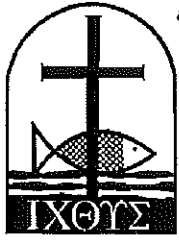


The mission of **FISH Hospitality Program** is to serve homeless women and families by providing shelter and meals, and such other assistance as we are able, in order to give them a new opportunity to live independently in their communities as respected families and individuals. FHP does assist and enable our guests to obtain housing, jobs, medical services and other assistance to which they are entitled, as far as resources allow. FHP serves people in need without regard to race, religion, national origin or disability.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Mar. 17 **FHP Board of Directors Meeting**
7:30 pm Wesley United Methodist Church
1500 Plainfield Ave.
South Plainfield N.J. 07080
- May 5 **Coordinator's Meeting** 7:30 pm
Christ United Methodist Church
485 Hoes Lane
Piscataway NJ 08854
- May 30 **Annual Yard Sale/Flea Market**
8:30am until 3:30pm
St John's R.C. Church
First St., Dunellen, NJ 08812
Rain date June 6

SERVICE STATISTICS

January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008

Persons sheltered	53
Family units	25
Number of women sheltered	25
Number of men sheltered	1
Number of children sheltered	27
Bed nights provided	4,132
Average stay in program	92 days

Cumulative statistics since program began in 1990

Persons sheltered	1,327
Family units sheltered	603
Number of women sheltered	587
Number of men sheltered	56
Number of children sheltered	694

In 2008 we received 535 calls for shelter.

VOLUNTEER VIEW

I was asked to write this volunteer view, and as I reflect on my volunteering at FISH Hospitality Program, it goes back to 1990. I was asked by Anita Hoynes (one of the founders of FHP) if I was interested in attending a meeting at the Seventh-Day Baptist Church in Plainfield to discuss the newly formed program for the homeless. I said "sure!", as I was convinced that any program that she took an interest in, I would have an interest in also. So, it was about a month after that first meeting that I was an overnight volunteer at the Friends Meeting House in Plainfield.

It doesn't feel like it's been almost twenty years since I started volunteering to do overnights at the Friends Meeting. Volunteering has been a very rewarding experience for me, one that I have never regretted. Sure, there have been ups and downs – great successes with some families, and then others who regretfully had to be asked to leave. I feel that we give the people in our program a chance to succeed...both the volunteers and guests alike! I think that getting to know some of the guests and some of the volunteers has been a very enriching experience for me.

As Vice President, I am grateful for all of the volunteers, donations, and grants that have come our way. All of these things help us to continue our vitally important labor of Love. As a volunteer, I highly recommend that you consider volunteering for FHP in some capacity (if you aren't already volunteering) – your volunteering might just be the thing that will enrich your walk with the Lord!

Dave Casterline, Vice President FHP

CONGRATULATIONS...

to Sandra Sheppard who was ordained in the Reformed Church on January 11, 2009. Sandi has had several roles with FISH Hospitality Program as director, treasurer, board member and coordinator. Rev. Sheppard is under contract as of January 1, 2009 in North Jersey.

GUEST SUCCESSES

Ernestine moved into a nice cozy rented room. She is very happy and thanks all who helped her.

Janine moved in with relatives.

Kelli moved into a rented room.

Candy and Alaysha moved into a studio apartment. Candy purchased a vehicle the weekend she moved out of the program.

THANKS TO...

Our Lady of Fatima R.C. Church and Father Paul DeSilva for hosting the annual Children's Christmas Party. Thank you to Lynn Hernandez for coordinating the party and all the wonderful volunteers and donors of gifts and food.

Girl Scout Troop # 118 Middlesex, Girl Scout Troop # 453 Warren, Boy Scout Troop # 5 Plainfield for preparing and serving dinner to our guests.

YARD SALE / FLEA MARKET

Saturday May 30 St. John's RC Church,
Dunellen, NJ
8:30am until 3:30pm
(rain date Saturday June 6)

CALLING ALL VENDORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Table Space is \$20.00 each
Van Space \$25.00 each (Vendors arrive 7:45 am)

Donations for the FHP table may be brought to
St. John's on Friday from 4 to 6:30pm

Volunteers are needed for setting up and
cleaning up.

Please call the FISH office (732-968-5957) and
let us know how YOU will help.

ACTION ALERT

FISH Hospitality Advocacy Initiative

The FISH Hospitality Advocacy Initiative is under way, with a dozen volunteers from Middlesex, Union and Somerset Counties. Our first meeting was held at the Bound Brook Presbyterian Church on January 18.

The purpose of our advocacy is to let our elected leaders hear our voices when it comes time for them to vote on measures related to homelessness and affordable housing. We invite you to join us. And since you don't have to be a FISH hospitality volunteer to be an advocate, please invite any family members and friends who might like to send an e-mail or make a phone call about once a month to an elected official in Trenton or Washington in support of the homeless and low-income families. Contact Brock Haussamen at haussamenb@yahoo.com or at 908-963-9729. Find out more at www.fishhospitality.com

Winter concert a success

The feedback received from the attendees of the FHP Winter Concert was that it was a superb musical afternoon. Thank you to Pastor David Taylor for hosting the concert. Thank you to Brock Haussamen and Joan Beil, Ministry of Music, Trinity Reformed Church for organizing the concert. Thank you to all the wonderful performers. They are: St Paul's Episcopal Church Choir Bound Brook directed by Darren McCann, jazz guitarist Larry Barbee and vocalist Christy Colato, Reverend Jack Zamboni, vicar of St. Francis Episcopal Church Dunellen, Trinity Reformed Church Choir directed by Joan Beil, and Ted Schlosberg who played the alphorn. Thank you to Don Zilkowsky for the delicious refreshments and surprise gifts. Thank you to all who attended and for your support of FISH Hospitality Program.

WISH LIST

NEW PILLOWS (we desperately need these)
laundry detergent,
fabric softener- liquid and dryer sheets

You may leave these at the FHP Office

FROM FORMER GUESTS

October 10th 2006 was a memorable day for me. I became jobless and homeless. With three children to provide for this became a frightening time in my life. Not knowing where to turn FISH Hospitality Program became a positive outlet for me and my family. Once accepted into the FISH program I had to start all over again. The three months in the program was a new and frustrating time. I had to relearn how to do things. I found a job after being accepted in the program. Then I had to relearn about my finances. I learned how to save a large part of my paycheck. One of the things that helped me was a log book that Susan gave me. I began to write down my goals then checking off my daily tasks as I completed them. It felt good to accomplish my tasks.

I was accepted and moved into transitional housing at Naomi's Way this began a bright beginning for me. I was conditioned to save while in the FISH program so I had enough money for the security deposit.

While at Naomi's Way I had to live within my financial means. I had a great possibility of receiving Section 8 if I graduated. With the new skills I had, and by staying focused on completing the eighteen month program, I successfully accomplished my goal. I have now returned back into society living in a beautiful condominium in Somerset County.

My children never missed out on anything. My oldest child will be graduating from college. I have a daughter who will graduate from high school and I am looking forward to her prom. My eight year old son has made new friends and loves having a swimming pool at his convenience.

Life is good. Life has truly taught me a lesson that I'll never forget. God had a plan for me, which was to come to FISH Hospitality. It has all worked out. Thank you to all at FISH Hospitality Program.

Sincerely,

A Productive Citizen

January 2009

To Susan:

I would like to take the time to thank you, Emily, Frank and all the volunteers for all the help I received in the program. I don't know what I would have done had you not accepted me in the program.

The friends I made were like family to me. Everyone got along and we were always there for one another. The advice, the sternness, the kindness were all well accepted. I'm a better person today, not as depressed or

sad as when I first arrived in the program. Once again thank you and God Bless!

Ernestine

Some quotes from guests' exit interviews:

"The volunteers were very friendly and helpful"
"The meals were excellent we had something different all the time."

"The churches we stay in are very good and the people are wonderful"

"The volunteers always made me feel welcome. I think some of them are good friends"

"The meals were very good"

"It was a good experience I really learned something being in the program."

"I got along with everyone. Some people didn't get along with me but I try to love everyone the same."

"All the churches were very good. The volunteers are excellent and so very helpful."

"The volunteers are the best because they have such patience and are very inspiring in what they do for us guests. I love them."

"All the food is a blessing could not ask for anything better being waited on is great especially at the end of a long day there is nothing like a good hot meal. Thank you."

"I didn't like the moving but it was what I had to do."

Festival of Sacred Music

an

Ecumenical Event

at

Our Lady of Mount Virgin Church

600 Harris Avenue

Middlesex, NJ 08846

April 26, 2009

4:00 pm

Eight to ten choirs of various faiths and cultures participating with musical selections in response to the readings from St. Paul

A free will offering will benefit
Habitat for Humanity

MARCH 2009

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FISH Hospitality Program, Inc.

A tri-county program for homeless women and families serving Middlesex, Union and Somerset Counties in New Jersey

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Union County: PO Box 5440
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Phone: 732-968-5957
Fax: 732-968-2870

e-mail: fishhospsw@aol.com
web site: www.fishhospitality.com

Affiliate of Family Promise
Affiliate of FISH, Inc. Dunellen, NJ
Member of New Jersey Alliance for the Homeless

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Vice President	David W. Casterline
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Exec. Director: Susan E. Baybutt, MSW, LSW,
C-ASWCM

Thank you to **VERSATILE printing applications** of Bound Brook, NJ for their continued support of FHP by donating their services to print this newsletter.

PARTICIPATING CONGREGATIONS

Host Congregations (night and/or day):

Bound Brook Presbyterian Church - n
Christ United Methodist Church, Piscataway - n
First Baptist Church, Sewaren - n
First Presbyterian Church, Avenel - n
First Presbyterian Church, Dunellen - n
Friends Quaker Meeting House, Plainfield - n
Middlesex Bible Chapel - d
New Beginnings Church of the Nazarene, Edison - n
Rose of Sharon Community Church, Plainfield - n & d
St Paul's United Church of Christ, Milltown - n
Trinity Episcopal Church, Woodbridge - n
Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick - n
Trinity Reformed Church, N. Plainfield - n
Wesley United Methodist Church, S. Plainfield - d
Woodbridge United Methodist Church - n

Buddy Congregations:

New Dover United Methodist Church, Edison
St Cecelia's R.C. Church, Iselin
St James R.C. Church, Woodbridge

Support Congregations:

Grace Alliance Church, Piscataway
Our Lady of Fatima R.C. Church, Piscataway
Our Lady of Mount Virgin R.C. Church, Middlesex
Pilgrim Covenant Church, South Plainfield
St John the Evangelist R. C. Church, Dunellen
St Luke's R.C. Church, North Plainfield
St Paul's Episcopal Church, Bound Brook