



Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester

IHN *Where people of faith work together to support homeless families*
news



Volume 6, Issue 3

September 2007

ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

COORDINATORS ARE AT THE CORE OF THE IHN PROGRAM

Phil Holman, Co-Chair

Mark your calendars for an important upcoming Coordinators Meeting on Tuesday, September 25th at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in Worcester at Wesley church, home to the IHN Day Center.

It is the goal of our Advisory Board to get a big turnout at this upcoming meeting. We would like to have representation from all host sites as well as any of our support congregations,

synagogues or parishes. Wouldn't it be exciting to have 30 to 50 coordinators and representatives all together at one time to share their enthusiasm and ideas for the IHN program?

The big message we are hoping to get out at the meeting is a celebration of all of our successes over the past year, and to present our upcoming goals and ambitions for the new fiscal year. Our Board has been

busy, and we are looking forward to sharing with the coordinators all the good things we have been working on.

Did you know that we finished the fiscal year, ending June 30th, with all our bills paid and a small contingency fund for the upcoming year?

Have you seen the expanded Day Center?

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Co-ordinator's Corner

Host Sites



September

- 9/2 – 9/9 UCC, Worcester
- 9/9 – 9/23 First Congregational, Shrewsbury
- 9/23 – 9/30 All Saints, Worcester

October

- 9/30 – 10/14 First Church, Sterling
- 10/14 – 10/21 First Cong/ Prince of Peace, Princeton
- 10/21 – 10/28 First Unitarian, Worcester
- 10/28 – 11/4 Wesley, Worcester

November

- 11/4 – 11/11 Immanuel Lutheran, Holden
- 11/11 – 11/25 St. John's/St. George's, Worcester
- 11/25 – 12/2 First Congregational, Holden

Guests

- Mom and Dad with 10 month old daughter
- Mom and Dad with 1 ½ year old daughter
- Mom with 2 year old son
- Mom with 7 year old daughter
- Mom with 13 year old son

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FINANCIAL UPDATE

LIVING A LIFE THAT MATTERS *Kevin Kirwan, Treasurer*

First, I want to thank all of you who helped us end our fiscal year on a high note. We ended the 2006/2007 Fiscal Year with a revenue profit. Our fundraisers and your donations as well as closely watching our administrative expenses helped us end the year in a profit. If you remember the "Collaboration of Generosity between Friends", the two friends and local Sterling businessmen Phillip Holman, president/owner of Fourstar Connections, Hudson and Remo Rossi, president/owner of Image Diagnostics, Sterling, partnered in a matching pledge campaign which was

one of our most profitable fundraisers. Starting the year with a profit will help carry us from August to October when donations tend to be low. So any help now, like donations, will help me look good when I report our financials at our monthly meetings, hint, hint! ☺

Second, I want to send a **BIG** thank you to Chris at Jed's Hardware in Holden and Christian with Hertz Penske in Auburn who worked a tremendous deal for us to rent a moving van on the weekends to transport the beds and families belongings between the host sites. So please go see Chris at Jed's, and say thank you. And if you need

to rent a moving van, give Christian a call at Hertz Penske in Auburn!

And last, I want to share the joy and fun I have volunteering for IHN. Sometimes we need coverage on the weekends at our day center and I always jump at this opportunity. I do this so I can spend time with our families. We have gone to the beach, to the mall for school supplies, but most of the time we just sit and talk. With my children grown, there is nothing more rewarding when the children run to meet me when I arrive, giving me hugs or



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

PROGRAM UPDATES *Joanne Marhefka, Director***Knock-knock. A Place to Call Home**

Two families moved into apartments this summer: **Annie and Yashira**. Yashira also had a son, **Joniel Alexander, 8 lbs. 8 oz.**, the end of July, the weekend after she left the program! Both are doing well.

Diana left the program because of the long hours she was working at her new job, but the good news is that she has already found a new job closer to home and an apartment and will be moving in very soon.

Welcome to the IHN Family

We have two new staff members on board to cover weekends. Some of

you have already met **Sam Carneiro**, who started in July. Sam has been covering both weekend days for the program until we could hire another person (thank you Sam!). Our newest staff member is **Jose Lopez** who started this month. Sam and Jose will each work one day on the weekend. Please join us in welcoming them into the IHN family.

The main reason for hiring the two weekend staff was to free up Maria to work Monday through Friday. She is now able to focus all of her energy on housing and employment assistance, as well as case management for our families; she will also have the time that is necessary to provide in depth follow-up to guests when they leave the program.

WISH LIST

Blankets
Pillows
Towels and face cloths
Deodorant
Razors
Body lotion
Shampoo and Conditioner
Cleaning supplies
Trash bags
Laundry detergent
Bins for families' belongings
Prayers & well wishes

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

SPOTLIGHT

INSPIRING INDIVIDUALS! *Janet Madison, Co-Chair*

IHN Worcester is so blessed to have on board a wonderful and enthusiastic young adult to help us. Please welcome **Nicole Grenier**. She is a senior at Assumption College majoring in English & Political Science. Nicole was introduced to hosting at Trinity Episcopal, Worcester and remains an active participant. In her pursuit to be make a difference utilizing her talents, Nicole sought out IHN Worcester and stepped up to the challenge to become the editor-in-chief of our quarterly newsletter. As the current editor, I look forward to passing the baton to Nicole. She is interested, committed and articulate in her commitment. Thank you Nicole, and welcome. You can reach Nicole at nlgrenie@assumption.edu for editorial input, article contributions, fundraising announcements, etc.

Another exciting piece of news.

Sharon Strzalkowski is the latest member of the IHN Advisory Committee. Sharon, a member of St. Luke's, brings a wealth of social service experience, enthusiasm and

open-mindedness to the committee. She has a compassion for communication and will be the voice of IHN Worcester. Anticipate a call from Sharon! Thank you Sharon for your interest and commitment.

A Personal Fan of Mine:**Liz writes ...**

*After 3 ½ years as a member of the advisory committee for IHN, I have given my resignation. A new job and other obligations have made it difficult to remain as an active member of the committee. I continue to attend meetings and to help when I can. It has been a pleasure to work with the members of the IHN Advisory Committee. The sincerity and dedication of these fine people cannot be questioned. **Phil Holman and Janet Madison** have been working as co-chairs and complement each other well. **Janet Rautkis** has been the secretary for the committee for ten years, in addition to her work and school commitments. **Deacon Joe Baniukiewicz** is another long serving member. Relative newcomers include*

***Kevin Kirwan**, who recently took over the job of treasurer, **Cindy Spellane**, a realtor with Keller Williams who has organized several fundraisers and **Sharon Strzalkowski**, a new member eager to help. Another person to cherish who attends all the meetings is, of course, **Joanne Marhefka**, our able director. Her work for the families is tireless, despite the many frustrations of a shoestring budget and unpredictable human behavior.*

*At the next **coordinators meeting, September 25, at Wesley**, there will be an appeal to coordinators and fans of IHN to consider, or to refer someone to come on to the advisory committee, or to join a sub-committee for a specific task to accomplish. Please consider a stint with the IHN leadership team. You have already shown a level of caring for the homeless families in your faith community; consider stepping up to support this program overall.*

With best wishes,
Liz Gustavson



THE BIG PICTURE

RIDING OUT THE STORM *Demand for Shelter Exceeds Availability* Joanne Marbefka, Director

The need for shelter is greater than ever. While the largest single barrier for families who are homeless is the serious shortage of affordable housing the more immediate concern for them is that the demand for shelter far exceeds the availability, especially for non EA shelter spaces. (EA spaces are those controlled and paid for by the Dept. of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and make up the majority of the shelter spaces in the city and the state.)

IHN is a non EA shelter; families do not go through DTA to access our program. We have been very busy this summer with the number of families we

have had in the program. Unfortunately we received many more calls from families in need, families seeking shelter that we were unable to assist. These are families that have been denied shelter through DTA. They are families with very few options with regards to shelter because there are precious few beds available for families who don't qualify for EA shelter.

These families are put on a waiting list to come into our program, but where do they go? Where does a family who is homeless go to wait for a shelter opening? A few are lucky enough to find another shelter, but only a few.

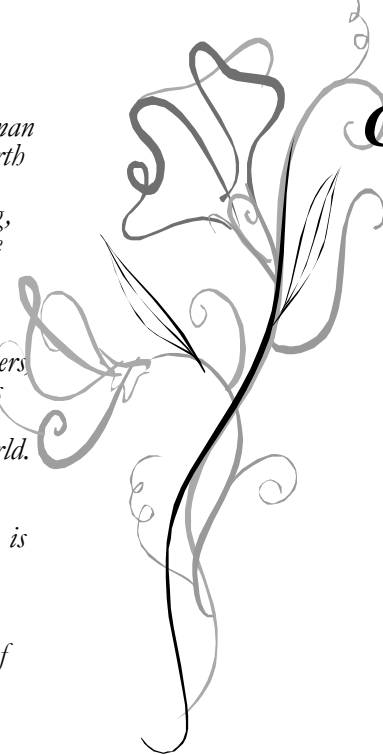
Many bounce from house to house staying with family or friends. Some sleep in cars or campgrounds, at least during the summer. All pray that shelter space will open up before the cold weather is upon them or before they run out of places to stay with family and friends. Sadly we lose complete contact with many of these families, having never been able to help them; and sadder still this crisis is worsening. More and more families find themselves without a place to live and without a safe haven in which to ride out the storm.

Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another. —Erma Bombeck

We don't have all the answers and the truth sometimes gets blurred, but we all have a reason to make a better world.

The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is just that little extra.

Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.



Co-ordinator's Meeting

Tuesday, September 25

7pm

IHN Center

Wesley Congregational Church
Main Street, Worcester

See the newly expanded center.

Share hosting experiences.

Happy 10th Anniversary!

What's in IHN Worcester's future?

CENTER - cont'd from page 1

Do you know that we have added some additional staffing to be able to better deliver our services to the guests?

Were you able to attend our informational breakfast that outlined how IHN fits into the safety net for homeless families in Worcester?

Would you like to know about our plans for the upcoming year?

None of this would be possible without the overwhelming support and generosity of our host sites, and the coordinators are a big part of this success.

Please plan to attend the meeting, and bring along someone who would like to know more about the program. Your participation is vital for us to continue improving on the services we provide to our guests. You can make a difference.

HUGS - cont'd from page 1

high fives. I enjoy doing things with the children to give Mom or Dad a break.

So again, thank you for your financial support of IHN, please continue your support so that we can care for the homeless families in our community.

Thank you,

Kevin



Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester

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to support homeless families
throughout the greater Worcester area.*

Newsletter

The IHN newsletter continues to be made possible by:

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

Janet Madison, Editor & Co-Chair

Contributing Reporters: Liz Gustavson, Phil Holman, Kevin Kirwan, Janet Madison, Joanne Marhefka, and guest reporters from our network. Thank you!

The Interfaith Hospitality Network is an organization that unites the religious community in an effort to serve and nurture families who are homeless 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 3rd 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 224 families, a total of 663 individuals, since its formation in 1997. IHN makes a difference!



Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester

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TO:

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