

# Homes with Hope

## Interfaith Housing Association

*Solving homelessness in our communities through supportive housing*



Summer 2009 Newsletter

## Bill Cosby Comes to the Klein Memorial Auditorium

### Sunday, October 4th 2009!

The second annual *Stand Up for Homes with Hope* starring Bill Cosby is being presented by Homes with Hope at the Klein Memorial Auditorium located at 910 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut. There will be two shows on Sunday October 4, 2009 at 4pm and 7pm. Tickets will range in price from as low as \$40 up to \$150 per person.

Bill Cosby is, by any standard, one of the most influential stars in America today. Whether through concert appearances or recording, television or films, commercials or education, Bill Cosby has the ability to touch people's lives. His humor often centers on the basic cornerstones of our existence, seeking to provide an insight into our roles as parents, children, family members, men and women.

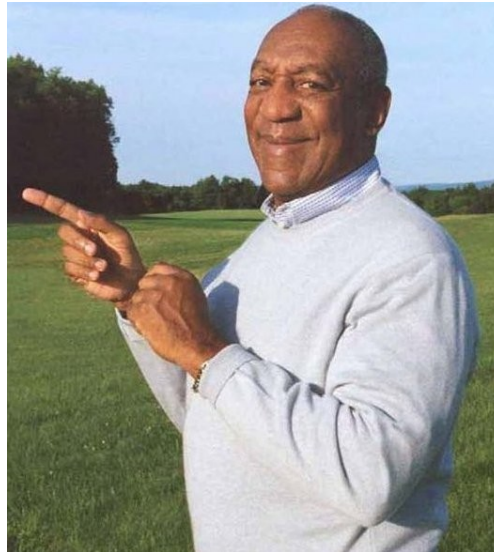
Homes with Hope is a local grassroots response to the tragedy of homeless. With caring, professionally trained staff and the help of more than 400 volunteers, the agency assists people who have lost their ability to lead normal lives.

Homes with Hope is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization

based in Westport. Opened in 1984, Homes with Hope's mission is to provide facilities and supportive services in a structured environment that enables homeless people in the communities we serve to achieve an independent and self-sufficient life.

Homes with Hope accomplishes this through permanent affordable supportive housing, casework and supportive services, emergency shelter, food and meals, and the life skills training critical in preventing homelessness from reoccurring. All proceeds from the two shows will go to support the mission of Homes with Hope.

Each night nearly 60 different people seek shelter or housing in one of our programs. We have the Gillespie Center and Hoskins' Place for single men and women and the Bacharach Community for homeless families headed by single women. We also have Saugatuck Apartments and the Westport Rotary Centennial House that provides permanent supportive housing for the formerly homeless mentally ill. Everything we



do is done in Westport. We believe that the suburbs should solve the problem of homelessness that occurs in those suburbs. We know that homelessness can be ended. We see it every day when we work at Saugatuck Apartments or Westport Rotary Centennial House. With your help we will end homelessness for more people.

The Klein Memorial Auditorium was built in 1940 and beautifully refurbished in 2001. It has hosted such luminaries as Della Reese, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Martin Luther King, Jr. More recently, the Klein has presented the comedy of Bob Newhart, George Carlin, Sinbad, and Wanda Sykes, as well as productions of the New England Ballet's Annual Nutcracker, tours of Saturday Night Fever,

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#### What is HwH up to?

- Stand Up for Homes with Hope featuring Bill Cosby
- Name change is official
- Castles in the Sand recap
- Good Neighbor Day at Westport Wash & Wax recap
- Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Westport Rotary Centennial House
- BandFest6 recap
- WIN Summer Picnic
- Connie Pappas - WIN life coach
- Food Pantry update
- PRIDE recap
- Save the Date

CATS, and regular community events. The Klein has been the home of the Greater Bridgeport Symphony for the past 60 years.

We hope that you will be able to join us at the Klein for one of the two shows on October 4<sup>th</sup> as Bill Cosby comes to entertain and help support our mission of ending homelessness in our communities.

To purchase tickets, visit [www.fairfieldtheatre.org](http://www.fairfieldtheatre.org) or call (203) 259-1036.

## We Are Officially Homes with Hope!

Change is a constant in life and in working with the issue of homelessness. We have officially made a change to our new name: Homes with Hope. As you maybe aware this was the name of our first permanent affordable supportive housing facility, which will now be referred to as Saugatuck Apartments.

The new name summarizes our future direction – acquiring more permanent affordable supportive housing to end homeless in our community. When we first opened in 1984, IHA was the result of the work of the local religious community in response to the growing problem of homelessness. Many members of the clergy were joined by talented laypeople to open a shelter in the Vigilant Firehouse, adjacent to what is now the Inn at National Hall. We continue to work closely



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with area congregations today but more than 15 years ago we changed our bylaws so that our board directly elects its own members. Fortunately, over the same period, our donor base has also expanded dramatically and it includes not only our founding congregations, but other local individuals, local businesses and charitable foundations.

Why change the name of such a successful charity and risk a loss of awareness and

support for our mission? For many years during our fundraising efforts, we have had to demonstrate to potential donors that we are not a church. The name “Interfaith” coupled with the agency President being an Episcopal priest has been confusing to some. Our new name defines the change in our strategic direction, from providing emergency shelter to working to end homelessness in our community through permanent affordable supportive housing.

What has not changed is our absolute commitment to serve our clients, the homeless of our towns, with the most effective tools we can find. Thanks to your continued support of our mission we have met that commitment for 25 years and with your help we will continue to meet it into the future.

## Castles in the Sand 2009



The Castles Lobster

Homes with Hope/IHA celebrated the 8th Annual Castles in the Sand build-athon at Compo Beach on Saturday, May 16th. Despite the less than perfect weather, there was a large crowd of enthusiastic teams who came to build a sea serpent, an octopus, a giant hotdog and hamburger, and a bowling alley to name

just a few. New this year was a Dunk Tank starring local celebrities, artist Miggs Burroughs, and Fire Chief Chris Ackley, who volunteered to be dunked for everyone’s amusement. Everyone had a wonderful time all in the name of raising funds to help the homeless in our community.



Above: Sami the sea serpent, winner of People’s Choice & Golden Shovel



Right: Miggs in the dunk tank Photo by Dave Matlow

## Annual Good Neighbor Day at Westport Wash & Wax



Kirsten Allen, HwH Community Relations Coordinator, Pete Powell HwH President, Scott & Craig Tiefenthaler

Westport Wash & Wax, located at 786 Post Road East, held the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Good Neighbor Day on Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. All of the day’s revenue 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.

Good Neighbor Day was established in 2001 by Scott Tiefenthaler and his wife Laila who wanted to lend their support

to a local nonprofit organization that was making a difference; Homes with Hope/ Interfaith Housing Association was that organization. Partners Scott and Craig Tiefenthaler have carried on the tradition every year since then. This year they donated \$4,500 from the event.

A special thanks goes to Amelie Babkie, of Babkie Graphic and Web Design for donating her talent for graphic arts and designing all of the posters and advertisements for this event for several years running.

# Westport Rotary Centennial House Holds Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup> was a beautiful summer day and brought with it almost 75 people to help commemorate the completion of the Westport Rotary Centennial House, Homes with Hope/IHA's new permanent supportive housing facility. The event celebrated not only the end of construction, but equally as important, the contributions made by the two Westport Rotary clubs – Westport Sunrise Rotary and Westport Rotary. Also acknowledged for her major contribution was Bunny Mostad, local realtor and Westport Rotary member.

The Rotary Clubs, who eagerly supported the idea as their project to recognize Rotary International's Centennial year, each raised \$25,000 long before there was a building to hang their name on. Bunny Mostad assisted Homes with Hope/IHA locate the property and facilitate the purchase. After the close on the property she donated her entire commission to the project.

Homes with Hope/IHA President, Pete Powell emceed the event and spoke at length about the process and thanked all of those who had helped to make the "idea" come to fruition. Westport First Selectman and Rotarian, Gordon Joseloff spoke about the importance of permanent supportive housing to the town. As a Rotary member, he was well versed in the clubs' participation. Representatives from both Westport Rotary clubs also spoke to the group.



Westport Rotary Centennial House  
Photo by Dave Matlow

Also on hand for the event were members of the Homes with Hope/IHA Board of Directors. They circulated through the crowd to talk with folks individually about their pride in this accomplishment and their hopes for the agency's future permanent supportive housing development plans.

Karen Mahar, Homes with Hope/IHA's Director of Resource Development, shepherded the construction project from be-

ginning to end. Wendy Epstein, WIN's Program Director, is the caseworker for this facility and has been working with Vice President Audrey Sparre to take care of all the details necessary prior to the move-in date. This is an extremely exciting time for the board and staff as well as those who will have a place to call their own. Tenants will be moving into the new apartments in early September.

*Pictured right, from left to right: Larry Aasen, Westport Rotary; Denise McLaughlin, Westport Rotary; Carleton Cleveland, Westport Rotary; Carole Rubenstein, Sunrise Rotary; Rob Reeves, Westport Rotary; Ann Lloyd, Sunrise Rotary; John Franklin, Sunrise Rotary; Gordon Joseloff, 1<sup>st</sup> selectman; Lois Schine, Westport Rotary; Bunny Mostad, Westport Rotary; Peter Ferrara, Westport Rotary; Dick Eldh Westport, Sunrise Rotary; Audrey Sparre, Sunrise Rotary; Jim Marpe, Westport Rotary; Dennis Wong, Sunrise Rotary; Jeff Mayer, Sunrise Rotary; Pete Powell, Westport Rotary; Anne Matlow, Westport Rotary; Jeff Mayer, Sunrise Rotary; Tom Lowry, Sunrise Rotary; Joe Nixon, Westport Rotary; George Masumian, Sunrise Rotary; Joe Hawley, Sunrise Rotary; Joe Renzulli, Sunrise Rotary*



*Pictured left from left to right: Peter Ferrara, Westport Rotary; John Franklin, Westport Sunrise Rotary; John Walsh Homes with Hope Board member; 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman Gordon Joseloff, Westport Rotary and Honorary Sunrise Rotary Member; Bob LaRosa, President of LaRosa Building Group; Karen Mahar, Homes with Hope Director of Resource Development; Anne Lissett, Architect at Crosskey Architects LLC; Pete Powell, Homes with Hope President; Bunny Mostad, Westport Rotary.*



## BandFest6!



Christian Babikian, HwH student board member at BandFest6 playing with his band, Charles Street

Once again this year, the Youth Board Members of Homes with Hope held BandFest on a spring Friday in May. BandFest6 featured five bands from schools in Westport, Wilton, Weston, and Fairfield. The show drew a spirited crowd to Toquet Hall, where the event has been hosted for four of its six years.

The sponsors of BandFest6 included Kingsley Court Reporting, Bank of America, Freudigman & Billings, and St. Luke's Youth Group. The Cow Store, Athena Diner and Centro all donated gift certificates as raffle prizes.

BandFest has been a great way for our Youth Board to be involved with HwH and to spread the word of our good works to the high school community. It also provides an opportunity for our "older" board members to enjoy the local music scene, which by all evidence at

Bandfest6 is alive and well!

Christian Babikian, co-chair of the event and HwH/IHA student board member was on hand for his 5<sup>th</sup> year at BandFest, his second as an HwH/IHA board member. Christian and his band, "Charles Street" have added so much to the musical talent over the years. We will be sorry to see Christian go as he will be off this winter to Pepperdine University in California but we wish him well!

This was Charlotte Katter's first year on the board and as co-chair of the event. Both students worked very hard to set up the event, find sponsors, find the talent and run the show, with support from HWH/IHA staff, board members and Toquet Hall. BandFest6 was a great event thanks their diligence and enthusiasm.

## WIN Summer Picnic



The annual WIN Picnic was held at Compo Beach on Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>. Each year, Wendy Epstein, LCSW and the Director of our WIN Mentoring Program hosts a beach picnic for all of the participants in her program, including the mentees, the mentors and their children. It was a picture perfect evening with clear

skies and a light breeze. The beach was a lovely setting for nineteen adults and eight children to have a wonderful meal and enjoy each other's company. Many participants contributed home-made salads and desserts. The fabulous weather, delicious food and pleasant company added up to a delightful evening for all!

## Inspiration for WIN from Life Coach, Connie Pappas

Life Coach, Connie Pappas, of Inspired Collaborative Resources has generously offered her services to WIN participants. She has led four talks, all encouraging women to discover new possibilities by addressing challenges with a positive outlook. Her talks have been inspirational and uplifting. Many women have walked away feeling motivated and hopeful. She will continue meeting with WIN once a month for the foreseeable future. The meetings are open to any women who are interested in attending. If you wish to attend, contact Wendy Epstein at (203)222-9260.



## Homes with Hope/IHA's Food Pantry and Community Kitchen Strive to Meet the Increase in Demand

During the current economic times we all feel some new challenges as a result. For the people in our community who are homeless or at risk of homelessness this



burden is especially magnified.

One of the many ways Homes with Hope/IHA helps to ease this burden is through their Food Pantry, located in the Gillespie Center at 45 Jesup Road. The Pantry provides 2 grocery bags of staple food items every two weeks to anyone who comes. Food Pantry hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. Through July of this year the Pantry has distributed an average of 187 bags each month, a number that hasn't been matched since 2005.

Equally telling of the stress individuals and families are under is the fact that the Community Kitchen, which provides 3

meals a day, has seen an increase of the normal 20-25 people who come for dinner nightly to in excess of 30-35 folks. Dinner is at 5:00pm each evening in the Community Room at the Gillespie Center and is provided and served by local area volunteers who purchase, cook and serve the meal. With 10 more coming for dinner this has put a burden on the Community Kitchen volunteers as well. Homes with Hope/IHA's team of volunteers number approximately 400 and come to us from local service clubs, places of worship and others who just want to help make a difference in people's lives. The agency is incredibly grateful to those who keep the Community Kitchen alive and well.

## PRIDE April 2009

Homes with Hope/IHA hosts an employment readiness program 4 times a year called PRIDE. It is open to anyone, for free, and most of the participants come from our programs and from referrals made by local social service organizations. Eleven individuals completed the April 2009 PRIDE session. Participants in this session came with a variety of backgrounds and interests. They shared stories of their past and current work histories, which were diverse. However, an overall sense of frustration about trying to obtain employment in the current turbulent economy was a common theme.

A feeling of security and trust developed throughout the course which helped students to admit some of their difficulties with work but also to recognize their talents and how they might apply them in a productive manner. The group members worked hard to establish goals and increase their self-awareness around employment. They also really understood that they may have to take a job to make some money in order to live in the short term, even if it's not their "ideal" job.

They saw that finding the right job is a process and while they are working toward their ideal job, it is still important to be working.

Guest speaker Bob Stokes reviewed tips on interviewing skills and helped address issues that surface once a job is obtained. Back for the 11<sup>th</sup> time, Franck Adjisegbe, founder and president of HEROS, an organization dedicated to developing leadership skills in students, addressed this PRIDE group. Franck is an experienced motivational speaker who has had many interesting experiences throughout the world. He was very well received by the group and truly had a positive motivational impact.

The course was completed on April 17, 2009. During the last class there was a graduation party and the participants received their certificates. Specific jobs and further training/education were addressed for each graduate and some were involved in a job search. Since that time, one person obtained a job in construction; one in a security position; one



in landscaping; one as a computer consultant. Another was finishing college and working part time in his chosen field of finance. Referrals were also made for further job and computer training.

The next PRIDE session took place in August 2009.

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**Save The Date!**

The following events are on the calendar for Fall 2009:

**September**

*Dedication Ceremony for  
Westport Rotary Centennial House  
10 West End Avenue, Westport CT*



**October 4**

*Stand up for Homes with Hope  
Comedy Event Presents: Bill Cosby in Concert  
Klein Memorial Auditorium  
Two shows starting at 4 pm and 7 pm  
To benefit HwH programs*