

The WIHN*d*ow of Opportunity

A Publication of Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network
A Community Response for Homeless Families



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Winter 2006

With a Little Help From Friends

Melanie* came to us late in the summer immediately following the birth of her daughter. She was recovering from childbirth and caring for her one-year old son when she suddenly found herself alone after her husband was detained by authorities. She was unable to work and physically exhausted when she made her way into WIHN.

Melanie was initially very quiet and withdrawn. She was overwhelmed with two very small children and facing her future alone. She was defeated and scared. She found solace during her first week at Hudson Memorial where she connected with a nursing professional and found someone who helped her understand her physical needs in addition to other volunteers who were eager to welcome her.

Melanie soon found full-time employment, was able to place both children in day care and find her strength to move on alone. She continued to work and consider her passion for working with children. She utilized her time at WIHN to build confidence and developed the ability to trust others. She was able to do this because of the warm, welcoming, safe environment the churches provide for our families.

Melanie was able to enter a transitional housing program where she continues to excel. She is presently saving all of her earnings and has just been promoted in her job. She attributes her success in part to the incredible emotional support she received from all the staff and volunteers that participate with WIHN. She was able to find her voice and is creating a new life for her and her children.

Sandy Geiger, Hudson Memorial Volunteer Coordinator, recalls that although Melanie was timid and hurting when she entered WIHN she knew Melanie could make it. It is this enduring optimism from our volunteers that enables our families to move forward and make progress during the most difficult of times.

* Name changed

\$20,000 CHALLENGE STATUS

Raised to date (12/19) : \$ 15,595

Still needed for match : \$ 4,405

Deadline 1/31/07

Put "Stewards Challenge" on memo line of check.
Stock gifts also accepted. See Sue Marcinko for
stock transfer details.

6/94 - 11/06

*784 Families
Called WIHN Home*

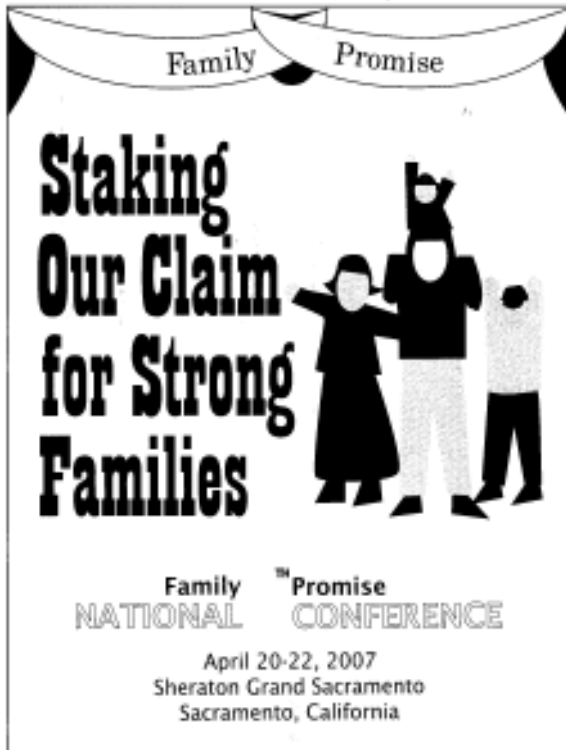


2005 -- 76 Families (95 adults, 155 children)



This year Family Promise opened 9 new networks, the most recent in Columbus, Georgia. A new network was also established in Charlotte, North Carolina. Nationally, IHN involves over 110,000 volunteers from 4,500 congregations through 124 networks in 39 states. This combined effort is making a real difference in helping families reach independence!

Announcing Family Promise's 8th National Conference



Fast Facts about North Carolina and Poverty

27% of workers earn less than \$9.28 per hour, the amount needed to lift a family of four above the federal poverty line

1.2 million North Carolinians live in poverty

21.2% of all NC families with children younger than 5 are poor

One in every five children in NC lives in poverty

41% of Renters and 30% of home owners spend at least 30% of their income on housing costs

1.3 million people in NC lack health insurance

30,016 children were victims of child abuse and neglect

State and local taxes consumed 10.9% of the incomes of the poorest 20% of taxpayers, but 6.3% of the incomes of the richest 1% of tax payers.



2005 WIHN Families

Prior to joining WIHN

56 lived in Wake County
9 lived elsewhere in NC
11 lived in another state

Reasons for Joining WIHN

Eviction/Foreclosure - 47
Displacement - 23
(Overcrowding, fire, flood, etc.)
Other - 6

Destinations for Families Leaving WIHN 2005

Permanent housing - 28
Transitional housing - 24
Other shelter - 4
Relatives - 10
Unknown - 3
Still at WIHN - 7 (end of 2005)



Hope and Thanksgiving A Musical Celebration of Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network

WIHN held an evening of music, thanksgiving and fellowship at Edenton Street United Methodist Church on Friday, October 20. The purpose of the evening was two-fold: the first was as a kick-off event toward WIHN's award of a \$20,000 challenge grant from the Stewards Fund. The Stewards Fund is a local foundation that has challenged WIHN to an all or nothing challenge – if we can raise \$20,000 by January 31, 2007, the Fund will match the \$20,000 raised. The second purpose was to express appreciation and recognition to the 38 Host, and 20 Support Congregations who make the WIHN program possible. It is with this assistance that WIHN has served over 750 families since opening the doors on July 1, 1994.

WIHN was honored to have Karen Olson, Founder of National Interfaith Hospitality Network and President of Family Promise, as the Keynote speaker. Karen shared information about the National effort in ending homelessness and praised WIHN for having a success rate above the National average. We thank Karen for her part in making this a successful event!

The evening culminated in the performance of *Handel's Hallelujah Chorus* by the WIHN choir (comprised of members of WIHN congregation choir's) as well as the audience. The raising of joyful music in the Sanctuary seemed to symbolize the power of the combined efforts of all who make the WIHN program a reality for the families we serve.

2005 Financial Audit

The 2005 audit of WIHN's finances was completed by Koonce, Wooten, and Haywood, LLP, Certified Public Accountants and is available in the WIHN office.

Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network, Inc.

(an affiliate of Family Promise) is classified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a public charity and qualifies for deductible contributions provided in Section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

Federal Tax ID Number: 56-184-3022

WIHN has been approved by the following campaigns to be a listed organization in the fall campaign drives.

This means WIHN will be listed in campaign materials and can receive designated gifts through these campaigns:

NC State Employees Combined Campaign
Research Triangle Combined Federal Campaign
IBM Employees Charitable Contribution Campaign
Triangle United Way designated gift

Other corporate charitable campaigns also allow employees to designate funds to non-profits. Thank you for any support you can provide to WIHN through your employer's charitable campaign.

SAS and Glaxo Smith Kline Beecham match employee donations to WIHN.

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that it's time to begin the mad dash through the holiday season. As usual at WIHN it has been an ever evolving, sometimes calm, sometimes hectic, yet rewarding and successful year. And although the staff and volunteers see WIHN as ever evolving the homeless families that we serve see it as their constant, a safe, warm, nurturing place to rebuild their lives and move on.

After twelve years in operation, WIHN has seen over 780 families come and go through our doors. We have served thousands of Mom's, Dad's and Children all with a different story, yet all requiring the same compassion and assistance. There are faces you will never forget, smiles that melt your heart and gratitude for the smallest gesture. Even after six years at WIHN, it remains a wonder to me that children and parents alike are able to maintain a sense of humor and provide acts of kindness to others as they work through the crisis of family homelessness.

It has truly been an exciting year! I am thrilled to announce that WIHN has been awarded a \$20,000.00 challenge grant by the Stewards Fund, a local family foundation. WIHN has been challenged to raise this money by January 31, 2006 – the challenge is that it is an all or nothing grant – raise \$20,000 receive an additional \$20,000! Please help us get the word out to everyone – an additional \$20,000 in the 2007 budget would make a great Christmas present for the WIHN families!

Last year WIHN served 76 families made up of 250 family members, 155 were children and of those 64 were under the age of 5. Fifty-four of the 76 families were single female headed households. Our local statistics support the national fact that women and children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. As always, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the WIHN Volunteers, Board of Trustees, and Staff who give freely of their time, talents and treasures to the WIHN families.



**left to right: Sue Marcinko, Lisa
and J**

Without each of you, the success of the program and the families would not be possible!

Please keep the challenge grant in mind this holiday season. I thank you in advance for anything you can do help us raise this much needed \$20,000.00! Happy Holidays to you and yours!

Many Blessings!



I began at WIHN in March 2006. Previously I have worked with the homeless population in Chicago in addition to working in the fields of mental health and child welfare. I graduated with a M.A. in Clinical Social Work from the University of Chicago in 2003. My husband, Mike, is a mechanical engineer for Caterpillar and is currently pursuing his M.S. in Systems Engineering. I have 2 sons, Carter is 3 and Connor is 1. We enjoy the outdoors and the beach.

Michelle Chiamonte
Case Manager

STAFF NOTES



**Lisa Williams, Michelle Chiaramonte,
Julie Jones**

Since joining the WIHN staff in April of this year I have had many opportunities to witness the positive impact this program affords the families it serves. It is incredible to see the capacity of the community and volunteers who give so freely of their time and resources to help our families on the road to self-sufficiency. I am proud and truly grateful to take part in such a valuable mission. Married with two children, a son and a daughter, I have a degree in Business Administration, attend Fuquay Varina United Methodist Church and am an active volunteer with Girl Scouts on both the local and Council level. I look forward to continuing to establish and embrace my place in the WIHN family.

Lisa Williams
Case Manager

I am so excited to be the newest addition of the WIHN family and am looking forward to serving as the volunteer coordinator. I have been in the field of volunteer management for the past 4 years and really LOVE what I do! I am still getting my feet wet here but I am looking forward to meeting all of WIHN's wonderful volunteers in the New Year. I am very impressed on how smoothly the program runs and the dedication of the volunteers who ensure that happens.

Part of my philosophy is to lead by example and do what a volunteer does so I can have the experience to share. Hence I plan on participating with several of the host congregations so I can watch, listen, and learn. I am also here to support all of WIHN's volunteers and consider it my responsibility to 'fill in' when and where any of the volunteers need me. So if the congregations need an extra hand with the cooking, unloading, or just another overnight host I am the official back up.

I know many congregations are seasoned pros at the whole WIHN process and will be a wealth of valuable information for newer folks as well as myself. We will host a volunteer information forum at the Day Center and I will ask the seasoned volunteers and host congregations to share their experience and answer questions. During this time we will also offer "sensitvity training" which will be taught by WIHN case managers Michelle and Lisa.

I would love to get the local youth groups and Civic organizations involved with Wake Interfaith too and perhaps do some more activities at the day center. There are many storage rooms that need to be cleaned and organized, vans that need to be washed, and opportunities to plan fun activities for the younger guests of WIHN. I am happy to assist in planning small fun, fundraisers with the youth and am always open to new ideas.

Happy Holidays; I look forward to getting to know all of you in 2007!

Julie J. Jones
Volunteer Services Coordinatgor

A Bridge from Despair to Hope

Walk through Highland United Methodist Church's Children's Center any weekday, and one of the beautiful, smiling faces you will see is that of "Rose," one of the teachers who provide loving care and nurture to the children in the preschool and daycare program. Just 3 years ago, however, the expression you might have seen was an expression of fear, sorrow and uncertainty.

In September of 2003, Rose and her husband Robert, real people in our community (last name omitted to respect their privacy) were evicted from their apartment. Suddenly, they and their three children, were homeless, and without sufficient resources to find a new place to live! Their's is a story that is all too common.

Homeless! How could it happen? Rose and Robert were living in a comfortable apartment – nothing fancy but adequate for them and their three children – a toddler and 2 growing boys nearing those difficult teenage years. Then Rose's elderly mother, living in South Carolina, developed a debilitating illness. With the love for her mother and concern about her worsening health condition, Rose began a series of almost weekly pilgrimages to SC. It was an expensive addition to family finances. Robert expressed his concern about the cost and the impact it was having on their dwindling resources, but after all, "family comes first!"

Robert continued to respect Rose's concerns for her mother and her frequent travel home – even though money was clearly flowing out faster than coming in. Unfortunately, as the trips continued and family resources were stretched beyond the limit, bills were paid only slowly – and late. Rent payments were missed and late. Then one fateful day, Rose and Robert found a sheriff's deputy at their door with an eviction notice.

Fortunately, Rose and Robert, both church people, had heard of WIHN. When they applied for temporary shelter, the WIHN staff told them they qualified. They joined the continuing parade within WIHN who have

found and continue to find temporary shelter at the WIHN Day Center and in cooperating churches in the evenings. WIHN clients are working people – indeed they must be working or seriously looking for employment. These are families who have fallen on hard times and suddenly found themselves on the street. It is a well known axiom, that many families are only two paychecks away from homelessness!

Finally, almost a year after having been evicted from their apartment, Rose and her family were ready to graduate from the WIHN and Step-Up sheltering programs. They were once again equipped and ready to move into an apartment on their own. With both working, things were certainly going better! Still, Rose was working part time at THE GAP, with no benefits. This job also required that Rose find some source of daycare for her still under 5 youngest. (Her two older sons are now attending public high schools.)

About the same time Rose was looking for a daycare solution, the Highland Children's Center was seeking another qualified and dependable teacher replacement. When Rose called Highland to inquire about our preschool program, the conversations led to the fact that we too were looking. After some further discussions, it was determined that Rose not only had a need for her own family, but she was just the kind of person needed by the Children's Center.

So if you are walking the halls of the Children's Center today, there is a very good chance that many of those bright smiling faces you see on the little ones, are simply reflecting the loving smile of Rose, their teacher!

Report by John Robinson, Highland UMC Communications Coordinator



2005 WIHN Families

Employed When Joined WIHN - 25

Average length of stay 42 days



**THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS
FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE**



Host Congregations

**Apex UMC
Asbury UMC
Benson Memorial UMC
Cary First UMC
Crabtree Valley Baptist
Edenton Street UMC
Fairmont UMC
First Baptist Church Salisbury St
First Baptist Church Wilmington Street.
First Presbyterian Church
Fuquay Varina UMC
Garner UMC
Good Sheperd Lutheran
Greenwood Forest Baptist
Hayes Barton UMC
Highland UMC
Hope Community Church
Hudson Memorial Presbyterian
Juniper Level Baptist
Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian**

**Macedonia New Life (2007)
Millbrook Baptist
Millbrook UMC
New Hope Baptist
North Raleigh UMC
Soapstone UMC
St. Andrews Catholic
St. Andrews UMC
St. Francis UMC
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic
St. Mark's UMC (2007)
St. Raphael's Catholic
Trinity Baptist
Wake Forest Presbyterian
Wake Forest UMC
West Raleigh Presbyterian
Western Blvd. Presbyterian
White Memorial Presbyterian
White Plains UMC
Windborne UMC**

Support Congregations

**Athens Drive Baptist Church
Avent Ferry UMC
Beth Meyer Synagogue
Bayleaf Baptist
Forest Hills Baptist Church
Gateway Community Church
Oak City Baptist Church
Macedonia UMC**

**Pleasant Grove UMC
Raleigh Moravian Church
St. Paul's AME
St. Paul's Episcopal
Temple Beth Or
Triangle Baptist
Raleigh City Missionary Union**



From Our Youngest Guests:



Dear WIHN

I am 11 years old I attend Smith elementary. My hobbies are stepping and singing. When I grow up I would like to be a pedatrician or an obstetrician. I have really loved my stay here at WIHN. I thanks you for all the things that you have done for me and my Mother.

Sincerely
Maria*

June/28th 06

My name is Brittney* I am 9 years OLD I like the churches better that my old like house. We are happy be here at WIHN. Thank you for let us be here. I Loveyou Ms. Jessica Thanks you for letting us here. We are moving out of here today. I loves you

Dear WIHN

I want to tell you that I am happy to be here. I have new friends that treat me like family. If it weren't for WIHN my family would have no were to stay. I thank all the workers for your hard work. It's a dream come true that you helped my mother get a job! When I grow up I want to be a preacher at any church around and sometimes it's hard to believe that it may be true. If I am not a preacher I will be a singer because I love to sing. Inside my heart I feel full.

Love,
Diana*

* Name changed



Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network
903 Method Road
Raleigh, NC 27606
(919) 832-6024 Fax (919) 832-3725
Email WIHN@aol.com

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Case Manager	Lisa Williams
Volunteer Coordinator	Julie Jones

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