

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

Sept 17 Board of Directors: 7:15 pm
St. Francis Episcopal Church, Dunellen

SERVICE STATISTICS

(January 1 – June 30)

Persons sheltered – 25 Families – 6
Sheltered Adults – 7 Children - 18
Nights of Shelter provided – 2,086

BOX CITY 2019

The Presbyterian Church in Westfield hosted the 2nd Annual Box City with over 30 participants. The hardy souls slept outside on the lawn of the church in boxes, symbolizing the plight of our homeless neighbors. There were speakers, delicious soup and bread dinners, music and a great sense of camaraderie. The fundraiser was a terrific success and plans are already in the works for 2020!

GUEST CORNER

My name is Susan Casiano. I am a mother of two boys Elijah age 11 and Jaden age 14. In March of 2018, my boys and I became homeless because I was renting an illegal apartment unknowingly in New York. I felt hopeless as a mom for not listening to the red flags that came about. The landlord would not allow me to get an inspection done nor rental assistance. As a result of my questioning this and asking about the electricity bill, I came home one day to find that the power was turned off. This was followed by threats to contact Child Services pushing my boys and I, out of the apartment. I called Child Services myself, and rented a hotel room for the weekend. When I tried to get help from DSS, but I was denied due to having my tax return in my bank account.

I had to keep my boys off the street, so I used up all my savings for a room at the hotel for months. I tried to get my things from the apartment like the worker at DSS had stated, but the landlord changed the locks and everything I had was gone. I felt lost, helpless, a failure as a mom.

After months of tears, feeling lost, and sending my boys away for the summer with their dad to Florida. I continued to push forward. By the time my boys came back, with help of a friend and her family, I relocated from New York to New Jersey for support. I called 211 for placement in a shelter, and I was recommended to Coming Home for guidance. My case worker, Christiana was a great listener, supporter and had all the right words in a situation like mine.

After months, I received a phone call. My boys and I were accepted at FISH Hospitality Program. I met with my case worker Theresa, and I started feeling hopeful again. My boys and I didn't look at it as a shelter, but a new beginning of a journey that God was taking us through. We moved every Sunday to a different church at different locations. Grateful to say, the coordinators and volunteers from these churches were so welcoming, made sure my family and I had warm meals to eat, cozy space and beds to sleep on at nights, and were consistent to our every need to make sure we felt at home. One church surprised me with a Birthday cake on my birthday, I enjoyed it very much. Thank you, Mr. Dave. At another church, my boys felt so loved that they adopted Ms. Charlene as their grandmother. She is a true blessing with everything she has done for my boys and I.

Thankful to the program, and Ms. Theresa for her consistent accountability as a mom in the program, I was able to get all my paperwork together that I had lost. I was able to push myself forward and stand my ground for what was needed for my boys and I. Theresa is a big pusher, the momma bulldog, strong at heart and means well to everyone who comes her way. Thank you, Theresa for everything, for pushing me and believing in me.

And last, I cannot forget everything that Frank, the Van Driver, had done for us. The rides every day to work, schools, appointments, emergency visits, the day center, the laughs and jokes, and telling silly stories and more. He also was very helpful with my boys. You will be missed Frank. We are very grateful for the program, and with all my hard work, and commitment, we have been blessed with permanent housing.

When I walked in to view the house for the first time, I immediately knew that this was our home. Landlord John and his mother, Joni were very open and welcoming. They allowed the inspection with no problem, which for me was a great start. We are now all settled in and can't wait to build great memories in our home. I want to thank the board of directors and everyone from the program and churches who were a part of our journey.

We are forever grateful.

JULY 2019

FISH Hospitality Program, Inc.

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*Affiliate of Family Promise
Affiliate of FISH, Inc. Dunellen
A United Way Partner Agency*

Board of Directors

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Theresa Donatiello Neidich, MSW/LSW

WE REALLY NEED YOU!!

Yes **YOU!** We need volunteers to help at our day center on Saturdays and Sundays. We often need help at our night hosting churches with meals and hosting. Please call the office and leave a message on the answering machine.

WISH LIST

Household items: for Guests when they move into their own homes including: -Lysol wipes; window cleaner; dryer sheets; cleanser; dish detergent, kitchen/bath size hand soap; air freshener; toilet bowl cleaner, etc.

Toiletries: shampoo and conditioner; body lotion & body wash (sensitive skin)

GIFT CARDS: Costco Cash Cards, Walmart, Target, Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid, Famous Footwear, Shop Rite, Acme, and Stop N Shop

We always need furniture for Guests moving out off FHP into a home of their own. Please call us when you have or know about available furniture.

PARTICIPATING CONGREGATIONS

Host Congregations:

Aldersgate United Methodist Church, East Brunswick
Christ United Methodist Church, Piscataway
Community Presbyterian Church, Edison
First Presbyterian, Avenel
First Presbyterian, Cranford
First Presbyterian, Dunellen
Rose of Sharon Community Church, Plainfield (day/night)
Ruth Fellowship Ministries, Plainfield
Second Reformed Church, New Brunswick
St. Francis Episcopal Church, Dunellen (day/night)
St Paul's United Church of Christ, Milltown
The Presbyterian Church in Westfield
Trinity Episcopal, Woodbridge
Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick

Support Congregations:

First Congregational Church of Westfield
The First Presbyterian Church of Iselin
Jack and Jill of America – Greater Union County
Mount Olive Baptist Church, Plainfield
Negro Women Council - Plainfield
New Beginnings Church of the Nazarene, Edison
New Dover United Methodist Church, Edison
Our Lady of Mount Virgin, Middlesex
Park Community Church, South Plainfield
Presbyterian Church of Woodbridge
St. Cecelia's Roman Catholic Church, Iselin
St. Frances Cabrini, Piscataway
St. Francis Episcopal Church, Dunellen
St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, Dunellen
St Paul's Lutheran Church in Edison
Stonecrest Community Church, Warren
Trinity Reformed Church, North Plainfield
United Methodist Church, Woodbridge
YMCA, Metuchen Branch
Zion Tabernacle, Piscataway

Who's in the program now?

(Kid's age in parenthesis – County)

Mom & Dad two girls (14 & 10) – MC
Mom & two girls (5) (7), three boys (1.5) (3) (6) - MC
Mom & one girl (7) and one boy (2) – UC

HELP WANTED - PAID POSITION!!

Part-time office staff: answer phones and do light clerical work. Please call the office and leave a message on the answering machine 732 968-5957.
