

Interfaith Housing Association IHA/Homes With Hope

April 2009 Newsletter

A New Purpose for Linxweiler House



The painting crew from Westport

In the fall of 2008 we closed our men's transitional program at the Linxweiler House in Westport due to a change in need for halfway houses. We were having tremendous success placing men in permanent housing and they no longer needed transitional housing. The board and staff saw this program closing as an opportunity to expand the Bacharach Community's program. In a time when the demand for this family emergency shelter continues to grow we are fortunate to have this building available to us.

The Bacharach Community has been able to shelter up to four families at our facility on Wassell Lane. The addition of the Linxweiler House will allow us to assist one to two

more families in need. We are very excited about being able to expand this very successful program and anticipate one or possibly two families will be moving in on April 15th. In 2008 we were forced to turn away an average of almost 21 families each month due to a lack of capacity and the need is only, unfortunately, increasing.

Quite a bit of work was done so the house would be ready for a family to move in. A number of wonderful volunteers gave their time and money to help refurbish the house.

A group from the local Westport area volunteered their time to paint the interior of the house. The electrical work, including a new hardwired smoke and CO2 detection system required by the Fire Mar-

shal, has been installed. Our electrician **Harry Rorback** returned once the painting was complete and changed all of the old switches and outlets to new ones, with new covers, at his own expense. This helped make the place look great! IHA Board member, **Hal Shupack** spent an entire day driving a large moving truck around Westport to pick up donated furniture from at least 8 different households. He was assisted by 2 Gillespie residents and it was a tremendous help. We now have furniture for the house! Many thanks to Hal for his assistance with that important part of this effort. Dale Gardner and Chris Thompson of **Stone River Craftsmen**, the construction team for the kitchen and bathroom remodeling, have also returned to Linxweiler to add a few cosmetic touches of their own (at no additional cost) and to give us a hand with the other rooms. The **New England Custom Floors LLC** has refinished the floors downstairs at a discount to IHA once the painting was completed. Finally **Georgia Rojas of Westport Home Design, LLC** in Darien helped with placing the donated and existing furniture into the house and really getting it ready for the move in. Georgia is a professional house stager and she really made the house look like a home.

Volume 21

April 2009

What is IHA up to?

- A new purpose for Linxweiler House
- Community Kitchen Volunteer Event
- Bandfest 2009
- Dr. Emilio helps IHA Clients
- 2009 Feinstein Challenge
- Update on Westport Rotary Centennial House
- Castles in the Sand 2009
- Morgan Stanley supports Bacharach Community
- Fairfield County Community Foundation transition grant
- Mike Jaffe & Jumpstart
- WIN at the Westport Country Playhouse
- Stop & Shop "Food for Friends"
- PRIDE recap
- Save the Date for 2009

We held a reception for all donors, helpers, Linxweiler House alumni, IHA friends and family to give them a chance to visit the house on April 7th from 3:00 pm to 6:30 pm. Before the family moved in, we wanted everyone to be able to visit the house and see how their donations of time, effort and household items have helped make this house a home for the next incarnation of the Linxweiler House.

A BIG Thank You to Community Kitchen Volunteers!

The Community Kitchen is IHA's oldest program, starting in 1982. It has grown to serve dinner, every night of the year, to anyone who comes to the Gillespie Center at 5:00. There are more than 300 people who volunteer to purchase, prepare and serve dinner. They range in age from pre-school to over 80.

Our clients are blessed by the care the volunteers take in preparing balanced, nutritional meals served with grace and care. The volunteers are consistently impressed by the welcome they receive from our clients and staff when they serve.

IHA will honor the volunteers who help serve the more than 30,000 meals annually at the Community Kitchen. The party will be held on April 23rd at Aitoro's, located at 401 Westport Avenue in Norwalk. Jonathan Mathias of A Dash of Salt and Andy Burke of Burke Catering are donating their services and will provide dessert. This event is an opportunity for Community Kitchen volunteers to meet each other and IHA's staff. Menu suggestions and tips on cooking for a large group will be distributed.



A Community Kitchen Photo by Dave Matlow

Bandfest 6

The sixth annual Bandfest (imaginatively named "Bandfest 6") is scheduled for May 22 at Toquet Hall in downtown Westport. Bandfest is a battle of the bands and is organized by our youth board members, Christian Babikian (who has performed in three Bandfests) and Charlotte Katter. Previous events have featured bands from Westport, Weston, Wilton, Fairfield, Shelton and Ridgefield high schools and private schools. The event raises money for the operating budget of IHA through sponsorships, ticket sales at the door, and sales of votes for the "People's Choice Award." This last fundraising technique provides one of the few places in our democracy where all participants are actually encouraged to BUY votes - in



this case for their favorite band! Winners are duly rewarded with gift certificates from Friends of the Bandfest, which in the past have included local music stores and restaurants.

Dr. Robert Emilio's Gift to Our Community



Interfaith Housing Association has some of the world's best donors. One particular example is the volunteer work of Dr. Robert Emilio, who has been in dental practice for 13 years. His office is on East Avenue in Norwalk.

One Sunday at the Greens Farms Congregational church he heard IHA President, The Rev. Dr. Pete Powell preach as a guest that morning in June 2008. After Pete described the mission of IHA in his remarks, Dr. Emilio was motivated to offer his dental services to clients of IHA free of charge. Since that

time, this generous dentist has seen 4 of IHA's clients and he has done extensive work on several.

Dr. Emilio had previously done pro bono work in New York City and he has continued that practice here in CT. Why? Dr. Emilio feels that it is the right thing to do, and he stated, "I feel better knowing I've improved the lives of those who don't have access to proper dental care. Oral health and systemic disease are directly related . . . having a healthy mouth will minimize one's chances of developing heart disease, diabetes and other serious illnesses."

IHA Takes on the Feinstein Foundation \$1 Million Challenge to Fight Hunger

IHA is participating in the Feinstein Foundation Challenge for the 9th year in a row. The Challenge's Alan Shawn Feinstein will divide \$1 million among hunger fighting agencies nationwide using it to help them raise funds during March and April of 2009. The grant will be divided among participating non-profit anti-hunger

agencies based on funds raised between March 1 and April 30, 2009. Each agency will reap a share of the grant that represents its portion of the total amount of money and food donated.

Please bring food donations to the Gillespie Center at 45 Jesup Road in Westport. Monetary donations can be sent to: IHA 49

Richmondville Avenue, Suite 112 Westport, CT 06880 OR visit our website at www.ihawestport.com to make a donation online. For more information on the work we do to help the homeless in the Fairfield County community call 203-226-3426.



Westport Rotary Centennial House Update

IHA's 6-unit permanent supportive housing facility being built on the property at 10 West End Avenue in Westport is within a few months of completion. The two-story building will have 2 apartments for families including two bedrooms and 4 one bedroom apartments for singles or couples without children. Also included in the facility is a common laundry room. The project

is on target to be completed in June with tenants being able to move in by



July of this year. The Service Coordinator for Westport Rotary Centennial House will be Wendy Epstein, LCSW who is currently the WIN Program Director. Wendy will take on her duties at WRCH and continue with the WIN program as well. Completion of this project will bring the number of permanent supportive housing units that IHA operates to 14.

Castles in the Sand 2009

Come help us celebrate an afternoon of family, fun, friends and community while raising funds to support the homeless and other neighbors in need. IHA is sponsoring the **Eighth Annual Castles in the Sand**, a sandcastle build-a-thon

at Compo Beach in Westport on Saturday, May 16th, from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. The event is generously sponsored by Gault Inc., Kowalsky Brothers, Joey's by the Shore and Lydian Asset Management. You can purchase either a Big Lot (10' X

10') for \$100 which can accommodate up to four sand sculptors, or a Really Big Lot (20' X 20') at \$300 for larger families or groups. Register anytime from now until May 7th and receive free **Castles in the Sand** t-shirts for your group. Additional t-shirts will be available for purchase the day of the event.

This year, IHA will be offering food and entertainment in addition to the sculpture contest. There will be a dunk tank and some locally famous individuals we'd like you to try and dunk! Face painting and games will round out the day.

Last year several families hosted birthday parties at the event—it's a great way to get your group outside and active. Call Kirsten Allen at 203-226-3426 to reserve your lot!



Morgan Stanley Foundation Supports Bacharach Community

For more than twelve years Westporter, Bruce Hennemuth, has served as a board member of the Interfaith Housing Association (IHA). Recently the agency received a generous donation from the Morgan Stanley Foundation that represents support from all of the business units within Morgan Stanley including Kampen Investments. "This contribution was made on behalf of the volunteer efforts of Morgan Stanley employee, Bruce Hennemuth."

IHA's President, Pete Powell, states "we are of course grateful for the contribution from the Foundation but moreover we are thankful for the selfless commitment Bruce has demonstrated in his long service as Board member and Board treasurer. IHA

only exists because of the efforts of people like Bruce and the support of their employers."

Morgan Stanley Foundation's contribution is earmarked for IHA's Bacharach Community. The Bacharach Community is an emergency shelter for homeless families headed by single women. The mothers and their children who come to stay on Wassell Lane have struggled with economic hardship, mental illness, substance abuse and/or domestic violence. The Bacharach Community is unique in Connecticut because each family has its own space in a house helping to normalize their day-to-day lives; other shelters provide housing in dorm-like settings where privacy

is limited. At Bacharach a woman and her children may stay for up to one year as they learn the life skills and gather the resources necessary to live independently.

"Morgan Stanley is committed to improving life in the communities where our employees live and work through financial support and employee volunteerism."



Fairfield County Community Foundation awards \$10,000 Grant to IHA

The Interfaith Housing Association has been awarded a \$10,000 competitive grant from the Fairfield County Community Foundation. This one-year grant will help support the engagement of Third Sector New England, specialists in the area of executive transition. After more than 20 years of service to the organization IHA's President/CEO, Pete Powell, is retiring in February of 2010. Pete Powell has been instrumental in growing IHA from its origins as a men's transitional house, emergency shelter and Community Kitchen to the full-service organization it is today. After months of research and discussion IHA's Board of Directors made the decision to retain this nonprofit consulting firm in order to recruit and hire a new Executive Director for IHA. Third Sector kicked off their engagement

with IHA in January of this year, which will run for approximately 18 months. Third Sector New England provides information and services to build the knowledge, power and effectiveness of nonprofit organizations that engage people in community and public life.

In 2009 IHA provides permanent affordable supportive housing and emergency shelter for singles and families, case work services, pre-employment training and mentoring. IHA's vision for the future is to focus on the solution to chronic homelessness by providing permanent supportive housing. Today there are almost 50 units in either operation, construction or in the pipeline for future development.

The Fairfield County Community Founda-

tion promotes the growth of community and regional philanthropy to improve the quality of life throughout Fairfield County. Individuals, families, corporations and organizations can establish charitable funds and contribute to existing funds. The Foundation also provides philanthropic advisory services, and develops and leads initiatives to tackle critical community issues. It is in compliance with the Council on Foundations' national standards for community foundations. The Foundation has awarded over \$100 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond. For more information, visit www.fccfoundation.org.

For more information on Third Sector New England, visit www.tsne.org.

February Jumpstart Dinner with Mike Jaffe

Life coach Mike Jaffe spoke at the February Jumpstart dinner (Sponsored by IHA and Westport DHS). Eight WIN participants as well as one Bacharach family attended his inspiring talk. Mike shared his approaches for planning and achieving an authentic life by introducing

more passion and balance into every action, every day. His message was very well received! Nancy Kuhn-Clark, from the Westport Public Library also attended with related resources. Childcare was provided by Staples High School Key club volunteers.



Life coach Mike Jaffe

WIN Holiday Party at the Westport Country Playhouse

In December WIN participants enjoyed a lovely afternoon at the Westport Country Playhouse. Thanks to the Theatre Access Fund, mentoring partners (and their children) attended a production of "A Holiday Garland". Before the performance everyone met in the lovely

Smilow lounge for pre-theatre holiday treats. The Playhouse, with its warm, welcoming environment provided a wonderful opportunity for the women to get together and do something that they never would have done otherwise. It was a special day!



A WIN mentoring pair at the Holiday show



Stop & Shop's "Food for Friends"

For the 8th year in a row Westport's Stop & Shop, through their "Food for Friends" campaign, has made a sizeable cash donation to the Interfaith Housing Association's Food Pantry. Local "adopted" food pantries receive 60% of all funds raised from the program. IHA is extremely fortunate to have this assistance from Stop and Shop. Westport's Stop & Shop has do-

nated over \$16,000 since 2001 to IHA through this program. In 2008 IHA's Food Pantry distributed 2,012 bags of groceries to individuals and families in lower Fairfield County. Thank you to the management and staff at Stop and Shop for all their hard work making this donation possible and allowing us to continue to serve those most in need in our community



PRIDE February 2009

Twenty individuals were referred to the February 2009 PRIDE Program. Sixteen individuals were appropriate for the program, based on an interview and evaluation.

There were many referrals to this PRIDE session from emergency shelters and consequently, the group ended up being mostly composed of clients in that kind of living situation. This provided an "unspoken bond" between the clients, since the theme of being "homeless" definitely had an impact on their overall situation and mood. Also, due to the troubled economy, many felt discouraged and frustrated about gaining

employment. It was an interesting, interactive and cohesive group of participants given their circumstances.

The PRIDE Program ran for three weeks. The program format demonstrated "up to date" topics which fostered increased learning and interaction – the content of each area of training continued to address vocational and clinically oriented topics well. Additional material is always brought into the program which is tailored specifically to the needs of the group.

There was a guest speaker who added additional perspectives and resources to the program. Bob Stokes enthusiastically came to discuss "real world tips" on interviewing skills and address issues that surface once a job is obtained. He also offered sound advice on resumes and what interviewers look for in a job applicant. Dress for Success, who has come to speak for many years, was unavailable, since their

organization was unfortunately closing down. Dynamic speakers have a positive motivational impact on the group – particularly in such a difficult job market.

The participants graduated on February 20th, 2009. During the last class there was a graduation party and the participants received certificates. Specific jobs and further training/education were addressed for each participant; all participants were involved in a job search; One client obtained a job in construction; one at Stop and Shop (while taking an EMT course as well). One client is pursuing computer training while seeking employment. Another client is applying for a position in freelance art. The clients are also continuing to focus on maintaining sobriety and pursuing housing options. Referrals were also made to CT Works for further job and computer training.

The next PRIDE session is taking place in April 2009.

April 2009 Newsletter

Interfaith Housing Association
49 Richmondville Avenue
Suite 112
Westport, CT 06880
Phone: 203-226-3426
Fax: 203-226-2557
E-mail: petepowell@ihawestport.com



We're online
www.ihawestport.com

IHA Staff

Pete Powell
President/CEO
petepowell@ihawestport.com

Audrey Sparre
*Vice President/
Chief of Operations*
audreysparre@ihawestport.com

Karen Mahar
*Director of Resource
Development*
karenmahar@ihawestport.com

Tom Reech
Comptroller
tomreech@ihawestport.com

Kirsten Allen
Community Relations Coordinator
kirstenallen@ihawestport.com

Maryellen Estrada
*Program Director
Gillespie Center & Hoskins' Place*
maryellenes-
trada@ihawestport.com

Paris Looney
*Program Director
Bacharach Community
&
Service Coordinator,
Homes With Hope*
parislooney@ihawestport.com

Wendy Epstein
*Program Director
Women's Interfaith Network*
wendyep-
stein@ihawestport.com

David Kelly
*Case Manager
Gillespie Center & Hoskins' Place*
davidkelly@ihawestport.com



Save The Date!

The following events are on the calendar for 2009:

April 23rd
*Volunteer Recognition Event at Aitoro's
401 Westport Avenue, Norwalk
from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm*

May 16th
*Castles in the Sand
Sand Castle Build-a-Thon
Compo Beach, Westport
from 2pm to 6pm
To benefit IHA programs*

May 22nd
*Bandfest6
Our 6th Annual Battle of the Bands
Toquet Hall, Westport at 7 pm
To benefit IHA programs*



June 26th
*Good Neighbor Day
A Charity Carwash at
Westport Wash and Wax
8 am to 5 pm
To benefit IHA programs*

And . . . soon to be announced:

*Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
Westport Rotary Centennial House
June 2009*

*Stand Up for Homes with Hope II
An evening of comedy at the Klein
October 2009*

