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Hospitality Network News

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

Building Relationships, Building Skills

How IHN helps families in shelter

In addition to providing basic needs and trying to help families find housing, IHN is committed to helping families improve their lives through increased skills, income and other resources. Case management and educational workshops are critical components of our shelter program and directly relate to our families' successes, both in finding and retaining housing and in other areas of their lives.

IHN also helps families by treating them with basic dignity and individuality. As much as guests are expected to demonstrate respect in their communication and use of the program, Staff and volunteers make a concerted effort to be welcoming, non-judgmental, culturally competent, and respectful of families' values, life experiences and privacy. As such, the services we offer recognize and support the strengths, opinions and self-determination of our guests.

Case Management

Leslie McAllister, Shelter Case Manager, meets with the adults in each family at least 3-4 times weekly. Leslie's work is individualized and tailored to the needs, schedules, abilities and goals of each family. Although each family comes into shelter with a variety of skills and strengths, most also need some assistance. Many have lost resources and coping mechanisms in the stress and crisis of homelessness. Leslie regularly assists families in the following areas:

- *Organizational Skills:* keeping track of paperwork, keeping an appointment calendar, setting goals and priorities
- *Navigating Service Systems:* finding resources; applying for benefits, programs or employment; complying with requirements and expectations; advocating for oneself
- *Successful Communication:* calling when late or absent; being respectful rather than adversarial with staff, volunteers, other guests, landlords and service providers; being open, honest and accountable for one's mistakes
- *Parenting:* identifying and prioritizing children's needs; providing appropriate supervision and discipline; supporting positive interactions
- *Financial Management:* Prioritizing rent and utilities; paying on time to avoid late fees; repairing credit; different approaches to budgeting
- *Cleaning:* Guests are required to keep the day center and host sites clean. Many landlords give negative references or fail to renew leases for poor housekeeping.

In addition to working directly with the guests, Leslie also works very closely with other service providers to ensure that guests are successful in accessing resources and in meeting expectations. "Everyone in shelter has some contact with the public benefits system," she says. "I try to work collaboratively with the caseworkers so that I can help IHN families truly understand what is expected

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.

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Program Report

January – June, 2003

Services:

- 16 families (36 children, 19 adults) received shelter
- 7 families received case management services while on waiting list
- 22 families received housing stabilization case management
- The Second Chance Apartment Project housed 3 families
- 6 families participated in the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program
- 15 community members participated in the Consumer Advocacy Group

Outcomes:

- 5 shelter families found housing; 4 are still in shelter
- 4 waiting list families found housing
- 82 % of families retained their housing 6 months or longer

Graduate News:

The following families moved into apartments: Peggy & Marquitta; Veronica, Jabore, Jamorne & Saladeem; Felishia, Quashay, Jamica, Karl & Aqueela. Congratulations to all!

Letter from a Second Chance Family

I am sending my message about the wonderful people that have entered into my life. These people are from the Second Chance Apartment Project. The staff and Case Manager have been great. Their guidance in starting a new beginning is good sound advice and supportive by all means.



*mentors Jane Englund,
Stacey Sandler and Eric Englund*

Then we have another important ingredient. The mentors, oh they are great. It is a good thing that they are involved for they balance out the relation with my Case Manager. My children receive that extra eye that is needed. Especially for someone in my situation, a single parent. The mentors show genuine concern about every aspect of my life. Concern for my children's enrichment level, and extra curriculum as well.

The Second Chance Apartment Project has made a difference in our lives. I could not have come this far without their help. The program is wonderful. It is a circle of unity. With the support and guidance from the Second Chance Apartment Project I see a brighter future for our family. With employment training through the program, I look forward to full time employment so I can successfully provide for my family. With the mentors being involved I see my children improving with school in the future. I feel we are going to succeed. This program is wonderful. It is a circle of unity, and we are blessed. Thank you everyone!

Special Thanks

Everyone at IHN extends our sincere appreciation to...

...to the **Wisconsin Community Fund**, for supporting the Tenant Advocates Group this year through a grant of \$2,400

...to **Al Bachmann** and **Bob Krantz**, who installed our air conditioners.

...to the middle school students in the **Summer Stretch Program** of Sun Prairie churches who helped us clean, as well as prepared bulk mailings.

...to **Howard Johnson's** for donating one free night of shelter to a family with sick children.

...to **St. Martin's College of Cosmetology**, sponsors of the Day Maker Program for offering free services to homeless people.

...to all of you who have dropped off donated items at the day center.

...to everyone who volunteered WAY beyond the call of duty to fill the empty week in our July shelter schedule: **Middleton Community United Church of**

Christ; Rebecca Adler, Genny Benesh, Kathy Berkley, Mary Boone,

Cindy and Tricia Boyle, Edie Chan, Suzanne Folberg, Mary Fulton,

Sandra and Norris Glick, Karen Goeschko, Bob and Jessie Gwynn,

Eileen Hodge, Julie Janusheske, Lisa Krosinske, Dr. Ken Kushner, Dave Lyford,

Barb McCabe and family, Tracey Reams, Marge Resan, Nan Schaefer,

Jan Schuster, Ben Sowaske, Barbara Spierer, Lynne Tosseff, and Susanne Trieber.

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of them. Many W-2 participants have trouble with the system because they don't understand the program's requirements." Leslie also works with several area landlords who are willing to give our guests a chance, in part because they understand the benefit of case management services. "I spend a lot of time explaining the 'state of renting' in Madison to our guests – what landlords are looking for, why landlords have high standards, and what guests will need to do to be accepted for housing and avoid eviction."

Workshops

IHN contracts with Family Enhancement to provide a parenting group twice each month, covering topics such as developmental stages, age appropriate activities, effective discipline, self esteem, and taking care of oneself as a parent. The workshops are interactive and include open discussion time in which parents can bring up any area of concern. When there are school-age children in the program, IHN offers a children's support group during the parenting group.

Tanya Kirtz of UW Extension comes once a month to provide nutrition education including information about foods for optimal health and growth as well as suggestions for less-expensive foods that can meet these needs on a small budget. Dr. Ken Kushner of Wingra Family Medical Center volunteers his time once each month to discuss symptoms of depression and other mental health issues with the families. He also meets with guests individually, conducts a brief screening for depression, and can assist in finding help if needed. During these workshops, volunteers provide special activities for children. All of these workshops are consistently rated high on client feedback forms both for the usefulness of the information, and for the presenter. In addition, most adults also attend the YWCA's Second Chance workshop – a six hour training on successful tenancy.

Case management and educational services represent the difference between basic survival and the hope for a better future. The IHN Shelter Network offers a comprehensive program, providing basic services to families in need while helping them move beyond crisis.

IHN to Benefit From Triathlon

On September 7th, John Elder will be racing in the 2nd Annual Madison Ironman, and raising money for IHN through a "charity challenge." John has already raised almost \$2,000 in pledges from friends and family. "As long as I'm going to all this effort, I might as well raise money for something," says John, who first heard about IHN through his church, First Unitarian Society, a Second Chance Apartment Project sponsor. "I wanted something local. I wanted something that anybody would be glad to contribute to, and I like the idea of supporting the homeless, especially families." If you would like to learn more about John's Ironman fundraiser, you can visit his website at active.com/donate/ihnmadison. John also invites you to send this link to your own friends and family!



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Wish List

We are most in need of:

Back Packs
Cleaning Supplies (bathroom cleaner, Windex, etc.)
Diapers
Feminine Hygiene products
Hair Grease
Hair Ties, Rubber Bands, etc.
School Supplies
Toothbrushes

We would also like:

Baby Wipes
Band-Aids/First Aid supplies
Batteries
Bleach
Deodorant
Dish Soap
Garbage Bags (13 or 55 gallon)
Hair Gel, Mousse, etc.
Laundry Detergent

Madison Metro bus passes
Movies (Family VHS)
Paper Towels
Phone Cards
Postage stamps
Over the counter medicine (Ibuprofen, Tylenol, cold and cough)
Toilet Paper

Financial Gifts are always needed and appreciated.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A Community Response for Homeless Families
Madison, Wisconsin 53715
1121 University Avenue

