

# Homes with Hope

## Interfaith Housing Association

Solving homelessness in our communities through supportive housing



May 2010 Newsletter

### Homes with Hope Names New President

Volume 23

May 2010



Long-time Homes with Hope board member, Jeffrey N. Wieser, was selected to be the new President & CEO of Homes with Hope after a search lasting more than a year. Jeff is taking the helm after the retirement of Pete Powell who led the agency for the last 22 years. He assumed his responsibilities in late March. Cathy Cohen served as interim Executive Director of Homes with Hope from mid January until late March.

Jeff has a long association with Homes with Hope having served on the board in 1989-1990 and from 1995 until January 2010. He was Board Chair from 1998-2002. He comes to his new post from a 30+ year career in international banking where his most recent position was as Senior Relationship Manager at HSBC. He previously served as Managing Director of Healthcare at HSBC, and as President of Manufacturers Hanover Bank of Canada.

Jeff is an active member of the Westport community. He is a member of the Westport RTM and has served on the Vestry at Christ & Holy Trinity Church and the boards of Earthplace and Staples Tuition Grants Committee. He is also an advisor with Builders Beyond Borders.

He is a graduate of Princeton University (AB) and received his MBA from New York University.

According to John Walsh, Homes with Hope's board chair, "Jeff is the ideal candidate to lead Homes with Hope forward during these challenging times. He is passionate about the agency and the problems of chronic homelessness; he has a proven record of successful community involvement; and he brings strong organizational skills to Homes with Hope."

Interfaith Housing Association dba Homes with Hope is a grassroots response to the problems of homelessness and those at-risk of homelessness in the community.

#### What is HwH up to?

- Homes with Hope Names a New President
- Pete Powell Retires
- Pete Powell's Retirement Dinner
- 9th Annual Castles in the Sand
- BandFest 7
- New Staff
- PRIDE recap

### Pete Powell Retires

Prior to retiring in January of this year, Peter R. Powell had led the Interfaith Housing Association dba Homes with Hope for the last 22 years. During that time, he grew the agency from supporting the area's homeless to an organization that has chosen the strategic mission to solve chronic homelessness in our communities through supportive housing. Pete has been committed to the development of Permanent Supportive Housing and remained steadfast to his commitment even in a wealthy suburban community where the cost of land is high and the effect of NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) is even greater.

In addition to his success at Homes with

Hope, Pete served in many related capacities in the effort to end homelessness, at home and statewide. He was a board member of Corporation for Independent Living from 1993-1999, he is a past President of the CT Coalition to End Homelessness, he was a member of the Reaching Home Steering Committee from 2002-2007 and is a founding member of Fairfield 08. Since 2001, he has been the Vice President of the Wassell Lane Corporation in Westport and is also a Past President of the Westport Rotary Club, an early funder of the agency's newest permanent supportive housing facility. He is also a Priest Associate at Christ & Holy Trinity Church in Westport.



Pete's enduring efforts toward solving the tragedy of homelessness has served the community greatly. He is well known and respected, commanding an incredible amount of knowledge and energy in the area of permanent supportive housing. Thanks to his leadership and dedication, Homes with Hope has developed 14 units of permanent supportive housing with 20 more planned in the very near future.

## For Pete's Sake!



Pete and his infamous bowtie on April 8th

Pete Powell's retirement dinner, FOR PETE'S SAKE, was held on April 8<sup>th</sup> at the Inn at Longshore. It was originally scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup>, the weekend of the horrendous

weather we experienced when half the town's homes were without power and half the town's roads were impassible. It was then rescheduled for the next day, March 14<sup>th</sup>, but the town was still in a state of emergency and it was finally decided to hold the event on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

The party was a great success and we were so happy for Pete that we were (finally) able to pull off such a heart-felt event on his behalf. We are in debt to so many people for their help including Homes with Hope board member Steve Paymer, who really personalized the struggle we are trying so hard to address. Rabbi Orkand, from Temple Israel, was one of 2 scheduled emcees and he was great! He had to perform solo since we lost Bill Mitchell of Mitchell's of Westport (our other emcee)



Carol Martin, Westport HA Executive Director; David Newberg Westport HA Board Chair; David Rich, Fairfield 08 Executive Director

due to a scheduling conflict. Joyce Green, who came to us as a volunteer through a board member Hal Shupack, was indispensable in making it a beautiful night as was Kirsten Allen, Homes with Hope Community Relations Coordinator, for her organizational and creative skills. Jeff Scanlan anchored the committee and other Homes with Hope staff pitched in to help the night of the event. The Inn at Longshore was a beautiful venue and their staff was amazing. Many thanks to all those who participated!



Rick Redniss, Redniss & Mead; Ross Burkhardt, former HWH board member; Alan Spierer, HWH attorney and former board member

## 9th Annual Castles in the Sand!

Celebrate an afternoon of family, fun, friends and community while raising funds to support the homeless and other neighbors in need. Homes with Hope is sponsoring the Ninth Annual *Castles in the Sand* sandcastle build-a-thon at Compo Beach in Westport on Saturday, May 15, between noon and 4:00 pm with a rain date of Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. The event is gener-



ously sponsored by the following sponsors: CharlesChase Group David Adam Realty, Babkie Graphic and Web Designs, Cox Radio, Gault Inc., Joey's by the Shore, Kowalsky Brothers, the Epstein Family and the Walsh Family.

Big Lots (10' X 10') are \$100 and can accommodate up to four sand sculptors. Really Big Lots (20' X 20') are \$300. Each participant will receive complimentary water and ice cream from Joey's By the Shore and two free *Castles in the Sand* T-shirts with a Big Lot and four free shirts for every Really Big Lot. Additional

t-shirts will be available for purchase the day of the event.

To reserve your sand-sculpting lot or for sponsorship opportunities, please call Kirsten Allen at 203.226.3426 ext. 10. Compo Beach parking fees for attendees are waived for the day of the event.



## Bandfest 7!

The seventh annual Bandfest (imaginatively named "Bandfest 7") is scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup> at Toquet Hall in downtown Westport. Bandfest is a "battle of the bands" and is organized by our Youth Board members, Charlotte Katter and Mikey Hintsa. 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 Homes with Hope 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.



## New Case Manager at Gillespie - Nicole Heit

HwH is pleased to welcome Nicole Heit as its new Case Manager at the Gillespie Center. She attended Adelphi University's School of Social Work in the advanced standing program; in which she obtained her Bachelors degree in 2007 and her Masters degree in 2008. She began her career in social work at Connecticut Renaissance in Stamford, serving as the Adolescent Outpatient Clinician as well as running the Stamford School Violence Prevention Program. She then moved on to work as a Residential Counselor at Silver Hill Hospital, and is now extremely happy to be part of the HwH team. She lives in Norwalk, and recently became engaged.



## New Case Manager at the Westport Rotary Centennial House - Wendy Epstein

In addition to running the WIN mentoring program, Wendy Epstein, LCSW, recently took the position of Case Manager for the tenants at Homes with Hope's new supportive housing facility, the Westport Rotary Centennial House. Wendy has been with HwH since June of 2002 and is thrilled to expand her work with the agency.

As a supportive housing case manager, Wendy works directly with the individuals and families living at Rotary House. Supportive housing works because of the relationships

case managers develop with their tenants; giving assistance as needed and helping to create community to maintain the all important goal of successful tenancy. At this time, Wendy is very busy getting to know everyone and sorting out their individual situations. Moving is very stressful and it's so nice to have Wendy there to smooth over any difficulties. We welcome her to this new position!



## PRIDE February 2010

Homes with Hope provides an employment readiness program called PRIDE. It is open to anyone, at no charge, and the attendees come from our programs and referrals made by local social service organizations. Fourteen individuals completed the February program. The partici-

pants graduated on February 22nd, 2010.

Due to the current turbulence in the economy, it has been very difficult for people to find work yet the extra help provided by PRIDE motivated the attendees to continue to look for work and apply their newly learned skills. Attendance throughout the course was excellent! Several group members were interviewing and even became employed during the most recent session.

Guest speakers added additional perspectives and resources to the program. Bob Stokes joined us 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 returned to us with a great presentation on "putting yourself together" to impress employers in the first 30 seconds

that you walk in the door. Pam Bass, a social worker from Westport's Department of Human Services spoke to the group about the vocational services and resources offered in the area.

At the end of the session, there is always a brief graduation ceremony where the participants receive certificates and enjoy a pizza party, followed by cake. Feedback from the group was positive, and the growth of the participants who completed the program was visible. One participant specifically expressed that some of the class members had developed negative views of work and the workplace, and the PRIDE program was helpful in changing those attitudes. The positive efforts and encouragement had a wonderful impact on everyone's overall motivation and persistence.

The next PRIDE session will be taking place in May of 2010.



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## Housing Programs

### HwH Board of Directors

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Bruce Hennemuth, *Treasurer*

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Charlotte Katter

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Bacharach Community  
Emergency Shelter for Single Moms  
and their Children



Saugatuck Apartments  
Permanent Supportive Housing



Linxweiler House  
Extension of Bacharach Community



Westport Rotary Centennial House  
Permanent Supportive Housing



Gillespie Center & Hoskins Place  
Emergency Shelter for Single Men and Women

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