

Nominator Information

Name: Robert Jones

Nominee Information

Name: Philip Bray

Title: President/CEO

Organization: Safehouse Outreach

Nomination Information

Examples of how this person demonstrates INTEGRITY:

Philip is a great living example of all three of these – honesty, authenticity, and truth telling.

One of the best examples is how Philip is not afraid to say things that might make him unpopular with some groups within the community. Years ago when the issue of ‘pan-handling’ first came up, there were a number of well-meaning church and other civic groups and community organizers who were very opposed to outlawing this arguing that it would be depriving them of their only livelihood. Philip took the stand that would have seemed counter to his role as a champion of the homeless and said that it wasn’t good for the community and it wasn’t good for what these people really need, and it should be eliminated. Eventually, his position became that of the city’s as well.

But Philip’s position was genuine and in line with Safehouse’s mission and slogan in saying that pan-handling doesn’t give the homeless what they really need which is a ‘hand UP’ rather than a ‘handout’.

His willingness to speak out on any number of issues has had a significant impact on the city and other organizations. The quality of the leadership on Philip’s Board of Directors and Advisory Board are a further reflection of the high esteem in which he is held.

In addition to examples of Philip being truthful with regard to a community issue, Philip also has been willing on many occasions to have difficult one-on-one conversations with their homeless clients.

A particularly great human interest example along these lines involved Tim Burrows – a former professional NBA basketball player who had played with Minnesota and Orlando before he and his career went totally downhill. Philip put up with Tim’s semi-manipulative behavior for awhile, but finally told him that he needed to get help, and they were not going to keep giving him what he asked for, whether it was money or other services, until he came clean. Finally the breaking point came when Philip told him he had to come clean and not to come back until he was. He told him that he was using up resources that was taking away from what they could do for others. When Tim finally did come back, people didn’t even recognize him. He had not only totally come clean and cleaned up his act, but when he did return, he remembered what Philip had told him and he felt he needed to repay Safehouse for resources he had used and abused. He volunteered for free for an extended period and this was part of his rehab.

Examples of how this person demonstrates RESPECT:

Philip has always shown respect for people no matter who they are – high or low

status – what they look like – suit and tie or torn jeans and scruffy appearance. In my own situation, when I came to work for Safehouse, you might say I was a young punk. I had scraggly hair and a beard and it was a sign to myself that I was comfortable being me. That didn't phase Philip one bit. But he saw something in me that I didn't see. Philip makes you comfortable with who YOU are and loves you - not because you have connections, or can help Safehouse, but just for whomever you are. This is also largely why he has created such a close bond with his board members. You also always know that you can completely disagree with him and you can speak your mind and he will listen carefully. If he disagrees, he is willing to take the time to tell you why.

Philip knows that people have the ability to completely change themselves. His story is a living example and very moving. He grew up in the church – the son of a Mother and Father who were both ministers. He totally rebelled. He not only was using drugs, but was selling them – he even was a member of the Dixie mafia. He wasn't seeing compassion from most in the church but it was from God, and from people who found him and who loved him for what he was, that finally turned him around. Then he felt he needed to 'pay back'. . .for the people who had helped him.

Having taken this journey himself and having been shown love for who he was, altered where he was. Now even when someone shows up still high on drugs or alcohol, he's able to help show how they deserve love and care.

It's a great place to work with such a great group of inspired people and such a wide variety of supporters. Everyone feels they can be themselves.

Examples of how this person demonstrates RESPONSIBILITY:

If Philip has a weakness, and it's not really that, he gets so personally involved with every person who comes to Safehouse that he takes it personally when they can't help someone. He's the 'Atlas' of Safehouse carrying everyone's problems on his own shoulders. There was a situation just the other day in one of our staff meetings where Philip shed tears about a family who wasn't taking care of their child and there had been nothing they had been able to do to help.

Philip knows what's going on in every one our programs and is in touch with every one of the staff personally with questions about their specific project. It's personal for him. It's his baby.

Recently when the snow hit in early January and the streets were solid ice that morning, Philip was the one to call and ask, "Who's going to open the doors?" Did it need to be him? Because of zoning, Safehouse can't board people, but downtown there are 40 degrees church's who open their doors to the homeless if the temperature falls below 40 degrees. But, once the day starts, Safehouse is open for business.

Please relate an incident demonstrating leadership character:

On the organizational side, several years ago, Philip saw the need in Tucker for a place where women and children who needed a 'safehouse' could go to stay on an interim basis. They had an office in a building which the owner was getting ready to sell and with consent of his Board, and a little persuasion on Philip's part, they bought

the building which needed to be TOTALLY retrofitted in order to turn it livable service center.

With the help of Home Depot who supplied some materials, Skanska who did the retrofit, Rusk Jones and Outdoor Conceptions and Pike Nurseries who transformed a dilapidated backyard into a beautifully landscaped playground for children, this is now operating although with the bad economy, it has prevented them from being able to run and staff it as they really hope to do in the longer-run.

On the personal side, on a Christmas eve, I saw Philip put himself in harms way when a man who was high on drugs came to the center ready to start a fight with a group of men. Philip knew that it would not only create permanent enemies among these men but someone could get seriously hurt. He was able to diffuse the situation – called a shelter to have them be ready to take him in as he was coming down from his high and keep him there to protect himself and others. Philip knows personally what Cocaine can do to people. He's been there himself. I feel very fortunate to have been mentored by a leader with Philip's character and integrity.