



Homes *with* Hope

*Solving homelessness in our communities through supportive housing*

# Homes with Hope, Inc.

**ANNUAL REPORT**

September 2011

# From the President

September 2011

Dear Friends,

There is a lot of energy right now at the agency that you support. In the last twelve months we have placed residents in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) in Norwalk and we have collaborated with three fellow PSH agencies, placing two Bacharach Community families in permanent housing in Bridgeport. We have begun to ramp up our new operations at the beautiful Hales Court development in the geographic center of Westport; and we are attempting to expand our PSH offerings in Westport by bidding on a new property near our current operations.



More importantly we are making a difference in the lives of the more than 250 homeless people who were in all of our programs in 2010. Whether it is through the casework that we provide to every client in each of our programs; or the sustenance that our 400+ volunteers provide through evening meals at the Gillespie Center; or the bags of food that leave the Food Pantry every day with needy residents from Westport and all of our neighboring towns, we – you – are making a difference by acknowledging and working to solve the need.

One of the great frustrations of this job is getting our local residents to recognize how rare Homes with Hope is. Our community takes care of our neighbors who are not able to take care of themselves. Many other communities push the problem off on the cities nearby. We work well with our fellow providers in Norwalk, Stamford and Bridgeport, but first we take care of our own; we do not rely on our city neighbors. All supporters of Homes with Hope can be proud of this.

On the other side, one of the great benefits of this job has been to better know the staff. Homes with Hope, and its clients are blessed with a caring, well-educated, loyal staff. Their professionalism has been confirmed in volunteered comments from peers around the county, and from residents whose lives they have changed. I hope you will have the opportunity to know some of these wonderful people as you support the agency, and I always hope that should you, your family or friends have the need of our services – as so many families in our community have had in the past – that you will appreciate the benefit of having a 27-year old agency in your backyard.

Thanks for your support and interest.

Jeffrey Wieser  
President and CEO

P.S. Please remember our Legacy with Hope campaign and join the number of friends who are including Homes with Hope in their estate plans.

## **HOMES WITH HOPE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

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*Director of Resource Development*  
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Greetings,

Last fall, I agreed to mentor a high school student, Jeremy, through the Confirmation process at our church. Part of this process included the Confirmand's participation in a meaningful service project. Jeremy chose to do something for **Homes with Hope**.

With the help of Audrey and Jeff, we agreed that a mutually beneficial activity would be to expand HwH's weekday food pantry operations to include Saturday. This would serve the community by providing additional access for people who could not make it to the pantry during the week.

It took several weeks to familiarize ourselves with the pantry operations. After the first month, the regular crew of Jeremy, his friend Khaliq who was also going through Confirmation, Jeremy's father, Jim, my wife, Sara, daughter, Alexandra, and I had established a good routine and became efficient in our work. We also got more deeply involved. What at first seemed like large food stocks began to dwindle. We worried when we ran out of staples like peanut butter, tuna fish, and Hamburger Helper. As summer progressed, the shelves got barer while demand (about 50 bags per week) continued. We supplemented the food stocks ourselves, and we tried to get the word out about the need for some of the critical foods. Fortunately, some additional food has arrived, but supplies will be tight until fall when the schools and houses of worship get their food drives active again.

Sometime during our Saturday mornings at the Gillespie Center, what began as a project evolved to a mission. Although Confirmation is completed, the two families continue to staff the pantry on Saturday mornings. It is especially fulfilling when someone comes for food, and when we arrive on Saturday and realize that the 40 to 50 bags we packed the prior week have been distributed. There is excitement when a new supply of mac & cheese or peanut butter and jelly shows up enabling us to replenish depleted inventory.

Not-for-profit organizations like Homes with Hope depend on volunteers to fulfill their mission. Hundreds support our efforts annually with contributions of meals, food, driving and financial support. We could not do our work without their efforts. I urge you to get involved, get your family involved. Hopefully, you will discover as we have that work like this is good for the soul.

John Walsh  
Chair, Board of Directors



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# Special Events 2011



## 10th Anniversary Sand Castle

Homes with Hope celebrated their **10th Anniversary Castles in the Sand** build-a-thon at Compo Beach this May. It was a perfect Saturday afternoon for the enthusiastic teams to build a shark, a lighthouse, penguins and a battleship to name just a few. Everyone had a wonderful time all in the name of raising funds to help the homeless in our community.

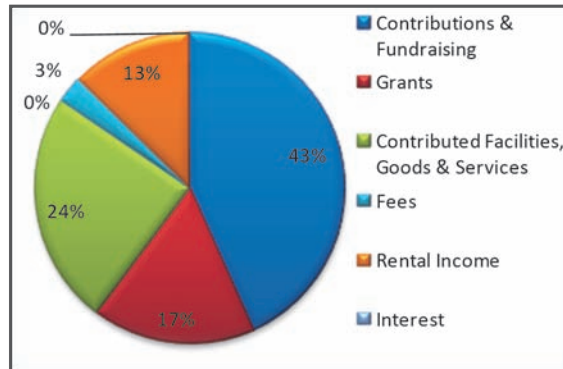
**Good Neighbor Day** was again sponsored by Westport Wash & Wax for the eleventh year in a row; the event was held on Friday, June 17. While the weather wasn't as wonderful as in past years many came to the car wash and were greeted by HwH staff and Board members. All of the day's revenue, plus a generous contribution by the Tienfenthalers, was donated to Homes with Hope to provide support for programs and services designed to help the homeless and those at-risk of becoming homeless in the local community. We thank the Tienfenthaler family for their continuing and munificent support.



**Stand Up for Homes with Hope An Evening with Martin Short** was held on Saturday, September 24th at the Westport Country Playhouse. This year's evening of comedy highlighted pre-show festivities under a tent including beverages, food and an auction followed by Martin Short appearing on stage. Mr. Short is a Tony and Emmy-Award winning comedian, actor, writer, singer and producer best know for his comedy work on SCTV and Saturday Night Live, where he created memorable characters that include the neurotic nerd Ed Grimly and the shady lawyer Nathan Thurm. His movie credits include Father of the Bride I and II in the role of wedding planner Franck Eggelhoffer and Three Amigos as Ned Nederlander. Along with his film and television credits, Short has also been successful on Broadway. He starred in Mel Brooks' critically acclaimed hit The Producers with Jason Alexander and in the musical comedy Fame Becomes Me.

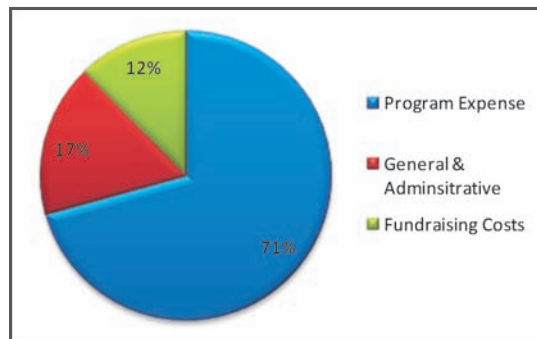
## Revenues 2010

Total Revenues in 2010 were \$1,919,192. This decrease of 1% over the prior year was the result of a smaller “Stand Up for Homes with Hope” event, and slightly reduced revenue generated from individuals. Increased rental income from our various Permanent Supportive Housing programs made up the bulk of the shortfall and revenues stayed close to even for the year. Support from individuals remained the keystone of our financial support, and this year government grants grew to a still-small 17% of our total revenues. The Revenues 2010 Chart below displays the component values.



## Expenses 2010

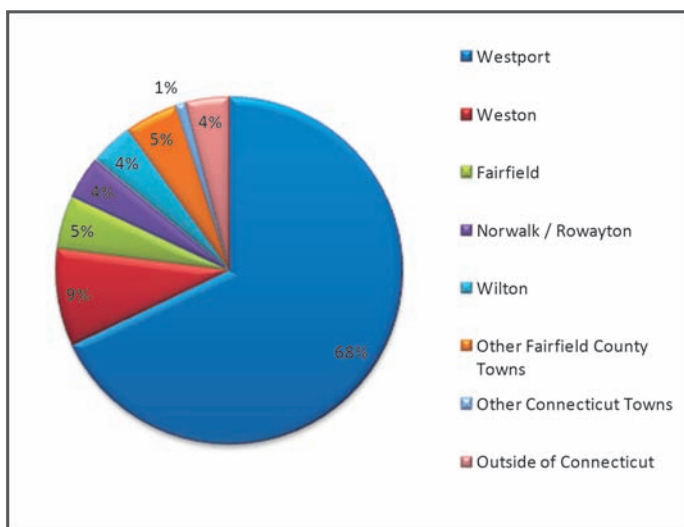
Total Expenses in 2010 were \$2,097,264, a 1% increase from the previous fiscal year. The smaller event impacted this number, but our first full year of operation at the Westport Rotary Centennial House (WRCH), as well as the introduction of operations at Fair Street Apartments in Norwalk, created the need for increased staffing and this trend will continue with Hale’s Court in 2011. We maintained other expense categories very close to budget, and created an operating result that was essentially cash break even. Our net, audited, shortfall for the year was \$178,072, the effect of the first full year of operations at WRCH. That new program created an increase in non-cash depreciation expense of \$157,889 (compared to \$93,348 in 2009). The 2010 Chart below displays the breakout of the various categories.



# Report of Giving

New to our Annual Report this year is our “Report of Giving.” This compilation celebrates the great depth of community support for the mission of Homes with Hope. Federal, state and local government sources provide only 17% of our general operating budget. For the balance, we depend on the support of individuals, foundations, businesses, services clubs and religious organizations. Each one of the following people and entities is important to us. Many have supported us financially since the 1980’s; some are brand new. We think it important to acknowledge and thank everyone on this list and hope that you are proud of what you have built in this generous community!

In 2010 Homes with Hope had approximately 800 individual donors the majority of which come from local Fairfield County communities. The geographic breakdown of these donor communities from largest to smallest is:



From the clients, board of directors and all of the staff at Homes with Hope - Thank You!! Your generosity is humbling and the ongoing support allows us to continue the work that we all love.

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Westport County Playhouse  
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Westport Weston Health District

Dear Friends,

This year, I've gotten several thank you notes from people we have worked with. Our clients and supportive housing tenants have had many quiet successes and in some cases, there have been real breakthroughs—important steps like finding employment, stopping smoking or beginning to go to the gym! These accomplishments create ripple effects that lead them to take bigger and bolder steps towards independence and health. When I hear from someone who was obviously struggling but had a positive experience and is grateful, it's almost enough to make me fall off of my office chair with joy. What's going on?

Dr. King stated, "All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence." Our homeless families and individuals are exceedingly well served by the remarkable efforts of the Homes with Hope program staff: Heather, Jim, Maryellen, Melanie, Nicole, Paris, Tracy, Wendy and our wonderful part-time people. They are in the trenches with very complex and sometimes provocative problems daily. Most of them have been with us for many years—very unusual in our field. I would like to thank our staff for the excellence they bring to this work, for their ever-increasing knowledge and their unwavering efforts to dignify real human lives, the people we routinely call clients. The staff inspires them and all of us, in the midst of desperate times, to exceed their own expectations.

Kind Regards,  
Audrey Sparre, MA, MFT  
Vice President & Chief of Operations



## **HOMES WITH HOPE PROGRAM STAFF**

### ***Program Directors***

*Gillespie Center & Hoskins' Place*  
Maryellen Estrada

*Bacharach Community*  
Paris Looney

*WIN (Women's Interfaith Network)*  
Wendy Epstein

### ***Case Managers***

*Gillespie Center & Hoskins' Place*  
Nicole Radice

*Saugatuck Apartments*  
Paris Looney

*Westport Rotary Centennial House*  
Wendy Epstein

*Fair St. Apartments & Hales Court*  
Melanie St. Raymond

### ***Program Supervisors***

Jim Barber  
Tracy Graham  
Heather Taylor

# Programs

## PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Homes with Hope provides permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless, mentally ill individuals and families. Tenants live with a lease in safe independent housing. Tenants receive support from a professionally trained case manager. All of Homes with Hope's permanent supportive housing operates under this paradigm.

### **Saugatuck Apartments**

This is the agency's initial permanent supportive housing program which provides 8 apartments for both individuals and families in Westport.

### **Westport Rotary Centennial House**

This permanent supportive housing facility provides 6 apartments for individuals and families. Rotary House opened in the fall of 2009.

### **Fair St. Apartments**

Homes with Hope opened 5 units of permanent supportive housing for individuals in the fall of 2010 as part of a 57 unit affordable housing facility in Norwalk that is owned and operated by New Neighborhoods, Inc.

### **Hales Court**

Homes with Hope is in the process of leasing up 10 apartments for families and individuals within this newly constructed 77 unit affordable housing project owned and operated by the Westport Housing Authority.

In a "perfect world", the homeless and hungry are welcomed by their community – the hungry are then fed and the homeless are housed. Reading over that sentence reminds me that the solutions to our rising issues of hunger and homelessness are simple. So how did things get so complicated?

One of the strengths of our country lies within our diversity as a nation; this can also be our greatest fault. Too often we are focused on the stigmas assigned to the homeless that can get in the way of applying solutions. We all agree that fixing hunger and homelessness in our nation is important – but disagree on *where* the hungry and homeless should be served. Essentially, we create hypocrisy – "I want a solution but not in my backyard".

It has been a privilege to serve the homeless and hungry in Westport for the last 5 years. As a community, our citizens have guided how homeless solutions are viewed and implemented which essentially lets others know, "yes, in my backyard."

It is my hope that we can continue to support the members of our community that are most in need with a message that will be heard by those all around us YIMBY!

Maryellen Estrada, MA

Program Director Gillespie Center & Hoskins' Place

It's been almost two years since the first tenants moved into Rotary House. As Case Manager I was fully expecting to help and support these tenants with issues like depression, anxiety, substance abuse, employment and budgeting. But what has been most interesting to me is that many of the tenants have also benefitted from help with the most basic skills of daily living. Because so many of them spent previous years moving from shelters, to prison, to psychiatric hospitals, to friends couches, they tend to have less experience living independently. It has been exciting and rewarding for me to witness the personal growth that can come from developing and maintaining good cooking and cleaning habits and establishing some basic daily routines.

A fortunate coincidence is that a participant, a mentee, in the WIN Mentoring Program who has been homeless for more than a year will be moving into one of our supportive housing apartments this fall. She has been very appreciative of the mentoring relationship. In a note of thanks to me she included the following lines, "What's hard about moving from the streets to an apartment? I can attest to how stressful change can be – even positive change. I've lost my family, and someone like Jeanne (her mentor) to talk to every week is the support I need."

I hope that along with her mentor, I can help this woman move successfully into permanent supportive housing where she's sure to develop good skills for daily living, as well as address the issues that initially led her down the path into homelessness.

Wendy Epstein, LCSW

Program Director WIN Mentoring

Case Manager Westport Rotary Centennial House

*Maya Angelou said "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

Several of the children who have entered the Bacharach Community, have said without hesitation "I want to stay here forever!" I interpret this statement as positive feedback from the children and our ability to listen and respond to their need for stability and safety. With lots of toys and books in the program, combined with plenty of open space, the children run and play and are afforded the opportunity to just be kids! We want every child who enters Bacharach to have this reaction and to slowly begin to recover from the stress and uncertainty of being homeless.

We recognize and understand how homeless children are at greater risk for additional traumatic experiences, due to the difficulties of shelter living. We work with many local community service providers to close the gap between the needs of the mother and the child's social and emotional well being, to lead the family out of their homelessness with compassionate support services.

We are most grateful to all those who work with us each year in the coordination of services to help our families and most importantly the children! We could not do the work we do, without your support!

Saugatuck Apartments had its second opening in as many years. The tenants are most excited about the new family who will be joining the community and offer a collective warm welcome.

Paris Looney, MSW  
Program Director Bacharach Community  
Case Manager Saugatuck Apartments

I joined the Homes with Hope family a little less than a year ago and was initially hired to provide case management services to our permanent supportive housing clients at 80 Fair Street in Norwalk. Nothing was more gratifying for me than to watch a chronically homeless gentleman pick out his apartment, to have a choice, a voice, in the process. Grateful and appreciative do not even begin to describe his satisfaction with his new home.

In addition to Norwalk, I will also be providing case management services to permanent supportive housing residents at the newly constructed Hales Court in Westport. Two previously homeless families and 8 previously homeless individuals will have the opportunity to begin again, having, at the very least, a roof over the heads and community supports in place to help them succeed.

As a case manager, people often ask me, "What exactly do you do?" I am a counselor, a cheer-leader, a navigator, a defender, a teacher, a mentor. One of my clients told me recently, "You gave me hope." How can it get any better than that?

Melanie St. Raymond, MSW  
Case Manager Fair St. Apartments & Hales Court

## EMERGENCY SHELTERS

### **Gillespie Center & Hoskins' Place**

Homes with Hope maintains 15 beds for men and 4 beds for women in this emergency shelter. Social services and casework are provided in this 24 hour facility.

### **Bacharach Community**

Located on Wassell Lane and the Post Road, this program provides emergency shelter for up to six families headed by single women. These mothers and their children are in need of safe emergency housing and caseworker assistance.

## PROGRAMS

### **WIN (Women's Interfaith Network)**

A mentoring program designed to support women at risk who are struggling to create stable and self-sufficient lives.

### **PRIDE**

Is an intensive employment-readiness program for men and women with significant barriers to employment, including mental illness, substance abuse or homelessness.

### **Community Kitchen**

Homes with Hope operates the Community Kitchen at the Gillespie Center and serves 30,000 meals annually. Volunteers from numerous organizations and families take turns preparing and serving dinners.

### **Food Pantry**

Homes with Hope maintains a Food Pantry at the Gillespie Center that is supplied by a variety of food collection and donation drives. Two bags of groceries are available to all who come on a weekly basis.

# Our Vision — Permanent Supportive Housing



Hales Court



Fair Street Apartments



Saugatuck Apartments



Westport Rotary Centennial House



Homes *with* Hope

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