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Hospitality Network News

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Madison Area

Working with Homeless Families

by Birgit Budreau, Shelter Case Manager

Working with homeless families brings new challenges every day; some small, some large. When families come into shelter, they face an overwhelming number of barriers. They need housing, but I know they will be denied for most subsidized units. Maybe Mom has an unpaid electricity bill, or maybe the family was just evicted last month and they owe the last landlord three months rent.

The number of problems homeless families face seems insurmountable at times, and isolated problems can actually be entangled with everything else. For me, it's like a quilt. I take one scrap of fabric: a visit to the dentist to fix an infected tooth; getting a family food stamps and medical assistance; getting the older kids enrolled in school and the younger ones in daycare. A birth certificate here, a social security card there. Make a payment on an overdue bill in collections. Every piece of material, though not very significant on its own, is connected with another. Before you know it, the impact grows and grows until suddenly all the pieces are there. As a case manager; I have been the thread to sew it all together.

As we pull the pieces together, I also get to take pieces with me: the stories the families share, their triumphs and their sorrows. I feel their joy as they finally get their credit paid back, as they open their first savings account. I get excited with them as donations of dishes and household goods come in. Even if that apartment may not come for two more months, we are still excited because we realize that for the first time in a long time, this family has something to hope for, a goal within their reach.

I'll never forget moving a mom into her apartment and asking her what the first thing she wanted to do in her new home was. She smiled and replied, "I am going to lay on the floor and roll around. I just want to roll around my apartment." We laughed; but I realized this was enormous. She finally would have the freedom to be herself and let loose in a place where no one can judge her.

Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Madison Area serves homeless families by mobilizing religious communities to provide shelter and meals, by working with families to overcome barriers to self-sufficiency and by raising awareness of social justice issues.

No Place Like Home Information Sessions

Do you know about all of IHN's programs? Have you ever wondered about our daily work with families? Please come join us for a 1-hour No Place Like Home Information Session. IHN has begun offering these sessions to let people see our work first-hand. We would like to have you come meet the director, board members and some of the staff. You will not be asked to make any donation, but we will ask for your advice and feedback.

No Place Like Home Information Sessions are held Wednesday evenings from 5:30-6:30 at the IHN Day Center. 2005 dates are: June 1, July 13, August 3, September 21, October 12 and October 26th. RSVP for any date to Lissa at 294-7998 ext. 301.

Program Report

January – March, 2005

Services:

- 8 families (17 children, and 9 adults) stayed in shelter
- 13 families participated in the housing stabilization program
- The Second Chance Apartment Project housed 10 families
- 10 families participated in the neighbor-to-neighbor program with 24 mentors
- 18 community members participated in the Tenant Advocates Group

Outcomes:

- 3 shelter families found housing (60%)
- 2 families graduated from the Housing Stabilization Program
- 86% of graduate families retained housing for six months or longer

Hospitality Network News is a quarterly publication of Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Madison Area
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News of Our Graduates

Nicole and her three children **Kalen**, **Kristian**, and **Patience** moved into their three-bedroom townhouse in April. “We want to thank everyone at IHN for all the help that was offered to our family. This shelter is top quality!” says Nicole.

Renee and **Hayley** moved into their first-ever apartment in April. Renee wants to thank IHN for helping them find a nice, affordable place to live.

Josie and **Amber** entered the Second Chance Apartment Project in February. They are settling into their new home and have been busy getting to know their mentors. Josie is a full-time student at Herzing College and Amber has started working from home with a very mobile **Aidan-Skye**, now 7 months.

Second Chance Apartment Project Update

The Village of Shorewood Hills, with assistance from Midvale Lutheran Church (lease signer) and the Madison Community Foundation (fiscal agent) began



sponsoring a family in February. At left, Shorewood Elementary students participate in a walk-a-thon to raise money to support the apartment. Plymouth United Church of Christ, through reduced rent from a landlord and a major donation from Douglas Stewart, Co., is also sponsoring a family. 10 Apartments and counting!!

Special Thanks

Everyone at IHN extends sincere appreciation to all of you who have given time, money or items to support our families.

Carol and Steve Quintana donated their used van. There were at least three families who could have used this vehicle right now, and the lucky mom who got it will be using it to get herself to work.

Judy Ettinger asked guests at her retirement party to give to IHN in lieu of gifts.

Diane Harvey and **Judy Von Bergen** held a fundraising concert with the bands “Alternative Medicine” and “Playing Doctor” and raised over \$1,000 to support our programs.

Departing board members **Al Bachmann** (past president), **Richard Seaman** and **Yomi Jarrett** gave three years, and **Juanita Ebert** six years, of dedicated service to IHN.

Why We Give to IHN

by Sona Olson, Board President and Major Donor

My husband, Sean Dilweg and I became involved with IHN because of the children in IHN's programs.

I am a foreign-born American and Sean's mother emigrated from Ireland. Before we had children, we traveled extensively. Throughout our adventures we saw the true suffering and misery of families having to survive in the streets. We realize we can't change the world, but we can certainly affect our own community.

My profession is real estate: I help people find housing everyday. When I look at the families at IHN, I realize these are families with children who could not find shelter, let alone housing. The reality that children are sleeping in the hallways of apartment buildings, in the back seats of cars, in bus shelters on State Street in Madison, is unacceptable to us.

After having children of our own, Sean and I decided we needed to get involved. We wanted to help those families with children trying to survive on the streets of Madison find a way to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. Helping these families break out of poverty makes us responsible for our own community. Madison becomes a healthier, safer place to live for our own family.



We believe that the combination of IHN's shelter program, partnered with case management services and housing stabilization provides the best structure for these families to succeed and achieve their goals.

Sean and I are dedicated to this organization because these families need IHN; and frankly, because IHN needs community members like Sean and me who are responsible for our own sense of community and who are dedicated to fighting against homelessness in our own backyard.

Wish List

We are most in need of:

Baby Wipes
Bar Soap (full size)
Bleach
Car Seats
Cleaning Supplies (full size)
Deodorant
Diapers
Dish Soap
Feminine Hygiene Products
Lotion (full size)
Madison Metro Bus Passes
Razors
Toothbrushes
Toothpaste

We also need:

African American Hair Care Products
Arts and Crafts Supplies
Board Games
Dishes
First Aid (including infant)
Garbage Bags
Kitchen Utensils
Paper Towels
Phone Cards
Pillows
Pots and Pans
Postage stamps
Toilet Paper

Financial gifts allow IHN to direct resources to our most critical needs

To Support IHN:

Financial Gifts: Rachel Krinsky, Executive Director, 294-7998, x 302

Volunteering: Shannon Hayes, Network Coordinator, 294-7998, x 306

Items for Families/Programs: Lissa Sundberg, Office Manager, 294-7998, x 301

Dear IHN,

It's been a while since me and my family stayed in IHN, but it seems like we never left. Actually, we never did! IHN has given me and my family a whole new outlook on life. When we arrived in Madison from Chicago I had no idea where we were going to stay. Never in a million years would I have guessed that so many people would have cared so much about us. The love from the volunteers and IHN staff was remarkable. I thank God every day for my IHN family.



It has been two years since we stayed in shelter and everything is getting better and better day by day. Jaboré, Jamorné and Saladeem Jr. (Red) are doing great in school and couldn't be happier. I'm also doing great.

I am now part of the family that I love so much (IHN). I've been the afternoon Van Driver for a little over a year now. My job has been very rewarding. From time to time I get a chance to see volunteers that remember my family and I always embrace them with hugs, even the ones that don't remember me, or that weren't around when I was in shelter. I just love them all. Thank you so much!!

*Love always,
Veronica and Family*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A Community Response for Homeless Families
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OF THE MADISON AREA
HOSPITALITY NETWORK



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