

Network News

The newsletter of the
Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network

1055 Edgewater Street NW
Salem, OR 97304

503-370-9752
www.salemihn.org



May 2007

From the Director

I have made it through my first "end of the year" and "beginning of the new." 2007 has started in a great way. The family numbers (see page 2) show that we are becoming more efficient in working with the families and helping them get into either transitional or permanent housing. At the first quarter break, we are already at 41% of last year's number of families!

One of the great joys of this position is working with a great group of individuals who are serving Salem IHN as the Board of Trustees. We are currently discussing what the possibilities the future holds for this vital service for families who are homeless and how we might expand our impact. We know who it is that we are currently serving. Behind the numbers are real families with everyday issues like toothaches or the need to find a vehicle that will meet their needs at the best cost. However, there is a whole other group of individuals that we help that never become part of the network.

Other than the 16 families we have hosted, 47 families or individuals have contacted us since January 1st. Of those, we have been able to help 20 get into housing through a variety of ways. Some have been reconciled with their families, some had resources but lacked good rental history - we were able to connect them with "second-chance" landlords, some were accepted to other shelters following an interview with Greg or myself. Two additional families are currently "in process." We have helped fifteen with various needs (diapers, referrals for financial assistance, etc.). Unfortunately, we have not been able to meet the needs of 10 families/individuals who have come to us.

Salem IHN is having an impact in Marion and Polk Counties beyond the families that become guests. But there is more to be done. It is an exciting time to be a part of our ministry. Give me a call and we can talk about how you can become more involved!

Richard Zielke
Executive Director

From the Part-time Van Driver

I was having a tough day recently - dealing with a difficult guest and lots (and lots!) of drama. I started wondering: What the heck am I doing? It would be *so* much easier to go back to my old job, pull down \$80K a year for sitting at a computer and writing documentation. Am I *insane*? Why am I doing this?

Then I saw this Exit Form from one of our recent guests. When guests leave the shelter, we ask them to fill out a form, so that we can evaluate how we're doing and make necessary changes.

Here's what she wrote:

What was most helpful to you while you were a guest with Salem Interfaith?

The feeling of relief, having a place for me and my family, having warm places to sleep at night, good food, and also learning how to budget my money better, and not having to worry constantly about certain things.

Would you be willing to refer homeless families to SIHN in the future?

Yes I would, because you treated me and my family so nice. Walking into this program I didn't expect such welcomingness here. Everybody I met showed us excellent hospitality and was really friendly.

Please add any additional comments you have that could help us improve Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network.

I just want to say thanks for everything you guys did for me & my family. Not once was I ever looked at for or judged for not having a home, I & my family were treated really good.

Oh yeah. Now I remember why I do this.

Robert Gidley
Part-time Van Driver

Helping Communities Help Homeless Families

Day Center needs

You guys are totally awesome! The response to the requests in our last newsletter were cool – we now have enough ties for our guests to look sharp in interviews. *And* we got some very nice VHS videos (special thanks for the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* movies!).

Our weekend van driver, Jim Dougherty, recently inventoried our downstairs Room of Supplies (which is organized by the Fabulous Wednesday Volunteer Ladies).

Here's a list of items we can use for our guests:

- ❖ Laundry detergent
- ❖ Laundry bleach
- ❖ Dishwasher detergent
- ❖ 3M scrubbies (those green flat things that are great for cleaning pots)
- ❖ Garbage bags (3 gal and 10 gal)
- ❖ Baby wipes (you would not *believe* how dirty a baby can get!)

Special Thanks to:

- Dan Sandau and Sandau Enterprises for the donation of grass seed for the Day Center.
- Randy and the folks at Power Chevrolet for helping one of our guests to get into a vehicle.

Donated Computer equipment

We're always happy to get working computer equipment (printers, faxes, PCs). But it would be a huge help to us if you could write down some basic information on a 3x5 index card and securely tape it on the equipment.

If it's a printer, include information about how full the ink cartridges are (it doesn't have to be exact – are they almost empty? Completely full?).

Are there any glitches you know about with it? (We had a PC once where you had to turn it on twice before it worked – but then it worked great.)

Unfortunately, we are unable to take non-working equipment. We don't have the resources to fix it and we then have the difficulty of disposing it as most computer equipment contains lead, PCBs, and potentially hazardous plastics.

This newsletter was put together by Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network. Specifically, Richard and Robert with assistance and graphic cleanup from the amazing Laura Gregg. Be sure to keep Angie in your prayers as her due date approaches—we're hoping for a happy, healthy, at-home baby!



Annual Fundraising Breakfast

As you know, if you were there (and if you weren't – well, you missed a heck of a great breakfast) our annual fundraising breakfast was a heck of a great breakfast.

Jinx Brandt has the place in stitches with her comments and Sydney Brewster gave a super speech that encouraged and challenged us all.

Monthly and annual family statistics

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007*
# Families	25	32	26	39	16
# Adults	33	47	36	59	26
# Children	51	65	55	73	31
# Total Guests	84	112	91	132	57
Avg. length stay (days)	49	37	48	29	24
% Occupancy (bed nights)	75%	80%	88%	75%	80%

* So far

Can You Help?

We are looking for individuals who would be interested in helping on the committee to plan our Fall Music Night. Contact Richard Zielke at the Day Center 503-370-9752 if you are interested.

Thanks to our support congregations

Last month, we thanked our Host congregations, who house our guests at their facilities. But where would we be without our support congregations; without food and diapers and all the other amazing things that these folks provide us?

Some of them help support our host churches with meals, while others provide financial support. But they *all* support us with their prayers!

So, thanks, mahalo, gracias, merci and domo arigato!

Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran
East Salem Seventh Day Adventist
Emmaus Community
First Christian Church
Keizer Clear Lake United Methodist
Morningside United Methodist
Peace Lutheran
Live Church
Salem Alliance
Salem Central Seventh Day Adventist
Salem Mennonite
St. John Lutheran
St. Philip Catholic
St. Timothy's Episcopal
Temple Beth Sholom
Trinity United Methodist
Westminster Presbyterian