teams, through to selling the homes. Buyers completed home owner education classes often led by Jill and partner organizations. Prior to her work at Project HOME, Jill oversaw marketing efforts for a five person start-up Internet business designed to be a financial resource for women to engage in online investing. Within a year, the company was acquired by a major national financial services firm.

A Business and Economics degree from Wilson College in Chambersburg, PA, was the beginning of a long association with the college, where she currently serves on the Board of Trustees. She has earned certifications from NeighborWorks America, Green Advantage Inc., and the Homeownership Counseling Association Delaware Valley. She has served as a Board Member of Mill Creek Urban Farm, was President, Vice President and Board Member of the Mazzoni Center, was a founding member of the Access to Rowing and Paddling (AXS2RP) Committee, and serves as treasurer for the Philadelphia Freeze Women's Ice Hockey Club.

In her leisure time, if you can call playing defense on an ice hockey team "leisure", Jill is a big sports fan. She is a life long Philadelphian, fan of the Flyers and Phillies, especially of Wayne Simmonds, Gary Maddox and Jimmy Rollins. She has been on a sports team - always playing defense - continuously since she was eight years old. Jill welcomes the challenges of the Healthy Rowhouse Project, saying, "I am a team player and this project is about teamwork - our staff and consultants, funders and contractors working creatively and collectively toward a big win for low income homeowners and tenants."