

The WIHN*d*ow of Opportunity



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

Special Edition 2008

Spring 2008

WIHN -- A Success Story in Process

This special issue of the WIHN newsletter focuses on the success of WIHN -- the organization -- rather than just the guest families. With the retiring of our last mortgage on the Day Center, it is time to celebrate, review who and what we are, and get to work on the next phase.

The mission of Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network (WIHN) Inc., is to help homeless families in Wake County achieve independent living by providing lodging, meals, case management, and educational services, and to promote awareness and action from the community regarding homelessness.

With the belief that: There but for the grace of God, go I and/or my family, WIHN approaches each guest with humility and desire to assist them with dignity and the tools and skills to remain independent. To that end, the goal is to “teach them to fish and not to give them a fish.” Emphasis is placed on the following tenets:

Each individual is deserving of respect, privacy, compassion, and safety.

Each adult is responsible for themselves and their children. The fact that they are temporarily homeless does not change that relationship.

WIHN opened for business in the summer of 1994 with the expressed goal of serving families in Wake County with an emphasis on helping the family unit stay intact and making maximum use of existing community resources. Acceptance of men and teenage boys into the program sets us aside from many other programs in this area. A “family” for WIHN consists of at least one parent and one child or a married couple. A couple without a child is asked to prove marriage but a couple with children together are considered a “family” with or without a formal marriage ceremony. A pregnant female is considered a parent with a child. Over the years, WIHN has hosted many single mothers with children, a few single fathers with children, many two parent families with children, pregnant mothers, families with grandparents, and even two men with a very young baby. Family size has ranged from 1 person (pregnant lady) to 10 including a grandparent. Each family has a special place in the hearts of the volunteers and staff who have had the pleasure of working with that family. The typical stay is approximately six weeks.

WIHN’s services are provided by people who help because they want to – Meals are provided/served/shared by community volunteers who **WANT** to spend time with the guests. Clean, safe overnight housing is provided nightly by caring volunteers. WIHN guest families participate because they want to become

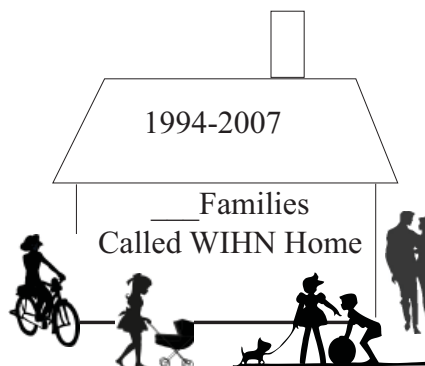
Have Fun AND Make a Difference in Your Community

The Stewards Fund of Raleigh, NC has made a \$25,000 all-or-nothing challenge grant to Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network (WIHN). During the four-month period March 1, 2008 through June 30, 2008, gifts to WIHN by new donors who have not supported WIHN before will have their gift matched in an equal amount by the Stewards Fund.

The Raleigh District of the United Methodist Church’s 5th annual Race of Grace Weekend provides an opportunity to have fun while helping WIHN meet the Stewards Fund challenge. This year WIHN is one of three local charities to share the funds raised during the three day weekend. See page 2 for the schedule of events.

www.wihn.org

now available



2007 - 63 Families (82 adults, 120 children)



Race of Grace Weekend Schedule of Events

Friday 3/25/2008
Links of Grace Golf tournament
Neuse Golf Club, Clayton, NC

Saturday 3/26/2008
Tour deGrace Bike Race
Start: Louisburg College, Louisburg, NC
Ride through Franklin County

Sunday 3/27/2008
5K Race/Walk
Start: Edenton Street UMC, Raleigh, NC
Route through downtown Raleigh

See www.raceofgrace.com for more details
or call Rev. Jo Elaine Harris at
(919) 787-0554 x19

Trinity Baptist Work Session “In As Much”



Glenn Wellborn and
Jessica Issacs



Glenn Wellborn and
Richard Cochran



Jack Cooke, Steve Issacs, Richard Cochran,
and Glenn Wellborn

What is WIHN ?

WIHN is made up of two very different components: People and capital assets.

The people of WIHN include:

- The guest families
- The host congregations
- The support congregations
- The volunteers
- The paid staff (executive director, case managers, volunteer-coordinator, and the administrative assistant)
- The volunteer board of trustees

Each of these groups has an important role. Without the guest families, there would be no WIHN. The host congregations provide overnight lodging plus an evening meal, a light breakfast, and fixings to make a “bag lunch”. Support congregations assist the host congregations or provide assistance at the Day Center.

Volunteers are the heart of WIHN whether they serve as part of a congregation, at the Day Center, on a committee, on the board, as a financial donor, or in another capacity; volunteers are WIHN-- There are over 2000 volunteers involved with WIHN.

The paid staff are responsible for the day-to-day running of WIHN. The executive director manages the daily activity and represents WIHN to the outside community. Two trained social workers provide counseling and guidance to the guest families,

each of which is required to have a weekly session with their case manager. The volunteer coordinator organizes and coordinates various volunteer activities, such as congregational coordinator meetings, Day Center work sessions, Day Center volunteers, special occasion events for the families, etc.,. The administrative assistant provides support to the staff and the board of directors.

The board of trustees provide guidance to the paid staff, assist in fund raising, and provide other assistance as needed.

The capital assets of WIHN are;

The Day Center on Method Road -- approximately 6000 square foot building. (See schematic later in this newsletter.) This location provides a daytime home: a place to do laundry, clean up, make/receive phone calls, receive mail, and receive case management counseling (guidance in obtaining jobs/housing and addressing issues which may have contributed to homelessness in the past). The dayroom is used at night for board meetings.

Two 15 passenger vans are used to transport guests between the Day Center and the congregations.

Two trailers are each equipped with rollaway beds, mattresses, cribs, and pillows. These trailers are attached to the vans and moved to the host congregation at the start of a hosting week.

Guest Family Selection Process

Guest families reach WIHN after being referred by another shelter or agency (Social Services, Salvation Army, ...), minister, former guest, or friend. Requirements for acceptance include: no untreated mental illness, no active substance abuse problem, a willingness/ability to work and a willingness to accept WIHN environment and regulations. Since a number of families are sharing common living areas, the respect of others is very important.

The steps for formal entry into the WIHN program include:

1. A telephone interview to discuss the family makeup and review the criteria for acceptance. An initial assessment is made of the family's likelihood of success in the WIHN environment. Each family is apprised of WIHN routine (overnight residence g in a different congregation's facilities each week and daytime residence at the Day Center.)

2. An in-depth interview at the Day Center is scheduled where the rules and assistance available are discussed. At this time both the network and the potential guests have a chance to get to know each other better.

3. If a family is selected, they are called back and offered entry into the network. On the first day in the network a contract is signed and a written copy of the rules is given to each family.



71 Summit Avenue
Summit, NJ 07901

WIHN is affiliated with *Family Promise* which includes Interfaith Hospitality Networks throughout the USA. WIHN is modeled after the first IHN which was founded by Karen Olsen in Summit, New Jersey.

There are now over 119 networks in 42 states.

There are 9 networks in North Carolina. (Wake County, Wilmington, Durham County, Fayetteville, Charlotte, Gastonia, Greensboro, Moore County, High Point)

Day Center Volunteer Opportunities

- Open/close Day Center
- Receptionist - Answer phones/take messages
- Clerical assistance - mailings
- Visit with guests
- Building repair/maintenance
- Lawn/grounds maintenance

Asbury UMC Work Session Quarterly Small Group Meeting Project



Kristen Smothers and Ramsey Williams



Scott Smothers



Danny Sykes

Maintenance and repair are constant needs at the Day Center. With an average of 8-10 families and 20 or more people using the facility at any time, normal wear and tear is accelerated. Pictures of two recent work crews are shown as a big "Thank You" to all who have helped.



Walt Roberson and Patrick Ellison



Clockwise from front left: Amanda Sykes, Vivian Sykes, Sarah Grace Ellison, Ellen Joyner-Roberson, Anna Ellison



**DAY CENTER
MORTGAGE
PAID OFF
2/2008**

The front of the Day Center building faces Method Road. The fence on the left of the picture encircles the playground. In previous times, the building has housed a convenience center (No gas was ever sold.), an insurance agency, and an office building for NC State. After extensive upfitting to meet building codes and WIHN's needs, WIHN moved into the building in summer of 1998. Having no signage out front is a conscious decision.

Upon entry into WIHN each family is assigned a bathroom and the responsibility for keeping it clean. (No more than 2 families share a bathroom.) Two half baths remain available to all families. Each family is also assigned a locker and is required to keep it secure.



Lobby



The guest office pictured above includes a separate phone line, a computer for generating resumes, washable surfaces and a quiet adult work area.

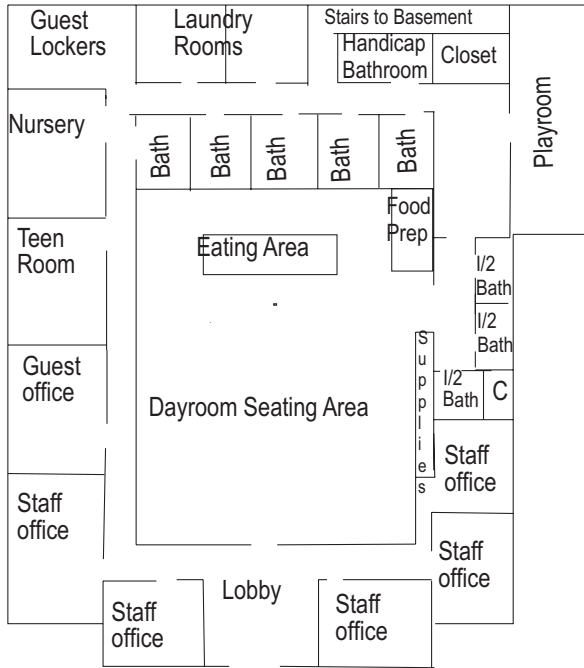


These two pictures are two parts of the large dayroom. Through the doorway in the sitting area on the right you can see the front parking lot. The picture on the left shows the food prep and eating areas and the doorway into the hallway leading to the half baths and the playground.

Typical Staff Office



Day Center



The teen room is open to teenagers only and gives the teens a haven of their own.



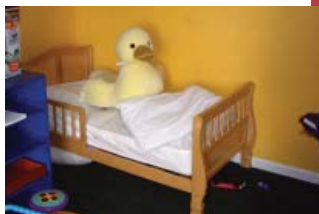
Laundry Room

The (not to scale) diagram above depicts the main floor of the Day Center.

Guest Lockers



Nursery



Playroom



Congregation Volunteer Opportunities

Congregation coordinator - Lead your congregation's activities for WIHN, interface with WIHN and other congregations, attend congregation coordinators meetings.

Setup/takedown crew - Unload the beds from the trailer, make rooms at congregation welcoming for guests. At end of hosting week, reverse the process: reload beds, reload trailer, drive van and trailer to next congregation.

Supplies -- Keep items needed by guests available (breakfast, lunch, and snack items, paper goods, bed linens and towels, etc.,.)

Overnight host - Spend the night with the guest families in a host congregation facility

Van driver -- Transport guests between the host congregation and the Day Center

Meals preparer -- Cook/serve/and eat meals with guest families in a host congregatio facility

Laundry -- Wash bed linens, towels as needed.

Note: Some congregations may define these roles slightly differently. However, 60 or more people are often involved in a host week.



West Raleigh
Presbyterian Church's
Van Driver Linda

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

Weekly Schedule for WIHN

Sunday Morning: Families pack up, strip beds, and take all possession with them. Hosting congregation reloads the bed trailer and drives van and trailer to next host location

Sunday (12-5): New host congregation unloads the trailer, sets up guest bedrooms (one per family)

Sunday 6 PM: Guests arrive at new host, unload belongings, and get acquainted with facilities. Night meal is served, Guests pack bag lunch if desired/needed.

Monday-Friday: Families are awakened in time for breakfast and drive to Day Center for arrival by 7:00 AM school bus. Families spend day at work/school, do assigned chores at Day Center, do laundry, take care of personal hygiene, seek work/employment, etc., and return to host congregation for dinner meal.

Saturday: Wake up time is usually a little later unless a guest family needs to be a Day Center earlier. Dinner time is same



Bed
Trailer

Two Way Communications

Communications between the WIHN staff and the host congregation are critical. Approximately Thursday before the guests arrive on Sunday the staff conveys a list of expected families along with the first names of each member, medical allergies, and notes about special needs. Changes are made as needed until the families arrive. On arrival for each evening, the van driver gives the congregation coordinator a sheet from the staff with expected family activity for that evening (scheduled arrivals, use of van or own transportation to/from congregation, etc.,.)

Additional information is shared between the congregations and the staff via coordinator meetings, phone calls, and email.

WIHN's Future

WIHN's future is bright. Continuation of current services to homeless families is the number one priority. Several expansions have been proposed. Among them are providing a temporary home for new mothers and their newborns when they leave the hospital,

(There is no place for homeless new mothers to go in Wake County today), providing transitional housing, and expanding services for the population we now serve. The board is discussing these options and more. Most of the options would require additional facilities and staff; thus additional funding. This is a big decision which the board is carefully considering.

Sobering Facts

The average age of a homeless family member is 4 years.

Families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.

Nationally, an estimated 1.2 million children are homeless.

A poor child in the US is more likely to live in a working family than to be on government assistance, and more likely to live in a rural or suburban area than in an inner city.

Between 1.6 and 1.7 million youth run away in a year.

In Raleigh 1,472 persons and families are homeless on any given night.

\$20,650

Could your family live on the federal ‘poverty line’ for a family of four?

Homelessness Defined

According to HUD, people are homeless if they lack a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence or if they have a *night time residence* that is:

a supervised public or privately-operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing)

an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized

a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

This does not include people who are “doubled up” without a legal residence of their own, or temporarily staying with another person. Furthermore, the data does not account for people who are at-risk of homelessness for any reason including unemployment, foreclosure, eviction, chronic or sudden illness, and domestic violence.

Wake County Continuum of Care, Inc.

Budgeting Success

Making decisions are a tough part of life, especially when the decisions involve resolutions that cause additional problems. This was the case with Andy*, his wife Sherry*, and their nine month old child, Billy.

The family had lived on only one income since the birth of Billy. Andy, a certified public accountant, unexpectedly lost his job and the family had not been able to adjust to a new way of living and spending money. The family admits they were not used to living on a budget. With no income coming in the family soon faced eviction, Andy and Sherry had to make the decision of where to stay.

With no family in the area and no other resources, the family contacted WIHN. Upon entering the WIHN program, the family received case management services centered on obtaining employment, housing, and budgeting. The family admitted that budgeting was their main problem, and that Sherry had a habit of spending money on items that were not necessary. In the past, they believed that with the income Andy was making, it was okay to spend the money because it was there. After receiving budget counseling at WIHN, they came to the realization that even if you have the money it is always best to budget and save some and for a rainy day.

After 10 days in the WIHN program, Andy was working as a certified public accountant again, making over \$50,000 per year. The family also decided that Billy was old enough to put in childcare and it was time for Sherry to go back to work and soon she was working at Wal-Mart. With the extra income from Sherry’s job and the rest of their time at WIHN, they paid off debt and saved enough money to move into a modest apartment within the price range their new budget allowed. Andy even requested an extension in the program in order to continue to work on budgeting. Sherry admitted that creating a budget helped put her habit of spending money unnecessarily to a stop.

Andy and Sherry are both currently working and Billy is currently in childcare. The family expressed that the decision to enter WIHN was the right choice to make. They stated they were allowed time to find jobs and save money. Most importantly, the family learned how to create a budget with their income that would allow them to pay all of their bills, save, and also enjoy life.

WIHN’s Wishes

- High capacity professional washers and dryers
- Electronic games/players for teen room
- 2 Rocking chairs - 1 nursery & 1- playroom
- Bus Passes
- Plumbing Services

Thank You

Guy Zumma - Our knight in shining armor for taking such good care of Day Center problems

Volunteers who keep the network running and donors who keep the money coming.

NC Veterinarian students who provided Christmas gifts for 17 children.

Highland UNC for providing Christmas gifts for all families enrolled in the WIHN program.

Cary First UMC for providing groceries to families when they leave the program.

Volunteers from Apex UMC for their continuous help with upkeep at the Day Center.

A volunteer from Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian Church for his expertise and assistance with computer technology.

All the unsung volunteers who assist our guests at the congregations and/or the Day Center.

All the supporters who keep WIHN in their prayers.

This Newsletter is proudly printed in black and white for maximum utilization of your donations. Thank you for your interest in obtaining a color copy from www.wihn.org.



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Volunteer Coordinator	Stephanie Kebler
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