

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

- September 15 **Board of Directors Meeting**
7:30 pm Wesley UMC
1500 Plainfield Ave
South Plainfield, NJ
- November 1 **Volunteer Recognition Dinner**
4:00 pm at First Presbyterian Church
218 Dunellen Ave, Dunellen, NJ 08812
- December 13 **Children's Christmas Party**
1:00 pm at Christ United Methodist Church
485 Hoes Lane Piscataway NJ 08854
- December 14 **A Festival of Carols**
3:00 pm Trinity Reformed Church
401 Greenbrook Road
North Plainfield NJ 07063

THANK YOU TO...

the children of the Sunday School at St Francis Episcopal Church, Dunellen for their generous donation to benefit the children in FHP

Dorothy Blae and the people at Wesley United Methodist Church for inviting FHP guests to their Multicultural Show and Dinner. All the guests had a wonderful time. Thank you for including our guests.

Boy Scout Troop # 5 from Plainfield who prepared and served food to our guests at Trinity Reformed Church

Girl Scout Troop # 155 from Middlesex who prepared and served dinner to our guests at Christ United Methodist Church

Girl Scout Troop # 320 from North Plainfield who served dinner to our guests at Trinity Reformed

VOLUNTEER VIEW

I am glad that Christ United Methodist Church is a night Host Congregation helping our FISH Hospitality guests have a place to live while they are working to get back on their feet, even if it can only be one week at a time. Since we are called to care for the least of these, it is good that the members of all the church congregations in the FISH Hospitality network are able to work together to offer this direct service that shows good works flowing towards our neighbors from the wellsprings of faith. I am also glad to be able to participate in the new FISH Hospitality Advocacy Initiative. Our ministry has now taken an important step toward acts of justice along with acts of mercy as we seek the means to end homelessness and to advocate for fair housing choices.

Of all the many Bible passages about caring for the poor, the following passage from the Epistle of James is one of the most moving for me because it challenges an all-too-human tendency to over-spiritualize Jesus' message:

What does it profit my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 2:14-17 KJV).

Being a volunteer with FISH Hospitality has given me a very real and specific opportunity to accompany my neighbors when they are in need. I have grown in spiritual maturity as I have practiced following Christ in this simple task. Boldly praying for a humble servant heart, I have gradually learned how to pay less attention to my own efforts to be good and more attention to Jesus Christ who is the Grace that forgives, yet who also sends me back out into the world again and again with the command to sin no more.

-Catherine M. Stanford

How can I help?

Monetary donations should be sent to FISH Hospitality Program, Inc. P.O. Box 170, Dunellen NJ 08812

To volunteer with the program call 732-968-5957 Pray for the well being and success of our guests

FISH Hospitality Advocacy Initiative

The next meeting of the FISH Hospitality Advocacy Initiative will take place on Monday, September 21, at 7:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Dunellen, located at 218 Dunellen Avenue. We will discuss recent housing and homelessness issues and then write some advocacy letters. All are invited to join us in raising our voices in support of fair housing for all.

On July 28 I joined 350 other New Jersey housing advocates in Washington D. C. at a Congressional reception. The event was organized by the New Jersey Advocacy Network to End Homelessness. We all—housing professionals, advocates, formerly homeless people, many others—gathered in a huge room in a Senate office building. The room, with tall marble columns rising fifty feet to the ceiling, is the majestic chamber where the hearings on the Watergate break-ins and on the sinking of the Titanic were held in the past.

Basically, the reception was an opportunity for any of New Jersey's Senators and Congressman to come speak with us in support of fair housing and against homelessness. Congressmen Leonard Lance and Rush Holt showed up in person, others sent staff members in their place; Senator Menendez, though not present, was thanked for having obtained this year's room for us.

We needed the big room. At the first such reception two years ago, 80 people came. Last year, twice that number. This year, 350. In this kind of advocacy, such numbers count. One speaker described us as the leaven in the flour that makes the bread rise. The consensus seemed to be that we were becoming more effective at being heard and that our state's representatives, with a few exceptions, were supporting the legislation that we cared about.

As I've learned more about the details of recent legislation, I can see the basic change in direction that the national response to homelessness is taking. The old pattern used to be that after a family becomes homeless, supportive agencies and shelters, including FISH Hospitality, begin to help out. The new pattern is to help families well before they become homeless. Families and individuals at risk of homelessness can be identified in many ways: by how often they move, whether they are living doubled up or in a motel, or if they are facing eviction, for example. Agencies bring early support in the form of short-term financial assistance, mediation, legal help, and credit repair.

If a family does become homeless, the operative phrase these days is "rapid re-housing." Agencies swing into action with housing searches and assistance for security

and utility deposits and moving costs so families are back in a home quickly. Such is the direction of the ambitious legislation in the pipeline these days. It is exciting to watch such humane and far-sighted strategies for making homelessness a thing of the past.

Brock Haussamen

SERVICE STATISTICS

January 1, 2009 – June 30, 2009

Persons sheltered - 46
Family units - 23
Number of adults - 26
Number of children sheltered - 20
Bed nights provided - 1857

GUEST SUCCESSES

Adrienne moved into her own apartment and was able to get settled before her baby arrived. On Sunday June 7 she gave birth to a 7lb 4oz baby boy. His name is Amir. Haj is happy to have a baby brother.

Pansy and Miracle moved into their own comfortable apartment.

Fatima and Nadjid moved into an apartment. Fatima is happy that she now has a short commute to work. Nadjid is getting ready to start his new school.

WISH LIST

laundry detergent fabric softener
bleach
body lotion mouth wash baby powder

You may leave these at the FISH Hospitality Office or a Host Church.

"Poverty is not created by God, but by you and me because we do not share."

Mother Teresa

GUEST'S FEEDBACK

"My hardest time was the weekly move: getting use to different people, different settings. All other experiences were great."

"All the volunteers were very nice and showed concern and caring."

"This program is excellent. Even though we move every week everyone in the program seemed to care more than other shelters I have been in."

"I learned a lot and acquired some lasting friendships with other guests."

"I have never been to another shelter, but I'm glad this one is my only one. It was good."

"The volunteers were very good."

"The volunteers were very good listeners."

"The churches were very good at accommodating my children's food allergies."

"All the people in the program were very caring and understanding."

"The other guests in the program were very good with me and my children."

"The other guests were a very good group."

"I made a few good friends. The other guests were comforting."

Current Statistics

Just a few statistics comparing New Jersey with neighboring states.

	NJ	PA	NY
Current unemployment rate	9.2	8.3	8.7
Foreclosures	4.32	2.39	2.97
Bank Failures	2	0	1

Source (a) Bureau of Statistics
(b) Mortgage Bankers Association
(c) FDIC

FROM A FORMER GUEST

We are all different, unique individuals; yet in so many ways we are the same. We have been given the awesome gift of free will. God has given us the ability to choose what we are going to do in this life here on Earth. Sometimes along the way we don't make the best choices. Looking back on my life I have realized I didn't always make the best decisions. I didn't always consider the next step, the next moment or even the next day. All that can be said about choice of actions, people I was associating with, education, the list goes on. The one time in my life I was forced to really think about the next day was New Year's Eve 2008. I was laid off from my job. I had only been there a short time and anyway it was temporary. I had decided to go back to work after being home with my oldest son for more than a year. The money was good, but it was far, that didn't really bother me too much. I was working to help make the financial situation in my family a little easier. Things were good for a while, bills were being paid, but I wasn't able to save like I wanted to. Not long after I was working I learned I was pregnant with our second child. Not long after that I was laid off. Not long after that, the bottom dropped out. The rent was late, very late, like tenancy court. So losing my job was not part of the plan. I was barely satisfying the court order. I saw the situation for what it was. Even though I had gotten the money to get caught up, what would I do to stay afloat? I gave up the decision to give up my apartment and go into a shelter. For three months my son and I were guests of FISH Hospitality Program. This was not how I planned for life to be; homeless, separated from my husband and pregnant, IN THE WINTER. That's just the thing I didn't plan, I didn't plan for anything. Despite the dismal situation, it did teach me some lessons; plan, persevere and pray. I am still trying to be better at all those things, especially the praying part. By God's permission we won't be in the same position ever again. We are in an apartment, we are well and we are happy. Some day I hope to be able to sit down with my boys and explain to them the importance of the "3 P's" and hopefully homelessness will be at the opposite end of the spectrum as I impart those lessons on them. Thank you FISH Hospitality. God Bless.

In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and Prophets
Matthew 7:12

SEPTEMBER 2009 FISH Hospitality Program, Inc.

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

Mailing Address: PO Box 170
Dunellen, NJ 08812
Union County: PO Box 5440
Plainfield, NJ 07061
Office: 456 New Market Rd.
Piscataway, NJ
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

Board of Directors

President	Robert J. Spencer
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Exec. Director: Susan E. Baybutt, MSW, LSW,
C-ASWCM

PARTICIPATING CONGREGATIONS

Host Congregations (night and/or day)

Bound Brook Presbyterian Church - n
Christ United Methodist Church, Piscataway - n
First Baptist, Sewaren - n
First Presbyterian, Avenel - n
First Presbyterian, 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, Woodbridge - n
Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick - n
Trinity Reformed N. Plainfield - n
Wesley United Methodist Church, S. Plainfield - d
Woodbridge United Methodist Church - n

Buddy Congregations

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

Support Congregations

Christ Church, N. Plainfield
Grace Alliance, Piscataway
Our Lady of Fatima R.C. Church, Piscataway
Our Lady of Mount Virgin R.C. Church, Middlesex
Pilgrim Covenant South Plainfield
St Francis Cabrini R.C., Piscataway
St John the Evangelist R. C. Church, Dunellen
St Luke's R.C. Church, North Plainfield
St Paul's Episcopal Church, Bound Brook
St Peter's Lutheran Church, N. Plainfield
The Rescue House of Prayer, S. Plainfield

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