



Home... for Now

A publication of the Greater Nashua Interfaith Hospitality Network, Inc.

Volume I – March 2006

Director's Corner: Laurie Skibba

Writing Your History into the Story of the Greater Nashua Interfaith Hospitality Network

For 2005 Our Network Looked Like This:

- 3,186 bed nights of shelter
- 9,710 meals provided
- 9 families served (or 28 people)
-- 68% (or 19) were children;
21% (or 6) were children 5 years old or younger
- 553 trained volunteers
- over 15,000 volunteer hours donated
- 56 families representing 221 persons were unable to enter our program due to lack of staffing and/or space accommodations

Thanks to each and every one of you who have so selflessly offered your hospitality to the Greater Nashua community- may we serve even more families in 2006!

Joyfully Serving,

Laurie Skibba, Network Director

Volunteer Training Date:

On March 22, Laurie will be holding another training program for volunteers. The location of this event is the Amherst Congregational Church, and the hours are 6 to 9 pm. We have welcome individuals who do not belong to the support congregations, finding that these individuals often can help fill the need for volunteers to work with our guests. There are often times when we could use volunteers to perform tasks that do not have direct contact with the guests. These tasks include writing of thank you notes to a more demanding ones like doing grant research.

Two Guest Families Move On... Two New Families Move In

The success of our program can be seen in the number of guests moving into a home of their own. Since our December edition, we have seen two families move out. But when a family leaves, they are not forgotten. Laurie has follow up contact with them and monitors the progress of their living independently.

We recently had a mother and her son move in, and are also expecting a family of 5, with a new baby on the way, to move in soon. Additional work has been done in the building to accommodate our new guests. The Sisters have currently given us permission to have up to 18 guests.

Additional Staff - Case Manager

By the time you receive this edition of "Home for Now..." the Executive Board will be reviewing resumes of people who have applied for the position of Case Manager. It has been a dream of the Board to provide another salaried person, and with designated funds we have made a bold step in hiring a person. The Case Manager will work directly with Laurie and our guests in supervising our guests' efforts to finding a home. This position is critical to us servicing over the original fourteen guests. When this position is filled, the Case manager will be introduced to the Volunteer Coordinators.



A Bus for Sale: Do you know a Buyer?

The Network has a 14-passenger school bus, painted a darker shade of blue, that has been sitting idle since we moved to Anne-Marie House. The Board voted to sell the bus. Please contact Linda Jeynes, President - if you are interested and need more specifications or if you know of a potential buyer. Linda can be reached at 589-3071.

Board Elects New Officers:

The Board had its annual meeting around the dinner table at Charmin's in January. The following people were elected to Board officer positions:

Linda Jeynes	President
Rev. Tom Woodward	Vice President
Sr. Lorraine Arsenault	Secretary
Brenda Hodgkiss	Treasurer
Laurie Skibba	Director

The following persons continue to serve on the Board:

Curt Potter	David Palance
Brenda Smith-Weiss	Janie Andolsun
Robert Marks	Vern Trudo
Helen J Gutekunst	

Fiscal Report:

The gift of time can never have a price tag placed upon it. We give time because we believe in the vision that continues to energize the Greater Nashua Interfaith Hospitality Network. What enables the Interfaith Hospitality Network to move ahead is both faith and the sustaining commitment of people and faith communities. The Board is charged with raising the necessary money to sustain our effort. Our anticipated costs for operations, including salaries and new case manager position, are approximately \$120,000. The Greater Nashua Interfaith Hospitality Network is in need of raising about \$75,000. To help raise this sum, there is a need to identify corporate and individuals who are potential donors. Linda Jeynes and Tom Woodward of the Board would appreciate suggestions so they can approach people and ask them to make a donation to the Network.

On our website <http://www.gnihn.org/howToHelp.php> we maintain a links for contributions, which can be made with a credit card or electronic check via PayPal. It is a secure way to give and support our work.



GNIHN Fundraising Plans for 2006

We are having our 3rd Annual Spring Concert program on Saturday, May 20 at the Amato Center, located at the Souhegan Boys and Girls Club in Milford. Dana Marangi and her husband have enthusiastically agreed to chair this event. Marge Ball and Tammy Davis-Betelak are giving their assistance as previous coordinators.

The Season's Greetings Magic Show, an excellent program held in 2005 in December, under the chairmanship of Chris Trudo, had a nearly full house in the auditorium of the Souhegan High School. This event raised about \$7,000 for the Hospitality Network. We would like to continue to host a December children's program as a signature event. Chris and her committee members are willing to assist a new team that would plan for this event. We ask that you contact Vern Trudo if you are interested in volunteering.

The Nashua Music Exchange, a women's chorus, was to have a concert on Valentine's weekend. The concert is now rescheduled for March 19, at 2 pm at First Church. There is no admission charge, but a free will offering will be received. The Board will provide light refreshments.

At a recent brainstorming meeting of the Fundraising Committee, a number of ideas surfaced. There is enthusiasm for these ideas, but we need some help from our volunteers to make them happen. Might it be that a congregation might take a project on and draw from their membership for volunteers. Three ideas were to have a "Nearly New Yard Sale", an auction and a Rock Out Homelessness intergenerational fun event.

Contact Fundraising Chair: Vern Trudo: 673-4781

Wish List

There is a need for two non-beater bar vacuum cleaners to clean the carpets at Anne-Marie House. We need this type because the threads of the carpet are being picked up by beater bar vacuums and are pulling the carpet apart at the seams. Please call Laurie if you can help or know of donors at 883-7336.



What's Happening... in Our Support Congregations?

(This is a new column where we can all share what is happening in our congregations, to recognize our volunteers and interpret local area needs of the homeless. Contributions can be sent to Tom Woodward at NPC03062@aol.com.)

Recently Nashua West volunteers joined in a potluck dinner at the home of June St. Lawrence to recognize their contribution to the Greater Nashua Interfaith Hospitality Network. About thirty people, enjoyed a variety of foods in a warm atmosphere. June St. Lawrence and Board Member Tom Woodward shared information on upcoming events. *Have you held a reception that recognizes your volunteers?*

Nashua Presbyterian Church has requested and received grants from the Presbytery of Northern New England for the work of GNIHN. Currently the Grants Committee is working with the Presbyterian Church to complete a grant for 2007. *Does your church belong to a conference that supports local mission activities of your congregation?* If so, maybe you can explore this way of sharing the work that happens at the Anne-Marie House.

There is an effort to involve young people in learning about homeless people and to participate in interpreting the local area needs. There is a "Box City" program being planned at the beginning of June, and participation in a Walmart/Sam's Club BBQ fundraiser. *More information will be shared at the Coordinators meetings.*

Panera Bread has a food certificate program. First introduced by Vern Trudo, it has become a way to raise money that can be used to assist our guests. See Laurie or call Vern at 673-4781 if you would like to get more specifics and to have your congregation participate in this mini fundraising activity.



Paula and three of her four children pose for a picture with their new car, outside Anne-Marie House. From left are James, 5; Paula; Nicole, 12; and Derek, 11. Missing is Stephanie, 14.

What is the best present you ever received? Some of us may have to think back a number of years to come up with an answer. But Paula, one of our moms in residence at Anne-Marie House, needs only to hearken back to Christmas Eve 2005.

It was about 8:30 in the evening when a visitor who has come to be known as the "miracle mechanic" came to the door and asked to see Paula. He handed her a small jewelry box.

He said, "Paula, I have a gift for you. Open it up." Inside were three sets of keys. Paula started bawling my eyes out.

After struggling for a year with a car that kept breaking down, despite the mechanic's interventions, Paula just wanted one that would be safe and reliable. She got a lot more than that. There in the parking lot was a green 1996 Chevy S10 Blazer LS.

"It was unbelievable. I never expected this," Paula said. "It was all in the works without my knowing about it, and it's the best thing that ever happened to me. When the title came in, I cried again."

This friend of GNIHN works at Auto Care Plus in Merrimack. The shop paid for Paula's new car at auction, and he spent three days getting it into good working condition.

He also has done repairs on the cars for other families at Anne-Marie House, getting the parts at discount through the company and putting in his own time.

“He’s the greatest. He’s awesome. I love him to death,” Paula said.

Paula cleans homes in several area towns and she needed a car she could count on getting her to work. Now she’ll get there in any weather.

And there’s another benefit for this mother of four: “I drive my kids to school in Nashua. And before, I had to drop them off out of sight; all of them except James were embarrassed. Now we drive right up to the school!”

Laurie Skibba, Network Director of GNIHN, said the Network also loves this very special mechanic. “He is always ready to help even if it means fixing a car on the side of the road so that it is drivable to get to Auto Care Plus in Merrimack,” she said.

So if anyone has a reliable car to donate to our program, we’re certain we have the person who will help maintain it; after all, he’s our “miracle mechanic.”