

A Dedication – Remembering Bob Hohler

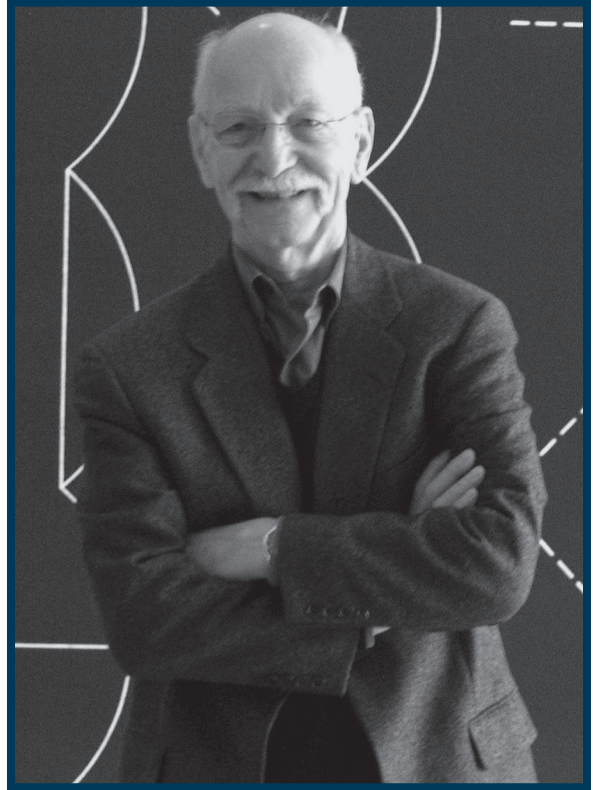
Priced Out in 2010

The Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force (CCD) are mourning the loss of our dear friend and extraordinary colleague Bob Hohler, who died suddenly on June 2, 2011. We are dedicating this 7th edition of *Priced Out* to Bob, who inspired and sustained the *Priced Out* study for many years.

Superlatives are common when someone dies, but even superlatives cannot quite capture the essence of Bob Hohler. We have lost a true champion and hero who worked tirelessly so that the most vulnerable of our citizens would achieve the dignity that comes with having a decent and affordable place of their own to call home. As Executive Director of the Melville Charitable Trust, Bob's vision, brilliance, leadership, passionate energy, and enthusiasm motivated and sustained TAC and the CCD Housing Task Force – as well as many others who were fortunate enough to work with him.

Bob's commitment to social justice was unequivocal. He knew from childhood experience what it was like to live in poverty, and transformed that into passionate advocacy for others. As a Freedom Rider in the 1960s, he bore personal witness to brutal bigotry and discrimination, a baptism that affirmed his deeply held belief that what our government does matters, especially to those who need its compassion and protection.

Bob's incredible support for the work of TAC and CCD to improve the lives of vulnerable people with the most significant and long-term disabilities was unwavering. As a philanthropist, he believed that government could and should solve intractable problems, such as chronic homelessness and the unnecessary institutionalization of people with disabilities. He was personally outraged that people with the most significant and long-term disabilities lived on the streets of our cities or were warehoused in institutions and decrepit board and care facilities. Bob's vision became the powerful driving force behind the work of TAC and CCD, leading to the creation of more than 100,000 permanent housing subsidies, which today are helping people with disabilities live in dignity in homes of their own in the community.



It was through Bob's leadership that TAC and CCD were able to sustain a four-year effort to reform and reinvigorate the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program. He understood that changing this relatively small HUD program to create integrated supportive housing through State Housing Finance Agencies would stimulate new state-level partnerships to end unnecessary institutionalization and promote community living for people with the most significant and long-term disabilities.

During all of this work, Bob marched right beside us – and often ahead of us – as he did during the civil rights movement; always encouraging, cajoling, praising, motivating, and being present. He expected us to work very hard and to get results, but he also cared deeply about us as people and as friends, and never asked more of us than he asked of himself.

Shortly before Bob died, he received an e-mail from a Harvard University Ph.D. candidate who had come across previous editions of *Priced Out* in her dissertation research on mental illness. She wrote the following e-mail to Bob: "Like most people, but for that report [*Priced Out*] I would otherwise assume that SSI benefits provided sufficient income for people to be able to afford housing and have a little left over to eat! (Imagine that!). Thanks to the *Priced Out* series, we know that is not the case." Of course, Bob found the time to reply, encouraging the writer to vigorously pursue her research on behalf of people with mental illness.

It is truly impossible to think about what our work will be like without Bob's twinkling eyes and inspiring presence. Our loss is as profound as his legacy. So we will redouble our efforts because that is what he would want us to do. We extend our deepest sympathy to the entire Melville Charitable Trust family, and especially to Bob's wonderful wife Karen and their family. It was truly an extraordinary privilege to work with Bob, and he will be deeply missed.

Technical Assistance Collaborative



Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities



June 20, 2011