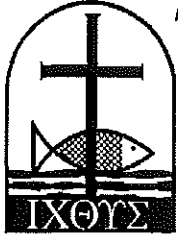


The mission of FISH Hospitality Program is to serve homeless women and families by providing shelter and meals, and such other assistance as we are able, in order to give them a new opportunity to live independently in their communities as respected families and individuals. FHP does assist and enable 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 9 **Coordinator's Meeting** 7:30 pm at First Presbyterian Church, 218 Dunellen Ave, Dunellen, N.J. 08812

Mar. 16 **FHP Board of Directors Meeting** 7:30 pm at Wesley United Methodist Church, 1500 Plainfield Ave, South Plainfield N.J. 07080

May 22 **Annual Yard Sale/Flea Market**  
8:30 am until 3:30 pm  
St John's R.C. Church, First St., Dunellen  
N.J. 08812 Rain date May 29

## Service Statistics

January 1, 2009 - December 31, 2009

Persons sheltered -	68
Family units -	30
Number of women -	30
Number of men -	4
Number of children sheltered -	34
Bed nights provided -	3,959
Average Stay in Program -	70 days
Average Daily Census -	10.8

In 2009 we received 563 calls for shelter

## UPDATE ON GUESTS

Jessica and her sons moved into her own apartment

Shannon went to live with relatives

Ricardo, Yolmaris and children moved in with relatives after leaving the program. They found an apartment shortly after moving in with relatives. They are all doing well.

Janine graduated from the nursing program she was attending while in the program. She is now employed in the nursing field. Congratulations!

## VOLUNTEER VIEW

When I was asked to write this volunteer view for the FISH Hospitality newsletter, I had to reflect to when I first started as a co-coordinator for the FHP at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Bound Brook. It was some time in 2004 when I was approached by our former chairman of the Inreach / Outreach Committee at St. Paul's to see if I would take over as the FISH coordinator at St. Paul's. I was skeptical at first because I had no idea what FISH was all about or how I would go about getting our very small congregation to volunteer for this ministry. While St. Paul's had been a support church with the FISH program for many years, I was not involved and did not know what to do. With some help from Nancy Jordan, the former St. Paul's FISH coordinator and some insight gained at the "new volunteers" meeting run by FHP and much help from the FHP office staff, Carole Barrett (my co-coordinator) and I have been able to figure it out.

St. Paul's provides support during the day whenever Bound Brook Presbyterian is the night church. Our volunteers go to the day facility to help when we can during the weekday and we host the FISH guests at our church on the weekends. Being a coordinator of the FISH program at St. Paul's has been a very rewarding experience for me and my family. It has allowed us to meet new people, both volunteers and guests, and has given us the ability to help others who are not as fortunate as we. It has helped us to be better Christians and to understand that by serving others, we are serving the Lord. Being involved with this program has shown my two children what it means to help others and to open their eyes to some of the difficulties that some kids their own age must overcome and be thankful for what they have. It is a family affair whenever we host the FISH guests: my husband, John, helps me to shop for the food and set up the church for the weekend and fills in whenever we do not have enough volunteers. My son, Jake, helps me to clean up at the end of the weekend and my daughter, Marisa, volunteers when she can. Even now as a teenager, she still likes to come to play with the kids. She does crafts, plays games, goes on the playground or watches a movie: whatever the kids want to do!

Some hosting weeks are more difficult than others and some are more rewarding. I am reminded of one middle-aged guest who was in the program by herself. She spoke fondly of a son and other family members but had not seen them in some time. The Sunday of our hosting week was her birthday. We bought her a Target gift card and a small cake and all of the guests and volunteers sang "Happy Birthday". It was a short while later that tears welled up in her eyes. When I asked her if she was OK and what was wrong, she simply replied "Thank you for remembering." It is the small, simple things that remind us that we can and do make a difference in others lives.

As a coordinator of the FISH program at St. Paul's, I am grateful for all of the volunteers from our church who continually give of themselves and their time to make this a successful program. Without them, we would not be able to do what we can to give the FISH guests a chance to succeed in life. If you would like to help us or visit with our St. Paul's family during our FISH hosting weeks or any time, please call me - we all would love to meet you!

Patti Ruskan  
St. Paul's FISH Coordinator

## REMEMBRANCES

Henry J. Nix

Navy lieutenant commander, engineer, attorney,  
82

Lt. Cmdr Henry J. Nix, USN (ret.) died on December 31, 2009 in Ocala Florida. In 1970 he retired from the Navy and worked as an engineer for the Port Authority of New York/New Jersey. He graduated from Seton Hall Law School in 1983 and went into private practice in Piscataway. He enjoyed doing volunteer work and served on the Fish Hospitality Program Board of Directors. He helped formulate the by-laws of FHP and provided other legal advice to the organization.

Edwin D. Hearn

Edwin Hearn passed away on Thursday February 4 at the age of 77. Ed served for several years on the Board of Directors of FISH Hospitality Program, Inc. He also served for many years on the Board of Directors of FISH Inc. We give thanks for his dedicated life of service to the disadvantaged people of Central New Jersey. Please keep Juanita, his wife of fifty-six years, and his family in your prayers.

Francesca Grassi

Francesca died on Tuesday February 9 at home with her family. Francesca was the wife of Frank Grassi, the former Social Worker for FISH Hospitality Program. Frank and Francesca were married for fifty seven years. Frank lives in East Brunswick. Early in her career Francesca was a teacher at St Michaels High School in Manhattan. She was the Vice Principal of St. Peter's High School in New Brunswick for over twenty years. Please keep Frank and his family in your prayers.

## FISH Hospitality Advocacy Initiative

Are you getting the news about what's happening to affordable housing laws in New Jersey? If you would like to be kept up-to-date on how the legislature and the new governor are changing New Jersey's plans for housing, join the FISH Hospitality Advocacy Initiative for e-mail updates. Contact Brock Haussamen at [Haussamen@yahoo.com](mailto:Haussamen@yahoo.com)

*How can I help?*

*Monetary donations can be sent to  
FISH Hospitality Program, Inc.*

*P.O. Box 170  
Dunellen, NJ 08812*

*To volunteer with the program call  
732-968-5957*

*Please pray for the well being and  
success of our guests*

**Thank You To...**

**Christ United Methodist Church and Rev. Donald Tabler** for hosting the FHP Annual Children's Christmas Party. Special thanks go to Edie Turi, Marsha Colby and Kathy Steiner for organizing this event. Thank you to all the wonderful organizations and individuals who donated to this event.

**Pack 224, Den 1 of South Plainfield** who together with their parents cooked and served our guests at First Presbyterian Church of Dunellen.

## **WISH LIST**

**Body Wash Deodorant Moisturizer  
Fabric softener Dryer Sheets**

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

### **YARD SALE / FLEA MARKET CALLING ALL VENDORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

**Saturday May 22 St. John's RC Church  
First Street Dunellen, NJ  
8:30am until 3:30pm  
(rain date Saturday May 29)**

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

**Donations for the FHP tables can be delivered to St. John's  
on Friday, May 21 from 4pm - 6:30pm**

**Volunteers for set-up and clean-up needed, also to sell  
items at FHP table.**

**Please call the FHP office (732-968-5957) to tell us how  
YOU will help in this fund-raising event.**

## The FISH PROGRAM and My Experience

Starting off in a very unfortunate situation.....Not having a place to live was one of the worse feelings ever!!!! There are so many mixed emotions and thoughts! And it seemed a hundred times worse, because I had to put my children thru this. It is not just me and me alone going through the emotions. It's all of us!!!!

The first step - calling into the office and being screened. I was greeted with a smile, and a hug, that gave me a welcome feeling and feeling that everything was going to be okay. For that moment, it made those overwhelming emotions seem a little lighter. After being screened and getting accepted into the program, I felt more of a relief that my children and I would not be on the streets.

Then I had the task of explaining to my children, what we have to do and to make them understand it's not going to be easy. And that I really wished we didn't have to go through this, but unfortunately we have to, to get to a better point in our lives and get mom back on her feet - that was the Goal!

Now after getting all the information I needed and getting started with the program and getting settled in is a whole other set of emotions.

The first week of trying to appear normal going thru our daily routine of school and work was very hard for me. Not wanting anyone I knew to know what I was going thru, made it even harder. I found it to be challenging, because I am a private and independent person. But along the way of going through all of this we dealt with it.

We met some really nice people for the most part. Relationships developed after being around other families and volunteers and for the most part these were good ones; of course there were some bumps along the way. We got through it, some days were better then others.

After being around different families and talking about our personal situation with other families in the program, my situation didn't seem as bad because they kept telling me that I was one step ahead as I was already working. It didn't feel that way to me. But when I looked at it, from their point of view they were right. In going through the program I really wished there were some things I could change. One example: the packing up on Sunday morning.

I wish I could have gotten to sleep in a little later on the weekend! After the hustle and bustle of the week with work and school and following the daily set up of the program, that was the one thing I could not wait to be able to do! Besides having my own place again, but to sleep in!

One other thing I wish I could change, the way some people look at you for being homeless. Please don't misunderstand me, it was not a lot of people that I encountered, just a few. But being in this situation you are already sensitive, emotional, that you feel it more so. Some people really need to realize being homeless does not make you to be a bad person or any other negative or nasty and or anything else people perceive homelessness to be ... the people involved in FISH, were people/families that had misfortune in their lives - mine being finances (loss of income and increase of everything else.)

However I do see the need for other churches and facilities and volunteers and donations that are needed to join in with FISH so that they can continue to help others in such an emotional and stressful situation.

Of course it would be the ultimate if there was NO more homelessness for anyone. But until then, support FISH Hospitality in anyway you can.

Thanks so much to all those involved, you are a blessing, more than any words can express! Just know my children and I am very grateful!

Thank you,

A Former Guest

*Dare to Dream*

*Family Promise*

*10<sup>th</sup> National Conference*

*April 30-May 2, 2010*

*Orlando Florida*

*Early Registration Deadline March 31<sup>st</sup>*

*For information call*

*908-273-1100 Ext. 20*

## MARCH 2010

### 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](mailto:fishhospsw@aol.com)  
web site: [www.fishhospitality.com](http://www.fishhospitality.com)

### Board of Directors

President	Robert J. Spencer
Treasurer	David Walter
Vice President	David W. Casterline
Secretary	Patricia Klatt
Members	Dorothy Blae, LCSW Michael Danciak Norma A. Elliott Marjorie G. Hall Brock Haussamen Richard Hoynes Sharon J. Hunt Emily Mlinarovich Kathryn J. Riss William Schultz

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, 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  
Second Reformed Church, New Brunswick - n  
St Paul's United Church of Christ, Milltown - n  
Trinity Episcopal, 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  
St Cecelia's R.C. Church, Iselin  
St James R.C. Church, Woodbridge

#### Support Congregations:

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  
The Rescue House of Prayer, S. Plainfield

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

**A United Way Agency**