



**Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines.** ~Robert Schuller

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## Co-ordinator's Corner

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FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD

### WHAT EXCITING CHALLENGES WE FACE *Jan Gregory-Charpentier, Board Chair*

I've been told that the Chinese character for "crisis" is a combination of two other characters, one that means "danger" and the other "opportunity." Not knowing Chinese, it could be this little nugget of wisdom is more "urban legend" than truism. But it rings with authenticity to me! Every crisis (of faith, of finances, of history, of relationship) presents us with risks and potential blessings. The IHN of Greater Worcester has come through a critical year!

We faced the danger of not being able to financially support our mission. But our network congregations have almost universally risen to the challenge of becoming sustaining financial supporters of our shared ministry by making and keeping the annual pledges requested of them by the Advisory Board.

We faced the danger of not being able to function as we have in the past given the changes in state fire and building codes. Our director, Board members, constituent congregation members all went to bat, showing up at state hearings, advocating for safe but reasonable revisions. And though new regulations have brought new challenges, together we are adapting and doing all we can to keep operating a safe and effective shelter program within the parameters of new requirements. Without the advocacy efforts of our IHN of Greater Worcester at the state level, along with the other MA IHN's, the new codes would be even more difficult to address as a network.

We faced and continue to face the critical need of our guest families for safe, secure and less stressful shelter and so

we have sought out the opportunity to become a "static" shelter (based in one location with network congregations' support). This latest challenge and opportunity isn't a reality yet, but it's exciting and, yes, just a little anxiety provoking, to move into the future envisioning a program better able to serve the families who come to us for shelter.

Together as a network of faith, we have continued to advocate for, support and help stabilize some of Worcester counties most vulnerable families. It's been a critical year! But thanks be to God who sees us through! Your IHN Advisory Board is enthusiastic, encouraged and expectant that the coming year will bring us many more critical opportunities for growth! Let's meet them together with joy and strength!

### Host Sites

#### April

3/27 – 4/10 First United Methodist, Westborough

4/10 – 4/17 First Church, Sterling

4/17 – 4/24 First Congregational/Prince of Peace, Princeton

4/24 – 5/1 First Congregational, Holden

#### May

5/1 – 5/15 Christ the King, Worcester

5/15 – 5/22 Our Lady of Good Counsel, W. Boylston

5/22 – 5/29 Wesley Methodist, Worcester

#### June

5/29 – 6/5 Trinity Episcopal, Shrewsbury

6/5 – 6/12 Immanuel Lutheran, Holden

6/12 – 6/19 Blessed Sacrament, Worcester

6/19 – 6/26 United Parish, Upton



TREASURER'S UPDATE

### OUR FINANCES ARE DOWN TO THE WIRE *Jan Raultis, Treasurer*

We are nearing our fiscal year-end of June 30<sup>th</sup>, and the IHN Advisory Board is holding their breath with the hopes of being able to finish at a financial break-even. We have made some wonderful strides with the efforts of our hosts sites. Without your strong financial support, this program would not be able to continue.

At the end of March we have a deficit of \$4,088.32. We believe with the balances remaining from some hosts sites on our pledge drive, the upcoming Walk for the Homeless, which will be held in Worcester on Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, along with other donations, we may be able to get us "over the hump".

As we approach the end of this fiscal year we would like to ask you to consider making one final contribution to assist us in meeting our goal. No matter how small or large, each and every contribution is greatly appreciated. All we ask is that you make a commitment to help in any way that you can. Thank you for your continued support!

### Our Guests

- Mom with a 6 year old daughter
- Mom with 15 year old daughter, and 2 sons, ages 10 yrs. and 6 yrs.
- Mom-to-be
- Mom with a 6 year old boy and 2 daughters, ages 3 yrs. and 4 yrs.



## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

PROGRAM UPDATES - WHY A STATIC SITE *-Joanne Alley, Director*

As IHN continues to move toward our goal of a static site (and we hope to have more concrete information to share with you by next month) some have asked "why?" Why changed what has worked for so long? There are several answers to that. First and foremost, the new code and fire regulations pertaining to congregations hosting families overnight have changed. Many congregations may not pass the new standards no matter what they do to their building; others may need to make costly improvements to continue hosting families, requiring funds that they may not have. There is no question that if we continue in our present model we will have open weeks in the schedule leaving the families without a place to go.

While this may be the primary reason for our goal of moving to a static site, there is more. For this, you need to try to look at it through the eyes of our guests. A static site will bring more stability to folks

who are desperately trying to provide some type of normalcy for their families. Most families no longer stay the average 8 – 10 weeks, as they did when our program first began. With today's poor economy and high cost of living, the lack of affordable housing, fewer section 8 vouchers, and lists for subsidized housing either long or closed, families now stay an average of 4 – 5 *months*, with some staying much longer. Moving week to week becomes physically and emotionally harder on everyone the longer you must do it.

There is another reason, one that may be even more critical... families struggling to get back on their feet need to find employment. The way the program currently operates, those who do not have a car must find jobs between the hours of 7:30 AM and 5 PM. Jobs are hard enough to come by without having to restrict the hours that one is able to work. Without cars and without bus transportation to many of our congregations, those who

find jobs that start before 7 AM or end after 5 PM have no choice but to decline them because they have no other way to get to or from the host site. The families need every opportunity to succeed. A static site would allow parents to work different shifts which could help make finding employment a little easier, as well as increasing the likelihood of a shorter stay in the program.

While IHN may be taking on a new profile, the mission will remain the same, for the faith community to come together to provide meals, support and assistance to families who have no home. Congregation volunteers have been crucial to the success of our program; they are the special gift that makes IHN different from the other programs. Their continued support will be just as vital if we are to succeed as a static site. Please continue to keep IHN in your hearts and in your prayers as we navigate through these uncertain times.

## THE BIG PICTURE

PLEDGE APPEAL UPDATE *Janet Madison, Board Member*

Last fall, in the midst of a *severe* financial crisis, we sent out an urgent appeal to our congregations to help *save* our program. This appeal took form as a "request for pledges" from our congregations. Pledges were requested so that we would know where and when (and yes, if) a stream of revenue would be available to sustain the program for another year. This also served to help our congregations budget their pledge throughout their own individual fiscal year.

Our goal was to have \$60,000 in *committed* pledges. Although we did not reach that goal of committed pledges, we did exceed \$60,000 from the overall appeal. We consider this a success! Fifteen out of our 30 host and support congregations and one business generously responded by pledging a total of \$47,000. In addition, 12 congregations, although they did not commit to a pledge, did respond to the appeal, some donating over and above their historic giving.

Combining the \$47,000 that was pledged plus \$15,000 from exceeded pledge amounts and non-pledged congregation donations, the overall appeal resulted in \$62,000, a significant inroad to meeting our overall operating budget of \$100,000+. Hopefully with individual, corporate, foundation, grant and fund-raising donations we will be in the black at the end of our fiscal year, approximately 8 weeks from now. Due diligence prevails.

Many thanks to those who have sent in their total pledge to date:

First Church Sterling  
 First Congregational Holden  
 First Congregational West Boylston  
 Greendale People's Church  
 Temple Sinai  
 United Parish Upton  
 Zion Lutheran

Many thanks also to those congregations who are still in the process of meeting their pledges before the end of the fiscal

year, June 30, 2011.

To those who did not formally pledge but generously continue to support IHN, thank you:

Evangelical Congregational,  
 Westborough  
 First Congregational Princeton  
 First Congregational Shrewsbury  
 First Unitarian  
 First Baptist  
 Mt. Olivet, Shrewsbury  
 Pakachoag, Auburn  
 St. Mary's, Grafton  
 Temple Emmanuel  
 Trinity Lutheran  
 Wesley United Methodist

Please keep IHN in mind when planning your mission outreach budgets for the upcoming year. We hope Fall of 2011 will reap even more committed pledges so that we can plan to support a healthy, stable and fiscally responsible budget - most importantly, continue to support our families.





### Homeward Bound!

Congratulations to Yeidin and Jose, Francisco, Christine, Maria, Emily and

Rudy, all have moved into new homes in Worcester and to Dollie who relocated back to West Virginia.

### Center Wish List...

Pillows & Shower curtains

SAVE THIS DATE

## OUR SHARED PROGRAM

*It is imperative that an open communication between IHN and all of its supporters continue* as we make inroads to financial stability now and in the future and to weigh in on program goal successes. Please meet with our executive board for a year-end update meeting. We request that you attend one of the two following meetings.

**TUESDAY, May 10th 9:00 AM**  
**TUESDAY, May 10th 6:00 PM**

Wesley United Methodist Church  
114 Main Street - Worcester

Please RSVP by May 2<sup>nd</sup> indicating which meeting you will attend:

[ihnworchester@verizon.net](mailto:ihnworchester@verizon.net) or 508-798-6732

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## THINK TANK Janet Madison, Board Member

The Outreach Board of First Church In Sterling pondered how they could leverage a small donation to IHN into something that would create a much larger impact. So, thinking a little outside the box, they contributed \$500 to IHN specifically to hire a grant writing specialist that works with nonprofit organizations. A consultant, Sarah B. Lange, Principal & Founder of NEW ERA, was hired and is working on identifying grant opportunities that may be a good match for IHN. Although still in the process, the hope is this \$500 will multiply via awarded grants.

Sometimes looking at things from a different angle creates new ideas. Explore your think tank for IHN!

SECOND ANNUAL ★ JUNE 11, 2011

# Ride for a Reason

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Worcester



**A fun, scenic and well-supported bike ride to benefit the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester**

- WHEN:** Saturday, June 11 from 9 am to Noon
- WHERE:** Start and finish at the First Congregational Church of Holden.
- RIDE:** 15, 30 and 50 mile options with cue sheets and marked turns; support vehicles to aid riders along the routes; rest stops with food, water and first aid; celebration picnic at the end of the ride.
- ROUTE:** Through the towns of Holden, Leominster, West Boylston, Sterling and Princeton; scenic rolling hills.
- SIGN UP:** \$15 (with a commitment to fund raise \$200) or \$65 (with no additional fund raising)  
Children under 16 need to ride with a parent (as we'll be on open roads).

Go to [www.ihnworchester.org/event](http://www.ihnworchester.org/event) for registration forms.

## R4R T-shirt Sponsors & Raffle Donations Needed

**Have your company, your congregation, or even your name on the back of the T-Shirts that will be worn by our riders!**

### AD SPACE AVAILABLE

6"w x 3"h: \$250.00 (6 spots)      4"w x 2"h = \$150.00 (12 spots)  
LINE SPONSOR: 4"w x 1"h: = \$75.00 (24 spots)

*Please contact Kevin Kirwan*

*Kdk1959@charter.net; kkirwan@acosta.com; 508-414-7125 OR*

send your ad in a pdf or jpeg format or your line sponsor name submittal along with a check made payable to:

### First Church In Sterling w/ IHN R4R notation

First Church In Sterling- Ride for a Reason  
6 Meetinghouse Hill Road - Sterling, MA 01564



### Raffle Baskets

Please consider donating a basket for a raffle the day of the ride. Theme baskets welcome - we already have healthy/gourmet food baskets; how about wine, candles, spa, or... whatever the imagination! Please contact Joanne at IHN 508-798-6732 if you are willing to participate. Thank you!



Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester

**IHN**

*Where people of faith work together to support homeless families throughout the greater Worcester area.*

**Newsletter**

*The IHN newsletter continues to be made possible by the spirit of a **Common Mission:***

*Contributing Reporters: **Joanne Alley, Jan Gregory-Charpentier, Kevin Kirwan, Janet Madison, Jan Rautkis***

*Printing & Mailing: **Phil Holman, President and owner of Four Star Connections, Inc.***

*Publisher: **Janet Madison***

*Thank you!*

*The Interfaith Hospitality Network is an organization that unites the religious community in an effort to serve and nurture families who are homeless regardless of income and family structure. Thirty congregations, many with assistance from additional congregations, provide meals, shelter and hospitality. Families receive individualized advocacy for housing, employment, and financial issues at the IHN day center. Massachusetts is the 5th least affordable state in the country for housing and about 20,000 children live in emergency shelters each year. Greater Worcester's IHN has helped 275 families, a total of 812 individuals, since its formation in 1997. IHN makes a difference!*



Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester

**IHN**

114 Main Street  
Worcester, MA 01608  
Phone: 508-798-6732  
FAX: 508-798-8286  
[www.ihnworchester.org](http://www.ihnworchester.org)

*Where people of faith work together to support families who are homeless throughout the greater Worcester area.*



The Central Housing Alliance, Inc.'s

**26<sup>th</sup> Annual WALK for the Homeless**

**3.0 mile WALK begins and ends at Elm Park, Worcester**  
**Registration at 1:00pm; WALK begins at 2:00pm**  
**Live Entertainment - BBQ after the WALK**

**SUNDAY, MAY 15, 2011**

To get more information, donate online or to register your WALK team, log onto [www.cmhaonline.org](http://www.cmhaonline.org)

For more information or to volunteer please call Amy at 508-791-7265 ext. 31

*"We dream of the time when everyone will have a home..."*

**TO:**