



THE WHEELS GO ROUND AND ROUND . . . *Janet Madison, Co-chair*

Transporting our families and their belongings is crucial to reaching safe shelter, school, and the day center. Everyday, twice a day, our van makes the trip to an IHN host site, not to mention the numerous trips the truck makes. More than once in the last few months we have been in an emergency situation for gas money. Fortunately, a few generous folks have actually met the van at a gas station and filled 'er up! There must be an easier way.

There is. I recently purchased a VISA gift card. You set a limit and the card expires when the balance hits empty. There's flexibility too. You're not restricted to one place of purchase because it's a charge card gift card. It can be used for gas or against the rental of the truck. Many banks and local

retailers like CVS, Stop&Shop, Big Y Food, AAA, Lowes, Rite-Aid and WalMart, carry them for purchase, or order them online or call. Two websites to visit are:
www.usa.visa.com/personal/cards or
home.americanexpress.com/home/ .

Another idea is if you are hosting our families in your congregation, consider sponsoring the rental of the truck and/or offer to fill the van up with gas that week. This would go a long way in offsetting the important investment we make in getting our families where they need to be safely.

Please help keep the wheels going round n' round... remember, your contribution doubles in value during the matching fund campaign currently underway! Many thanks and blessings. Zoom-zoom-zoom.

IHN FALL FUNDRAISER *Phil Holman, Co-chair*

Last year at this time we had the most successful fundraiser in the history of IHN. As a result, our program funding was secure for most of the fiscal year. We are hoping to repeat that success again this year. The basis for the fundraiser is to challenge IHN supporters to raise funds, big and small, through fundraising, personal donations, and special collections. To leverage this fundraising effort we are asking local businesses to match these donations dollar for dollar. Last year we were able to raise a total of \$70,000 with match money in excess of \$35,000.

Here is how you can help: Plan a fundraising event between now and December 31st, with the proceeds designated for IHN. Let us know about your event and we will help you advertise it throughout the IHN host network using our email chain. Turn in your

fundraising money before the end of the year, and we will work to coordinate a corporate match, which could double your money for IHN.

If you are unsure how you can help, the IHN Advisory Board has developed many fundraising ideas for you to consider. This information is in the form of a fundraising handout. Many of the ideas in this information sheet are successful fundraisers that have worked for other host sites in the past. Whether you take on a major fundraising event or a more modest effort, all contributions are welcome and appreciated.

If you would like to discuss your ideas, or need help organizing your event, please contact Joanne Marhefka, or a member of the IHN Advisory Board.

Coordinator's Corner

HOST SITES

Nov:

11/4 – 11/18 Immanuel
Lutheran, Holden
11/18 – 11/25 St. Mary's,
Grafton
11/25 – 12/2 First
Congregational, Holden

Dec:

12/2 – 12/9 Trinity Lutheran,
Worcester
12/9 – 12/16 Our Lady of
Good Counsel, West
Boylston
12/16 – 12/23 Temple Sinai,
Worcester
12/23 – 12/30 Temple
Emanuel, Worcester

Jan:

12/30 – 1/6 Temple
Emanuel, Worcester
1/6 – 1/20 First
Congregational,
Shrewsbury

1/20 – 2/3 First
Congregational, West
Boylston

Feb:

2/3 – 2/17 First Unitarian,
Worcester
2/17 – 2/24 All Saints,
Worcester
2/24 – 3/9 Mt. Olivet,
Shrewsbury

GUESTS

- Mom and Dad with 2 year old daughter
- Mom with 2 year old son
- Mom with 7 year old daughter
- Mom with 13 year old son
- Dad with 7 year old daughter



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

THE HEART OF OUR PROGRAM *Joanne Marhefka, IHN Director*

Volunteers are the heart of our program. IHN simply could not exist without them. These are ordinary people who do what may seem like small things individually, but collectively end up making a significant contribution in the lives of our families. Every day, 365 days a year, they reach out to shelter and feed people they do not know; moms, dads, and children who find themselves at the doors of IHN. Beyond providing shelter and meals, volunteers shower our families with kindness, caring support, and love.

And oftentimes they go above and beyond...

Last month when we found ourselves

without a host site for two weeks in November, two congregations stepped forward to offer their space to our families: St. Mary's Church in Grafton and Immanuel Lutheran Church in Holden. Immanuel Lutheran will host the week of Nov. 11 – 18 (in addition to their scheduled week of Nov. 4 – 11) and St. Mary's, with the help of volunteers from all of the Grafton churches, will host Thanksgiving week.

IHN is truly blessed to have such a wonderful, caring, supportive network of volunteers. I extend my sincerest thanks to everyone at Immanuel Lutheran and St. Mary's, and to all of the volunteers from many

congregations who have offered to help in any way at all over that two week period. You have stepped up to the challenge and are a reminder to us all that the Thanksgiving season is not just a time to be thankful for what we have, but a time to share your blessings by reaching out to help others who are going through a difficult time.

We at IHN have much to be thankful for, but above all we are grateful to our many volunteers for all that they do for our families and our program. To all of you who have ever helped in any way, I say thank you. You are the heart of our program and we simply could not exist without you. God Bless.

CHRISTMAS CARD DESIGNS . . . *Leanne Luetkemeyer*

Last year was the first year for United Parish of Upton's IHN Holiday Card Fundraiser. It was an exciting, but huge challenge to get artwork for the cards and find an affordable and fast way to get the cards printed, packaged and out by the end of November in time to sell for the holidays. But even with the short selling time, the IHN Holiday Card fundraiser was very successful. We raised over \$1600 for IHN from the sale of the cards! We want to thank you for all of your help and support in making it happen!

We are planning two new designs to sell for this year in addition to the snowman and purple holiday tree cards we have leftover from last year. The artwork on last year's cards was created by two year old Cora and then adapted by the students of Blackstone Valley Regional Technical High School in Upton, to accommodate their printing capabilities. The students and teachers at Blackstone Valley are very proud of the work they did on last year's cards. We met with the teachers this fall. They're very excited and had many great ideas.

For the first card the students are taking a cut paper and paint collage of an angel created by four year old

Marlyann and adapting it to 3 spot colors. The finished card has a beaming angel floating on a cheery red background. The second card is a whimsical holiday tree on a white background created from a yellow star and a green handprint that Marlyann also painted. We will email the designs to the IHN coordinators as soon as we can and are looking into having the cards available for viewing on the IHN website as well.

Thank you for all of your suggestions and ideas. Your feedback on last year's cards, packaging and pricing has been very helpful. We are planning to package the new angel and handprint tree cards with just one design per package. They will sell for \$5.00 per package of 8 cards. In addition we have a large number of last year's already packaged cards, (6 purple holiday trees and 6 snowmen to a package,) leftover from last year. Because we have already covered the costs of producing last year's sets, they will also sell for \$5.00. Like last year, all of the proceeds go to IHN.

The cards are very easy and fun to sell. They are blank inside and can be used as a note card, gift, thank you

note or holiday greeting card. There is information about IHN on the back.

As far as places to sell the cards, at United Parish we sold them at a table during coffee hour after the service. If your place of worship or a nearby school is hosting a fall craft show, an IHN table of cards and IHN brochures would be a great idea. Maybe some of the local stores in your area would be open to a basket of cards and brochures about IHN on their counter. This year we hope to have the printed cards back by the end of October.

We'll let you know when the cards are available for pick-up at the IHN Day Center or delivery to you. Please take as many cards as you can and return any you don't sell at the next coordinators meeting.

For more information or any special requests, please contact Leanne Luetkemeyer, lmluetkemeyer@earthlink.net. Thank you!



WISH LIST



- * WRTA bus tickets
- * Bins for families' belongings
- * Cleaning supplies
- * Trash bags
- * Deodorant
- * Laundry detergent
- * Blankets & pillows
- * Razors
- * Body lotion
- * Shampoo & conditioner

Please call Joanne - 508-798-6732 to donate. God bless and thank you in advance!

Family Update

I am very happy to report that Brian, Stephanie and Hailey moved into their apartment last month. They are very excited that Hailey will spend her first birthday in their new home!

A big thank you to all those congregations who agreed to change the weekend hours to allow our families more time on the weekends for sleep and to relax without having to rush out the door. It has worked out well for our families and our staff, and they join me in thanking you!

We'd also like to thank First Congregational Church in Shrewsbury for purchasing two new cots for the program!



Letter from the Editor –Nicole Grenier

We have all said it: 'I can't wait to go home!' Whether at the office, sitting in class, or stuck in traffic, each one of us finds solace knowing that a good meal, a hot shower, and a comfy bed are not far away. This notion is so familiar to us that all too often we find ourselves taking our homes for granted and perhaps forgetting the fact that there are many people in our very city who do not have this luxury. Coming to work with IHN was definitely a wake up call for me and reminded me of the people who need our help to find homes of their own. Any little thing that we can do is a huge help to the organization. Donating items from the wish list, donating money, or donating your time really does make a huge difference. I know that learning about IHN and helping out in any way that I can will have a positive impact whether small or large. Whatever you can do is crucial to the lives of the IHN residents and the organization itself; and no matter what, always remember how special your home is and how blessed you are to have it!

IHN Secret Santa Elves

Young or Old ~ You Can Be A Secret Santa Elf !

To continue our support of the Interfaith Hospitality Network during the holidays, please feel free to put on your Secret Santa hats!

We will be fulfilling the holiday wishes of the IHN children.

This is now an annual tradition and all gifts and donations are sincerely appreciated and promote a joyous and festive holiday season for these deserving children.

Moreover, these gifts are a valuable and much appreciated aspect of our giving and support to the IHN program.

As the Secret Santa Coordinator, I will obtain each child's wishes and coordinate with each church who would like to participate.

Contact Pam Guild at 978-422-6078 if your church would like to participate as Secret Santa elves.

All gifts will be returned to the IHN Day Center for distribution and gift wrapping by the children's parents.

Many thanks to the generous members of our church community who support the IHN children and families at this upcoming holiday season.



Important Dates:

Wednesday 11/14/06.

Contact Pam Guild to participate in gift giving at 978-422-6078

or

Pamela.guild@cgi.com

Monday, 12/17/06

Deliver gifts to the IHN Day Center



Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester

IHN

Where people of faith work together to support homeless families throughout the greater Worcester area.

114 Main Street

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Newsletter

The IHN newsletter continues to be made possible by:

Phil Holman, president and owner of ***Four Star Connections, Inc.***, Hudson: printing and mailing

Nicole Grenier, Editor

*Contributing Reporters: **Phil Holman, Janet Madison, Joanne Marhefka, Pamela Guild, Leanne Luetkemeyer** and guest reporters from our network.*

The Interfaith Hospitality Network is an organization that unites the religious community in an effort to serve and nurture homeless families regardless of income and family structure. Thirty-one congregations, many with assistance from additional congregations, provide meals, shelter and hospitality. Families receive individualized advocacy for housing, employment, and financial issues at the IHN day center. Massachusetts is the least affordable state in the country for housing and about 20,000 children live in emergency shelters each year. Greater Worcester's IHN has helped 225 families, a total of 665 individuals, since its formation in 1997. IHN makes a difference!



Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester

IHN

114 Main Street

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TO: