



Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Main Line

Embrace. Inspire. Restore.

A Self Sufficiency Program for Homeless Families

Newsletter, Fall 2009

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Sue White-Herchek
Executive Director
Cassandra Hill
Case Manager
Tasha Overton
Van Driver
Bill Riggins
Van Driver

Learning Skills Center
1449 DeKalb Street
Norristown, PA 19401

Phone:
610-277-0977

Website:
www.IHNcares.org

New Staff Pledge to Continue IHN – Main Line’s Great Mission



Bernie Peterson (Board Vice-Chairperson), Sue White-Herchek, Carole Marchand, and Karen Wilson (Board Chairperson)

The IHN – Main Line Board of Directors, volunteers, and past guests came together last June to say good-bye to Carole Marchand and thank her for over four years of dedicated service to IHN – Main Line. She built a solid self-sufficiency program that has guided many homeless families to independence. We will miss her and wish her well as the new Executive Director of Family Promise of Lake Houston in Texas.

Carole passed the button to Sue White-Herchek who assumed the role of IHN – Main Line Executive Director last July. Sue’s association with IHN – Main Line began five years ago when she became our grant writer. She comes to her new position with over 20 years of social work experience and a great love for the program. As the new Executive Director Sue pledges to provide the same great programming that IHN – Main Line is known for.

We are also excited to welcome Cassandra Hill to our staff. Cassandra took on the role of Case Manager in October and dove right into working with the families. She works closely with them each day as they develop and accomplish their goals.

Another new face at IHN – Main Line is that of Bill Riggins. He joins Tasha Overton as the new weekend Van Driver. They have the important role of safely transporting our families to and from the congregations.



Cassandra Hill, Case Manager

Message from the Board Chairperson:

It's my privilege to be the Board Chair of an organization with a creative response to an intractable problem. How do we help families that find themselves homeless and feeling helpless? How do we respond as individuals and as a community? Do we shut our eyes and hope someone else lends the hand? No. Instead we form a consortium of faith based groups willing to offer their buildings and time to give families respite from the street and the promise of hope. We buy our own building for a day center where we work with the Moms and Dads to get them back to school, receive necessary training, and find employment that will move them confidently toward self sufficiency and independence. We have a remarkable success rate, a wonderful group of volunteers and a small dedicated staff that together make this a reality.

With the current recession, all non-profits are scrambling for ways to support themselves. Over the years we have been lucky to receive outside grants and contributions from the congregations that participate in our program. This year, just as the homeless population is increasing, so is our need for help from individuals in our community. Please don't shut your eyes and hope someone else will lend the hand. Say yes and embrace the Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Main Line. Join us to volunteer, share a meal, mentor or write a check. We accept all largesse! Please read and enjoy our newsletter and check out our website at www.IHNcares.org to experience what we do.

Thank you,
Karen Kutcher Wilson

Host Congregations

IHN – Main Line is made possible through the collaboration of 11 Main Line host congregations. Through the generous time and energy of many volunteers these congregations provide overnight shelter and food to many homeless families each year. We thank these congregations and their volunteers for making our Network possible:

Beth David Reformed Congregation
Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
Central Baptist Church
Church of the Redeemer
Our Mother of Good Counsel
St. David's Episcopal Church

St. John Neumann Church
St. Katherine of Siena
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
St. Thomas of Villanova Church
Wayne Presbyterian Church

IHN – Main Line is always looking for new host and support congregations. If your congregation is interested in helping IHN – Main Line with our important mission, contact Sue at 610-277-0977.

Family Promise PR Video

Last August IHN –Main Line families assisted in the filming of a new Family Promise (originally known as the National Interfaith Hospitality Network) PR video. Two volunteer families and a graduate family were filmed as they answered questions about their experiences at IHN- Main Line. Through this video Family Promise hopes to promote the good works of Interfaith Hospitality Networks and their volunteers. It will be used as a volunteer recruitment and fund raising tool for Family Promise and affiliate Interfaith Hospitality Networks. Our families did a great job and are featured along with staff, volunteers, and guests from IHNs all along the east coast.

The Holidays

The holidays are a busy and stressful time for most families and this is even more so for homeless families. It also gives us a special chance to help the families in our program. This year we are accepting gift cards (from Walmart, Target, Toys R Us, etc.) in lieu of presents for the guests in our program. The gift cards will give our families a sense of empowerment and control in their lives. The parents will be able to purchase their own gifts for their children and make sure that have not only what they need but what they want.

A special thank you

to Professional Duplicating

for providing the printing for this newsletter

Our Volunteers are the “Hospitality” in Interfaith Hospitality Network

If it was not for our volunteers we literally would not be able to do what we do. Young and old our volunteers give of their time and skills to provide meals, security, and friendship to the vulnerable homeless families we serve. Through the kindness of our volunteers we are able to supply a safe and welcoming environment for our families to spend their evenings and nights. Volunteers read to children, talk with our families, offer donations of clothing, etc. They are there to listen when a mother needs to talk and offer meals when are families are hungry.



As our homeless families enter our Network they feel scared, distrustful, and hopeless. Through the work of our compassionate volunteers our families gain trust, security, and hope. They develop lasting relationships and positive memories of the volunteers who take the time to help them when they are most in need. Some families even want to become volunteers after they leave the program, because they understand the value the volunteers provided to them while they were in the program.

A recent graduate stated that although she felt distrustful towards everyone when she entered the Network those feelings soon changed. “There were a lot of people ...whom made us feel comfortable and welcome. They were always helping out or assisting when they could....I remember the dinners we shared with the Host volunteers, the holidays that everyone participated in....There were so many people who cared so much showing compassion as well as interest in our lives....I’ve learned so much as a person.”

If you are not currently a volunteer for IHN – Main Line consider becoming one. Call Sue at 610-277-0977 to find out how you can help out.

We hold monthly Volunteer Training Sessions on the first Saturday of each month. Call Sue to RSVP for a training session.

A special thank you to all the private foundations
that supported the Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Main Line last year.

Ally Bank
Claneil Foundation
Connelly Foundation
Douty Foundation
Elsie Lee Garthwaite Memorial Foundation
The Emergency Aid of Pennsylvania Foundation. Inc.
Fourjay Foundation
Genuardi Employee Caring Fund
Genuardi Family Foundation
The Grace S. & W. Linton Nelson Foundation

Louis N. Cassett Foundation
L. W. Pierce Family Foundation
McLean Contributionship
Merion Foundation
Mill Spring Foundation
Montgomery County Foundation, Inc.
Montgomery County Medical Society Foundation
Morgan Stanley Foundation
Patricia Kind Family Foundation
Snave Foundation



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Together we can make a lasting difference by breaking the cycle of homelessness.

Our Mission

The mission of the Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Main Line is to *provide a caring and positive environment for homeless families and their children while they design and implement a plan to break the cycle of homelessness in their lives. Using the energy of over 2,500 community volunteers we are dedicated to families who seek to be accountable, resilient, and strive for a better tomorrow for their families*

How you can make a real difference in the life of a homeless family in need:

Volunteer your time: by making a meal, helping to turn a congregational space into a home for our families, helping children with home work, or spending time with a homeless family.

Contact Sue at 610-277-0977 to learn more about how you can volunteer.

Donate: your tax deductible contribution will go a long way towards helping our families reach self-sufficiency.

Donate by mail: Send your tax deductible check or money order to: IHN – Main Line
1449 DeKalb Street
Norristown, PA 19401

Donate on-line: Visit www.IHNCares.org and click on the Make a Donation link.