

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Network News

The newsletter of the
Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network

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From the Director

We are sending out this EXTRA edition of the Network News because we have some exciting things happening in the IHN Network we want to let you know about. The first is about our good friend and long-time IHN worker and former Interim Director, Bob Saunders. This is taken from the web site of the Evangelical Covenant Church (<http://www.covchurch.org/cov/news/item5674>).

Bob and Jerri Saunders Receive T.W. Anderson Award

PORTLAND, OR (June 23, 2007) – Bob and Jerri Saunders were named the recipients of the T.W. Anderson Award today during the 122nd Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

The award is named in honor of the only lay president of the Covenant. It is presented during each year's Annual Meeting and honors laypersons who evidence lives of commitment and dedication to Christ and the church, who have been members of the denomination for at least 25 years, have not served on a conference or national board, have provided outstanding service to the local church and community, and have been recognized vocationally.

The Saunders have served 31 years at Trinity Covenant Church in Salem, Oregon. Throughout that time, they have shepherded the congregation's youth, walked alongside the broken-hearted, and inspired the church's mission in the community, say those who have benefited from their ministry.

"For Bob and Jerri, living has always been about giving - giving to God, giving to the church, giving to the community, and giving to friends and strangers alike," says Dick Lucco, superintendent of the Great Lakes Conference and their former pastor.

According to their current pastor Chris Haydon, "Their passion for the poor, the newcomer, (and) the new Christian is a reflection of their deep gift of hospitality."

"They are true companions for many people whose lives have been broken by sin and disease. They have spent countless hours in homes or at the hospital, sitting at the bedsides of those in their last days as well as standing beside surviving family members and friends." says Dan Johnson, a longtime church member.



The couple also was instrumental in helping the congregation discern how it can serve the community, Johnson says. "Bob and Jerri have encouraged, nudged, urged, and modeled how we might be the hands and feet, eyes and voice of Christ. Through their dedicated commitment, Trinity is now involved in numerous ministries in the community."

That work has ministered to the most vulnerable, including the homeless and hungry. The couple led the church to become the first evangelical congregation in the community to participate in the Interfaith Hospitality Network. "Their vision for the IHN program was that for one week – four times a year – the church would become a home for these guests, and the church community would become their extended family," Johnson says.

The Saunders also encouraged the church to work with the Salem Leadership Foundation, which brings together churches, schools, businesses, and government agencies to connect the needy with resources.

"Bob and Jerri are always optimistic, never condescending, and ever preaching the Gospel both with their lips – and more potently – with their lives," wrote Sam Skillern, the foundation's executive director in a letter supporting their award nomination

Congratulations Bob & Jerri from all of us

Helping Communities Help Homeless Families

at Salem IHN!

News! News! News!

We're now halfway through 2007, so this is an appropriate time to mention some of the great stuff that's been happening at the Day Center lately.

Greg "Full-time" Kornspan

Mid-way through June, our Case Manager Greg Kornspan earned a new nickname: "Full-Time." That's right, after nine months of working part-time, we brought Greg on as a full-time Case Manager!

Greg works directly with the families that stay with us, helping them develop strategies for finding regular full-time work and finding affordable housing.

An important part of Greg's job is *preventing* homelessness in the first place. This involves talking landlords into forgiving late rent payments, helping families reconcile, and connecting families with resources to help them keep the housing they already have.

We get a significant number of calls from individuals and families who are seeking housing. In many cases, they have resources available to them but are caught in a poor rental history situation. Greg contacts property owners who are willing to work with him in screening these families and provide them with a second chance.

We have been keeping track of these "Non-Occupancy" families that have contacted us. **They totaled 51 from January to June.** We have identified four different ways in which these families have been helped:

- Reconciliation with families so they are able to move in with them (10)
- Working with other shelters in the area to find them a place to stay when we are full (15)
- Moving into a transitional housing situation (4)
- Moving into permanent housing (22)

We are truly blessed to have an individual with Greg's passion to help those who contact the Day Center.

How are we doing?

We are moving toward our goal of helping 50 families in 2007 as guests of the Network (We served 39 in 2006). At the conclusion of June, we have had 21 families as guests. This breaks down to 33 adults and 44 children, 15 of which have been under the age of five.

Last year at this time, we had a low occupancy, at times having only one or two families staying

with us. This year in the month of June, we were at 98% capacity and are remaining full.

What's changed? Well, Greg and Richard have been working Full-Time to increase Salem IHN's visibility in the community. Richard has met with many of the other agency directors and Greg is consistently in touch with other case managers, finding the best resources for families in the Marion/Polk county area.

This extra effort has raised our visibility in the community, resulting in more referrals and more families seeking our help.

Grant us this day...

Exciting things are happening with the Day Center itself! We have received two grants that are going to help remodel the center.

One grant, through the City of Salem, will let us remodel the office and turn it into a Homework Center, while we turn the large back room into a full office for our staff.

The other grant from US Bank will let us fence in our back yard to allow a place for the kids to run around without worrying about them running into traffic.

So if you visit us in the next couple of months — excuse our dust, we're expanding!

Family updates

Many of you met Mellodee and Wesley, who stayed with us for several months. We're happy to report that Mellodee recently moved into an apartment in North Salem.

Our only concern was how Mellodee would get to and from her job as a grocery clerk in North Salem, since she sometimes has to work late, or on Sundays when the buses don't run.

In an amazing coincidence*, *that very same day* a charming community member donated a running car to the program for anybody who needed one. Problem solved.

Yay, God!

* Ha. Like we don't know better.

Musical fundraiser Sept 16

More than nine musical groups from local congregations will perform on Sunday, Sept 16 at 7:00 pm in Our Savior Lutheran church for the 4th annual Benefit Concert for the Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network.

A reception after the concert will celebrate the 800 volunteers (!) from 30 congregations that provide meals, money, supplies, and love for the homeless families served by Salem IHN.

You are cordially invited!