

JUNE 2011

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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	Emily Mlinarovich
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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, 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 John the Evangelist R. C. Church, Dunellen - d
St Paul's United Church of Christ, Milltown - n
Trinity Episcopal, Woodbridge - n
Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick - 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 Luke's R.C. Church, North Plainfield
St Paul's Episcopal Church, Bound Brook
The Rescue House of Prayer, S. Plainfield
Trinity Reformed Church, N. Plainfield

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

A United Way Agency

Moving Mountains

Family Promise

11th National Conference

September 23-25, 2011

Salt Lake City, UT

For more information call

908-273-1100 Ext. 20

SIXTH ANNUAL CONCERT AND SILENT AUCTION

The annual FISH Hospitality Program Benefit Concert was held this past February for the sixth year in a row. What was different this time was the addition of a Silent Auction to the pleasures of the Concert itself. The two events combined raised a total of \$2,664.00

Visitors entering the narthex at Trinity Reformed Church first saw several tables neatly laid out with a variety of auction items. These ranged from hand-made quilts to framed pieces of art to a Kindle book reader to store and restaurant gift cards. Next to each was a sign-up sheet on which visitors could read over what others had already bid and then write down their own bid. The bidding closed about half an hour after the concert ended; the winning bids were announced and the winners picked up their items. The auction was a very relaxed way to enjoy the "game" of the auction and to make a contribution.

FISH Board of Directors member Marjorie Hall was the chief auction organizer and gift arranger, for many items were presented in attractive baskets. She was assisted by Susan Baybutt, FISH's director, and staff members Emily Mlinarovich and Kathy Steiner.

The Concert itself, after welcomes from Brock Haussamen, the concert organizer, and Rev. Scott Harris for Trinity Reformed Church, featured the usual wide array of musical performers. The audience heard the North Plainfield High School Concert Choir, under

the direction of Amy Six, sing three songs including Paul McCartney's "Can't Buy Me Love" and Randy Newman's "Short People." The chorus was followed by the song writer and performer Kathy Moser, whose motto is "Music for a Better World." She performed her songs "Moses," Straw, Clay, Wood and Stone," and "Some I Like U."

Next, we were treated to Trinity Reformed Church's own choir under the direction of Joan Beil, who also co-organized the concert. The choir sang "Paul Saw the Light" and "River in Judea." Next, Queintard DeGeneste performed on the piano. Quin, as he likes to be called, is a twelfth-grade student at New Covenant Christian Academy in Plainfield, has studied piano for seven years, and assists musically at local churches. He played "Songs of the Struggle," "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me," and Beethoven's "Sonata in F Minor, opus 2, No. 1."

The Hunterdon Harmonizers concluded our music with their barbershop versions of "Cabaret" and medleys of songs by George Cohan and others.

Trinity Reformed's Don Zolkiwsky brought the concert to a close as he does each year with his own birthday-based surprise gift lottery, after which the audience adjourned to refreshments in the library as well as to their final bidding on the tempting tables with the auction goodies on them.

The Board of Directors and staff of FISH Hospitality Program extend their enormous thanks to all the performers and to Trinity Reformed Church's congregation for their enormous efforts without which the day would not have been possible.

Please support the following businesses that generously contributed items to our Silent Auction

Acme, Middlesex
Corliss R. Franklin, Attorney at Law
Devine's Pharmacy, Dunellen
The Dunellen Hotel Restaurant
Maggiano's, Bridgewater
Middlesex Auto Service
The Planetarium at Raritan Valley Community College
Snuffy's Pantagis Restaurant
Versatile Printing, Bound Brook

Wish List

Shampoo, conditioner, Dove soap and Dove sensitive skin soap, skin moisturizer, wash cloths, Q-tips
NEW bed pillows.

You may leave these items at the FISH Office or any participating Congregation.

THANK YOU TO...

Father Patrick Kuffner and the people of Our Lady of Mount Virgin Parish for allowing FHP to use their school parking lot to hold our annual Flea Market and Yard Sale. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Thanks to all at FISH Hospitality Program

This letter is to express my gratitude to the FISH Hospitality Program and all the workers, volunteers and churches that are a part of it.

First of all I was interviewed by Susan who accepted me into the program. I was about to be homeless because I was being evicted for non payment of rent due to an injury that prevented me from working. In January 2010, I fell on ice and hurt my back and couldn't walk for a week. Had to use a cane and was in a lot of pain. It didn't occur to me to go to the emergency room because I had no health insurance. I assumed that I had a slipped disc, which is not that serious and I would be alright eventually. Susan was wonderful and after explaining the program to me I wasn't afraid anymore because I knew I still had a future. When I first arrived Frank the van driver picked me up at the train station and after I met with Susan he took me to the day center. I was welcomed and fed. This is where the people in the program spend the day, unless they have appointments, or go to work or school.

In the early evening Frank comes to pick up everyone to drive them to the weekly night church where they are served dinner, shower and sleep for the night.

In the morning Frank arrives to pick up everyone to take them to their daily appointments or work destinations. If anyone simply wants to visit someone or go on a personal trip they have to provide their own transportation. When that is done everyone without appointments gets taken to the day center where there is always plenty of food to eat, and time and space to do paperwork or anything else.

To top all this the program can send you for eyeglasses. The clothing room at the FISH office building helps you with clothing and new sneakers.

Every week the guests go to a different church. The churches and their people are wonderful. They are not just efficient and helpful, but treat everyone with kindness and respect and their volunteers cook tasty and nutritious meals. Aside from the cooked dinners there are always all kinds of other food to eat, in case anyone gets hungry in between meals. Most of the churches ask for requests; if people would like something they don't have there they provide it- truly amazing- and they usually have little gifts to give to the guests. God bless them!

Susan has experience, knowledge and insight. Without her persistence and guidance I never would have gone to Middlesex

County Board of Social Services because I didn't think I qualified. It turned out that not only did I qualify to get an allowance, rental assistance, food stamps and Medicaid but my case worker had me go to the Social Security office to put in a disability application after asking me about my health. Frank the van driver took me to all these appointments. Everyone in the program has a weekly appointment with Susan at her office where she sees how people are doing, and helps with anything necessary. Also once a week there's a group meeting with Susan where everyone discusses everything to find ways to make things better. Anyway, without Susan I would not have made it to all these appointments. Not to mention her encouragement and help with the necessary paperwork and phone calls. She's so busy helping everyone else I wonder how she has time for herself. God bless her and her work and the FISH Program!

After I left the FISH Hospitality Program with tons of clothing, gifts and saved up money the Social Security office sent me an appointment letter requesting that I be examined by their own doctors in their New Brunswick clinic. It turned out that my back injury was an actual fracture which had healed itself over time, but not in the right way. It's scary when I think about it. I was awarded Social Security Insurance income checks, and was off welfare. Needless to say none of this would have happened if I had not been accepted into the FISH program. Susan never allowed me to give up, but encouraged me to have a positive outlook and to keep trying.

So I thank God, SSI, Middlesex County Board of Social Services, all the churches and volunteers and Susan who makes the FISH Hospitality Program work and thrive. I hope she receives all the necessary funds and more to keep the program going successfully. Where would all the other people, in the past and present be, including me, if it wasn't for "FISH", not to mention people in the future? FISH saves people, kids and whole families and gives them a future and it is a necessary program that should be supported and funded to expand in the future.

Forever grateful,
Sonja

GUEST'S FEEDBACK

"The volunteers at the churches were pleasant and easy to talk to."

"My experience was excellent except for one bad experience which had nothing to do with the program."

"We had clean restrooms and a safe roof to sleep under."

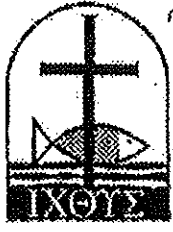
"The churches met the needs of a multiethnic group"

"I appreciate that you guys gave me a place to live with my kids. And in the future I would love to be a part of your efforts to help people."

"Susan was always flexible, a good listener and ready to help solve problems and very accommodating."

About Emily- "There is nothing else anyone can ask this very nice and very helpful and very thoughtful woman for."

The mission of FISH Hospitality Program is: to serve homeless woman 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 20 - Board of Directors Meeting

7:30 pm Wesley United Methodist Church, 1500 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield N.J. 07080

October 11 - Coordinators Meeting

7:30 pm New Beginnings Church of the Nazarene
80 Jefferson Blvd.
Edison, N.J. 08817

SERVICE STATISTICS

January 1, 2011 - April 30, 2011

Persons sheltered - 36

Family units - 14

Number of adults sheltered - 17

Number of children sheltered - 19

Bednights provided - 1032

Guest Successes

Samantha and Mekai - moved into transitional housing

Charlene and her daughters - moved in with a relative

Bushra and her sons - moved into their new apartment

Tricia and her children - moved in with relatives

Adriana and Johnny - moved into their new apartment

Volunteer View

I remember when FISH Hospitality was a new project for our church, and four of us were volunteered (drafted) to run it.

I know the board was leery of the idea when it was first presented (something new and unknown makes many people leery). The discussion and opinions went back and forth, pro and con, this church or another church. Then a member stood up and said simply, helping the homeless in our community was too important for us to say no. The discussion was finally settled with a compromise: our church would try out hosting for six months.

That was over ten years ago.

Since then I've met more wonderful guests than I can count. We've had new born babies, a guest who fixed our TV antenna, and one who gave me a big hug because I'd brought Italian Ice.

Naturally, our pool of volunteers has shrunk over ten years, but their dedication and fondness for our guests hasn't changed. We have volunteers who have slept over during our week for ten years, and other volunteers who pick their evening host or dinner slot and sign up for the same night for the whole year. We also have some families who volunteer to share their holidays with our guests. When we are hosting Easter or Christmas or Thanksgiving one of those families signs up as soon as I post the schedule.

*Marsha Colby, Coordinator
Christ United Methodist Church*