



Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester

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



Volume 5, Issue 4

November 2006

ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

\$20,000 MATCHING FUND CAMPAIGN!

Janet Madison, Co-chair

Phillip Holman, President/ Owner of Fourstar Connections in Hudson, MA, and IHN Co-Chair, a dedicated and compassion-ate supporter of IHN has set a challenge to the greater Worcester community. Between now and December 31, 2006, Holman will match charitable pledges made to the IHN program up to \$20,000 in total.

The month of October recognized \$3000 in pledges resulting in a matching

donation of \$3000!

Holman commented: "It is critical to give back to the community. My personal experience is especially in tuned to families who are struggling to meet basic housing for their children. I challenge the greater Worcester area to meet my match, through personal or corporate donations, or a fundraising effort on behalf of IHN. Let's not have another family go without a place to call home."

IHN Director, Joanne Marhefka commented, "Phil and all our volunteers continually come to the aid of our families in whatever way they are able. This program would not exist without the support of our volunteers and our contributors. Our families are grateful for a helping hand and for a fresh start."

IHN relies solely on private donations, thank you: IHN, 114 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608. 508-798-6732.

Co-ordinator's Corner

November

11/5 – 11/12 Immanuel Lutheran, Holden

11/12 – 11/26 St. John's Episcopal, Worcester

11/26 – 12/3 First Congregational, Holden

December

12/3 – 12/10 Trinity Lutheran, Worcester

12/10 – 12/17 Our Lady of Good Counsel, W. Boylston

12/17 – 12/24 Temple Sinai, Worcester

12/24 – 12/31 Temple Emanuel, Worcester

January

12/31 – 1/7 Temple Emanuel, Worcester

1/7 – 1/21 First Congregational Shrewsbury

1/21 – 2/4 First Congregational, W. Boylston

February

2/4 – 2/11 Trinity Episcopal, Shrewsbury

2/11 – 2/18 First Unitarian, Worcester

2/18 – 2/25 All Saints, Worc.

Current Guests

Dad with 7 year old son

Mom with 9 month old son

Mom with 3 daughters, ages 3 and twins, 10 months

Mom with 4 year old son

Mom with 10 year old daughter

FINANCIAL UPDATE

INDOCTRINATION OR "BEEN HAD"

Kevin D. Kirwan, Treasurer

Hi, I'm Kevin Kirwan, the newest member of the IHN Advisory Committee and I recently assumed the roll of Treasurer. When I joined IHN, I didn't know there was an indoctrination process. In August, Joanne Marhefka, called and asked me if I would take a turn to help with the care of the van used to transport our guests. I would have to meet the van, fill it with gas, check the oil and clean the windows. So once a week I would meet the van, pump the gas, wash the windows and check the oil. I even sometimes paid for the gas to help my charity. I never understood why Maria and Ron, our van drivers, would be laughing hysterically each time I would meet the van. It wasn't until the end the of August that Joanne came and said how I

brought great joy and laughter to Maria, Ron, and our guests because I was pumping the gas, washing the windows, and checking the oil. I looked surprised at Joanne and told her it was she that told me to do all of that. She responded that I only had to do it once and that she didn't expect me to do it all of August! I of course said it wasn't a problem; she thanked me and turned away from me smiling. I then saw her pump her arm and heard her mumble, "Got him" as she did a happy dance as she left me! I don't know, but I think I got had.

Seriously, I became involved with IHN because at one time I had supported several youth organizations. I was involved in helping people, mentoring them and

coaching them. I let myself drift away. I chose IHN for one reason, my sister, Janet. My sister helped, supported and was there for me during a difficult time in my life. I always respected her involvement in church and other organizations she supported. My sister often talked about IHN at family gatherings and I felt that it was an organization that I wanted to be involved in.

I have really enjoyed my short time with IHN. I hope to use my humor and "nice guy" personality to help develop and improve my charity. As treasurer, I would like you to know that we are unfortunately down from last year in contributions. We have some fund raising ideas coming up and I hope you will support them.

Peace and love to all.



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

FAMILIES FIND HOMES

Joanne Marhejka, Director

There is much good news to share with you regarding families successfully leaving the Network. Two families left last month, Rachel and her son moved into an apartment and Elsie's family offered to let her move in with them until she secured housing. And as many of you already know, we have been extremely busy the past few weeks assisting four families who moved out of the program. Petra, Jon, Mercedes & Victor and Iris' families all moved into apartments! Many thanks to all who donated furnishings, household goods, and gift cards. Your kindness and generosity has helped them get off to a great start in their new homes. IHN of Greater Worcester is blessed to have such caring volunteers.

Thank you! We are truly grateful for all that you do for our families and our program!

Update on Ja'Kwan

There is some good news and not-so-good news with Ja's health and recovery process. The good news is at this time, the cancer is gone. The not-so-good news is that, although it is no longer cancerous, the mass is still there and very close to his heart and lungs, too close to operate. And it does affect his ability to breathe on his own, so he remains on the ventilator and in the hospital. Sadly, the homecoming they hoped to celebrate in early November will not happen. Please continue to keep them in your prayers.

WISH LIST

- Blankets
 - Towels and face cloths
 - Deodorant
 - Shaving cream and razors
 - Bath-size soap bars
 - Body lotion
 - Shampoo and Conditioner
 - Cleaning supplies
 - Trash bags
 - Laundry detergent
 - Bins for families' belongings
- Please call Joanne - 508-798-6732 to donate. God bless and thank you in advance!

CO-ORDINATOR'S MEETING

The quarterly meeting held in September at Christ the King in Worcester was blessed by creative brainstorming about fundraising ideas. Just in time for the matching fund campaign (see article page 2). Thanks to Janet Rauktis and Deacon Joe Baniukiewicz for hosting the evening. Here are a few fundraising ideas that were shared:

"A Garden of Hope" Sell packets of garden seeds under the concept of: growing hope for the future. Plant and nurture the seeds as does the IHN mission.

"Building Roots"

Monetary gifts are tied to a tree branch called a "money tree" which is presented to the anniversary celebrants. What if a "Home Money Tree" was part of your solicitation? Request families to make a one time annual (or seasonal) financial contribution to the "IHN Family Tree". Utilize an actual branch, small tree or a very creative representation of the "white picket fence home".



"Buy a House, Build a Home" Purchase a custom drawn house by one of our IHN children. Personalize your

houses to make it a home. Post in a prominent area as a reminder of the challenges some families face.

"Family to Family" a very personal approach . . . If each of your family members "gave up" a daily luxury, like

buying a candy bar or cup of coffee, in a week's time what would this represent as a family donation directed to an IHN family? What would be a reasonable dollar amount that a family could work together to contribute?



"Music to Soothe the Soul" An Evening of Music utilizing local talent. Have a cover charge or take a collection. Can be as family oriented or sophisticated as you wish.

"BAM - Take it up a notch" Already sponsor a coffee hour after services? Why not bring it up a notch by sponsoring a brunch - menu is limitless.

"Chowda' Cook Off" Invite people to prepare and share their favorite chowder with the community. The community gets a sample taste from each. Participants vote by making donations at their favorite chowder station. Hosts just need to provide a place, tables and some utensils and cleanup.

CO-ORDINATOR'S MEETING

Thursday, Dec. 7, 7pm

Bethel Lutheran Church

90 Bryn Mawr Avenue, Auburn



Casual Evening: Great Company, Delicious Dessert & Holiday Cheer!



IN OUR CORNER

IHN CHILDREN DESIGN ORIGINAL MASTERPIECES FOR HOLIDAY CARDS!

Leanne Luettkemeyer and Janet Keeler, United Parish of Upton

United Parish of Upton has taken on an exciting fundraiser for IHN, one we hope will have a continuing impact throughout the year. The possibilities are endless.

United Parish has holiday cards available for purchase. The art was created by children in the program. This year there are two designs, a fun "snowman in the snow" and a cheery "holiday tree with a star on top".

The cards are available with envelopes in packages of twelve, six of each design. The price is \$12 per package. What a bargain! The cards are blank inside for your own holiday message. They can also be used as note cards, gifts or gift tags. Reserve your boxes of cards today! Talk it up in your community - talk to your congregation, friends, families, and local businesses.

To reserve your cards contact Leanne Luettkemeyer at 774-573-3155 or Janet Keeler at hoha@charter.net. Cards are available for delivery to your place of worship or at the IHN Center November 20th.

All proceeds go straight to IHN. If each network member committed to 15 boxes we'd sell out! So, reserve today, quantities are limited.

YOUNG OR OLD - YOU HAVE SECRET SANTA ELF QUALITIES! *Pam Guild, First Church, Sterling*

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 faith community who would like to participate. 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 Secret Santa Elves of our faith communities in support of the IHN children and families at this upcoming holiday season.

Please contact me, Pam Guild at 978-422-6078 for gift giving by Friday 11/17/06.

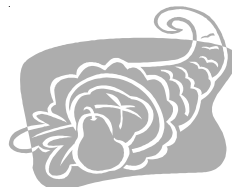
Deliver gifts to the Day Center is no later than Monday, 12/18/06.

SPOTLIGHT I

CRISIS & CAMARADERIE *Jackie Walsh & Paul Bigwood, Bethel Lutheran, Auburn*

We are reminded of the importance of friendship and support in our own lives and in the lives of others, especially in times of crisis and challenge. During our week of hosting the IHN families, it was evident that this group was special by its interaction with each other. Through the years, we have recognized the uniqueness of **all** the families. However, this was the first year that all of our volunteers made a special effort to comment on the camaraderie they observed between the members of each of the families. Moms, **Juli and Laura** helped each other with their children; 13 year old **Jorge** was almost always seen with one of two of the kids in his arms as they whisked off in the early morning hours to catch the van. When Dad, **Tom**, had an emergency with his leg necessitating

an unexpected hospital visit, **Juli, Laura and Petra** were all right there to comfort **Matthew** and to support and reassure Tom. All the families pitched in with after dinner clean-up, maintaining reasonable organization of the common room and showed great respect for the church property. Even when dinner was very late one night due to a problem with the stove, they were patient and understanding. As coordinators and volunteers we shared with the families the importance of people needing and helping other people in times of challenge. *May God bless you all.*



SPOTLIGHT II

IHN APPOINTMENTS

The October 2006 IHN Advisory Committee meeting's agenda included the official appointment of a number of officer positions. **Phil Holman, First Church In Sterling** and **Janet K. Madison, St. Richards, Sterling** both Interim Co-Chairs for the past 2 years accepted a 3-year term as official Co-Chairs. **Kevin Kirwan, Shrewsbury** was voted in as Treasurer, 2 years; **Janet Rautkis, Christ the King, Worcester** continues her position as Clerk, 2 years. Other members of the advisory committee include: **Liz Gustavson, First Unitarian**, 1 year; **Cynthia Spellane, Keller Williams Realty**, 2 years; **Ron Ramsey, Wesley Methodist**; and **Deacon Joe Baniukiewicz, Christ the King**, all of 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

*Contributing Reporters: **Liz Gustavson**, **Phil Holman**, **Kevin Kirwan**, **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 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 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 207 families, a total of 618 individuals, since its formation in 1997. IHN makes a difference!



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IHN

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TO: