

WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS!



“Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something”

- Author Unknown

This is how we feel about our wonderful volunteers that help make the lives of our families so much better no matter how big or small it may seem. In fact, it seems like a whole bunch of little things adds up to be a lot of big things!

Did you know that every year there is a full week that we can celebrate the wonderful work that volunteers bring to Helping Hand House? This year it is April 11th-16th. This window of time gives us a chance to honor individuals who go above and beyond to tak-

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HELPING HAND HOUSE



Helping Hand House

VISION

Helping Hand House is dedicated to ending family homelessness by providing caring support, education, and innovative programs designed to empower families to achieve self-sufficiency. Helping Hand House develops and implements model programs in partnership with community resources to strengthen families with children while contributing to healthier communities.

MISSION

Helping Hand House is dedicated to preventing and ending family homelessness.

VALUES

Helping Hand House provides an environment based on integrity, compassion, honesty, respect, integrity, good stewardship, and professionalism through positive and caring relationships.



Dear Friends,

As we enter springtime there are many changes that occur; daylight savings time, daffodils blooming, longer hours of daylight, and hopefully warmer weather and more blue sky. It seems like these changes used to seem much more significant, but faced with the reality of the past few years I for one have come to realize that change is my new reality. I have always tried my best to embrace change, looking for each new opportunity, and way to utilize that change to its fullest potential. However the enormous number of families who have become homeless and either are receiving services from Helping Hand House or are trying to receive services have experienced devastating change. For them change has closed doors and ended ways of life they knew well. They have a hard time seeing the beautiful daffodils in bloom or the trees in bloom, because they are blinded by despair and hopelessness.

At Helping Hand House we lift that veil of blindness daily by providing families who have become homeless with new ways of thinking, new ways of moving forward and discovering opportunities. And, they are grateful for the housing and services we provide. This month we have added an Employment/Career Specialist to our staff. She works with the adult household members to help them identify the direction they want to move toward. She helps them get the education they need to pursue the career that will lead to stable employment allowing them to fully care for their family. This is an exciting change

and one the families are thrilled with. However the sad reality is that we continue to have more families that need help than we are able to assist. With layoffs and budget cuts by bigger companies in the area the face of homelessness continues to change and embrace a broader array of families. Families like yours and mine who never expected to be in such a situation are seeking help. The other factor in this new reality is that funding is more and more difficult to get to keep our programs working smoothly, which means stepping in and providing for a variety of needs our families have; from car repair and gas to toilet paper and toothpaste. State and Federal budget cuts are unfortunately hitting the poorest the hardest. Those receiving TANF funds from the State Department of Human Services have recently experienced a cut in their monthly support. Some of our families who are trying to learn a new way of living so they can leave the cycle of generational poverty and have been receiving these funds off and on for five years are completely cut off, no TANF money, no food stamps, and no medical care. As you may imagine this simply makes our work more demanding and requires us to assist with covering expenses we have not needed to support in the past.

So let's enjoy the daffodils, the blooming trees, the sunshine, which are all part of the change that is spring. And, together let's work to make sure that those who are experiencing the negative changes occurring in our communities have an opportunity to remove the blinding veil of hopelessness and feel the sunshine and enjoy this beautiful place we live in. I ask each of you to think about a way you can step up your support by a small amount each month to help us or other providers as we create new realities and take the lemons of change and turn them into lemonade for those we care for. Thank you!

Happy Spring,

Nola B. Kemp



Continued on from page 1

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

~Mark Twain

ing action and solving problems in their community. We get to celebrate ordinary everyday people who do extraordinary things through service. Something changes when a person discovers that it is in serving others that they most find their joy. Have you ever experienced the profound affect it has on your community when you selflessly give of your time and energy? It is priceless and something we witness in our volunteers every day.

It seems that the news headlines are of stories of despair, hopelessness and the strains of the world. How often do you turn on your TV and hear about the wonderful and caring deeds that volunteers do on a daily basis in your own community or throughout the world? The volunteers who work with Helping Hand House are absolutely priceless to our mission and are vital as we look for ways to serve more families. It may seem like one is doing a very small task at times, whether baking a child's birth-



day cake, cleaning our shelter yards, or making a quilt. But to us - and the family that will move into a clean, freshly painted home - it means the world. That birthday cake is for a child whose parent may not be able to do, providing means for the child can have a happy birthday. Those hours

in our yards make it possible to move a family into a house and hear them say, "Wow- what a beautiful home and yard - I get to live here?" That quilt becomes a message to every one of the family members in our programs that, "people in your community care so much for you, that they made you this beautiful quilt that you can keep forever." Small or big, the volunteer task you provide for Helping Hand House helps out so much and we are so grateful for any and all support.

If you are interested in volunteering or have a great idea to share, please contact our Director of Volunteer Services, Lisa Heintz at 253-848-6096 ext. 17 or check out volunteer opportunities listed at our web site at www.helpinghandhouse.org.

Please know that we are always so grateful for the volunteers that show the families love and support - regardless how big or small the task, we cannot do our work without you!



House Warming TOURS

Homelessness is a lot closer to home than many ever expected. It is shocking how often people tell us that a family member or close friend is on the brink of homelessness, due to a lost job, family crisis, or other factors. In that situation, what do you do? What do you know about family homelessness and the solutions out there? How can you make a difference in the lives of your neighbors in these tough times?

We invite you to join us for one of our monthly House Warming Tours. These 1 hour times are packed with information and a great venue to ask questions of people who are on the frontlines with families, and a part of the policy-making discussion on a local and state level. We want to hear from you!

Tours are on the 3rd Saturday of the month (Upcoming dates are: April 16th, May 21st, and June 18th) from 9:30-10:30am at our office on South Hill.

If you would like to join us please RSVP on our website or call us at (253) 848-6096 Ext. 15 and speak to Jamie Anderson.



Christmas Wrap Up

It was a bitterly cold afternoon in between rain and snow storms when a group of holiday elves made a visit to Helping Hand House to drop off boxes and boxes of Christmas toys and holiday meals for one of the families we serve. In a wonderful convergence of early and late, the family who was to receive the gifts arrived at the same time as the donor family.

The father of the family in our program was entirely overwhelmed. Soon there was an assembly line of gifts going through hands to pack his car - the more he saw coming, the more emotional he got. Tears streamed down his face as he knew that he would not be able to afford such wonderful gifts and food for his family. He kept saying, "Thank you for making my Christmas so memorable - I have a family that deserves to have Christmas, but I just can't give it to them." By this time, not only was the Helping Hand House family crying with tears of joy, but donor family was crying as they were able to see firsthand the huge impact they were making for a family in need.

Another Christmas miracle happened at Helping Hand House this past year - a family moved into a program unexpectedly 3 days before Christmas. Given that it was so close to Christmas, we were not sure how we could make Christmas dreams come true for this family. But due to the kind and generous hearts of our donors, two gentlemen stepped forward and got their whole neighborhood involved in purchasing and wrapping gifts. When the family arrived at our office, the look on their faces was one of disbelief as the Mom said, "I wasn't expecting anything like this so close to Christmas."

We are very blessed at Helping Hand House to be able to work with extremely generous donors who always go above and beyond to ensure that our families are well taken care of for each holiday and every day throughout the year. We feel honored that you truly care for the families as they were your own and want the very best for them as we do! Without your generosity during both Thanksgiving and Christmas, we would have never been able to provide beautiful holiday meals, Christmas stockings filled to the brim with toys, puzzles, candy and gift cards, or gifts. You made it possible for all Helping Hand House families to enjoy the fullness of the holiday spirit!

CHANGE IS IN THE AIR

Just look around you. Flowers are blooming, birds are nesting, lambs are being born, bunnies and baby ducks abound. All of nature is waking up from winter slumber ready to step into newness. Spring is a great time to move ahead on possibilities in a new season. And we are certainly doing that at Helping Hand House.

Our agency has outgrown its location. Over the years here, we have re-organized and re-modeled and shared office space until we are unable to grow another inch until we find a new location. We have found a realtor who is deeply familiar with the work of Helping Hand House to conduct a search for existing buildings that satisfy our requirements as well as look at land where we might build. We would very much like to make a move by the end of 2011 or early 2012. We are excited when we think of having enough space to serve more families more efficiently.

Another change that has bloomed is the way we receive clients into our programs. Instead of calling our office directly, all families needing help now connect through Access Point 4 Housing operated by Associated Ministries. The goal of the new system is to help people find the services they need without having to call numerous

agencies repeatedly. Having all calls recorded by a central number will also give us an accurate count of the true need for services in our community.

Just over a year ago, with federal stimulus funding to address newly homeless families, we opened our first rapid re-housing units. Since then we received more funding and increased the number of families we could serve from 5 to 25. The model for quickly re-housing families in units leased in their names, and providing stabilization services until they can succeed on their own, is being encouraged by both public and private funders. We anticipate other changes to existing housing programs to occur in the response to the HEARTH Act. Some of these changes include transitioning in place instead of needing to find new housing when clients graduate.

Employment possibilities are growing very slowly and unemployment figures continue to go up a little and then down a little from month to month. To give families in our programs a boost into the job market that increases their likelihood of finding jobs, we have hired an employment specialist. She provides individual career and skills assessments, job readiness and job retention coaching, educa-

tion referrals, document preparation, as well as individualized job search planning. We are pleased to be able to help level the playing field so our families have a better chance at landing a family wage job.

Enjoy the newness in your life!



Calling All Green Thumbs

Do you enjoy the satisfaction of a yard well groomed? We at Helping Hand House welcome groups to help us maintain and care for the housing program yards. If you or a group of friends are looking for a spring yard project or ongoing yard projects this summer, please contact the Director of Volunteer Services at 848-6096 Ext. 17 for more information.

Helping Hand House 2011 Family Awards Banquet

A Night to Celebrate Success!



It's not every day you see a grown man cry. The Family Awards Banquet is one of those times, as Board members, staff, and friends of Helping Hand House come together with the families in our programs to celebrate their successes and victories.

Many were deeply touched as each family received an award, and their case manager shared stories about the major challenges they had overcome. For some of these families – so long written off by society and those around them – it could have been the Oscars.

Choices matter, and it is never an easy move from living in a car to a healthy home. But it is such a joy for a child to see their parent being recognized in a room filled with laughter and tears, as they learn about making good life choices.

Our banquet was catered by Outback Steakhouse and the “Hawaii Club” was on hand to dazzle and dance their way to the hearts of the audience, courtesy of the Pacific Lutheran University. We also were blessed to have a fantastic group of high school students and local business and school professionals volunteer their time and served as our table wait staff.

Gaining Confidence

Amber came to HHH with her 5 children nearly 2 years ago. She had left a husband who became involved with drugs and whose actions resulted in being evicted from their home.

Amber had no income and was unsure of how she was going to be able to provide for her family. For the 2 years prior to becoming homeless Amber and her husband had lived with his parents and during that time Amber gave over much of her parenting responsibility to the children's grandmother. She was

depressed and experienced shame and verbal abuse from other family members.

After a brief stay in emergency shelter Amber moved into the HARP transitional housing program. She soon found a job paying \$11 per hour and she opened a savings account. While she appreciated her new job, Amber had worked with her case manager and realized that her best hope for becoming self sufficient would be to gain higher level job skills.

When she was in high school Amber had been an excellent student, but her years involved in a difficult marriage had drained her confidence. Deciding to return to school was not an easy decision. Amber knew that returning to school would mean leaving her job and taking a huge risk. Still, she enrolled in a training program to become a C.N.A. and at the conclusion of the program she was the top student in the class.

Her teacher encouraged her to take the pre-requisite classes which would



They were so excited to be a part of the magical night to not only learn more about Helping Hand House, but also to see firsthand how families can overcome their obstacles in life as they are growing up.

Thank you to everyone who supports the mission and work of Helping Hand House. Your generosity is a steady reminder that the whole community is invested in the success of our families - and that we cannot do this work without your support!

“it is such a joy for a child to see their parent being recognized in a room filled with laughter and tears, as they learn about making good life choices.”

allow her to enter the colleges nursing program and assured her that her high placement would guarantee entry into the program which would start 1 year later. Amber found part time work as a C.N.A. and began to take the prerequisites classes.

During the next year Amber continued to excel at school and at work. She worked with a family support generalist from the local family support center and also began to receive counseling. Amber's children participated in after school programs and were able to receive care from a relative during this time. This last summer all of the kids participated in summer camps.

Just this last week Amber began to take classes in the LPN program at one of the local colleges. Upon completion of this 1 year program she can expect to earn a living wage in a job with excellent benefits.

Amber will leave HHH in a few months and will have to use her savings in order to live on her own for the final 9 months of her nursing program. While she rightfully worries about her ability to provide during that time, she and her case manager have completed an income and expense projection which shows that she will be able to maintain housing through the end of school.

“Amber came to HHH with her 5 children nearly 2 years ago. She had left a husband who became involved with drugs and whose actions resulted in being evicted from their home.”

Women in Nature

“Nature is always lovely, invincible, and glad, no matter what is done and suffered by her creatures. She heals all scars, whether in rocks or water or sky or hearts.”

- John Muir

Did you know that as little as 30 minutes in nature can reduce stress, speed emotional and physical healing, and restore the ability to focus? The positive effects of time in nature have been researched and well documented. Do you remember the last time you felt refreshed and calmed by a walk in the forest or along the shore? Most of us value that experience and can't imagine what life would be like without it.

We are delighted to pilot a project for twelve women in our housing programs so they can spend time

with staff once a month throughout the year in various natural settings close to home and afar in our gorgeous Pacific Northwest. Most of the women haven't had the time or means for many years to pause and absorb the benefits of time in nature. They have spend most of their time facing one crisis after another while working very hard to create lives that will support their households.

We call the project WIN. The women look forward every month to the time when they can re-gain a sense well-being, increase self-awareness, and grow personally. As they recognize freedom from stress, fear, and worry that they discover in nature, they emerge as more powerful, aware, calm, energized, and courageous. Naturally they share their experiences with their families, making sure the children spend time in nature with them. They are so inspired by nature, by bonding with other women, and by stretching out of their comfort zones. They express feelings of deep gratitude at every outing.

You might be interested in a few of the places we visit - Clark's Creek for salmon spawning, Mt. Rainier snowshoeing, Nisqually Delta to watch the birds, Point Defiance to walk the trails, and Pacific Beach for the annual Coast Cleanup for Earth Day. Many of the women had never been to these places even though they grew up right here in the Puyallup Valley.

“I am a worrier, always worried about something, but after our walk in the forest today, I am so surprised that I am not at all worried. This is the first time I ever felt this. Is it peace?”

-Program participant at Point Defiance



Homelessness to Hope Benefit Breakfast

save the date

Did you know that the average age of a homeless person in America is 9 years old? Helping Hand House is working to prevent and end family homelessness so that children have a stable environment to live and learn.

Mark your calendars to join us Tuesday, October 4, 2011, from 7:30 - 8:30 am at the Puyallup Pioneer Park Pavilion. This is a free breakfast which gives you the chance to create opportunities for homeless families in Pierce County. You will hear incredible stories from those whose lives have been changed, a refreshing morning to be inspired, and the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and change the course of someone's family for decades to come. We serve to support vulnerable families as they regain their self-sufficiency and discover a future full of promise. We are able to fund our programs through the grants we receive and the generous contributions of our donors.

“Did you know that the average age of a homeless person in America is 9 years old?”

With your help we will continue to provide safe and well furnished housing to homeless families with the intensive case management, that provides a variety of support services enabling families to build independent living skills, complete their education, and obtain job readiness skills before graduating and moving into a home they can afford. Our services encompass all the needs of the family to ensure that this is the last time they will be homeless.

Please support the homeless families in our community by saving the date of the Homelessness to Hope Benefit Breakfast. For more information please contact Lisa or Jamie at (253) 848-6096.



Helping Hand House thanks all of our loyal supporters who have given their time, talent and money during these last months.

THANK YOU SO MUCH

December 2010 thru March 2011

LIFESAVER SOCIETY

John & Valorie Backus
Eli Berniker & Frances Buckmaster
Chris & Sara Devine
Stephen & Ann Dorsey
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CHURCHES

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Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
First Christian Church
High Pointe Church
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Joy of Life Church
Living Word Lutheran Church
Mountain View Lutheran Church
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Our Savior Lutheran Church
Peace Lutheran Church
Saint Matthews Episcopal Church
Shepherd of the Hill Presbyterian Church
SOMA Community Church
Sumner Presbyterian Church
United Methodist Church of Puyallup
Yelm United Methodist Church

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ESAP- 2060, 2163
Pierce County-ESG, Rapid Re-Housing
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Washington Families Fund

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Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
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Paul G. Allen Family Foundation
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United Way of Central Virginia

United Way of King County
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United Way of Thurston County
William Kilworth Foundation
Woodworth Family Foundation

CLUBS/GROUPS

4-F (Food for Four Legged Friends)
Bethel Bunco Club
Boy Scout Troop DXVI/Soaring Eagle Patrol
Candy Cane Bowling Team
Cub Scout Pack 525
Dicey Dames Bunco Club
GFWC Valley Volunteers
Hands All Around
Laureate Alpha Gamma
Last Ladies Cards
Lost Ladies Bunco Club
Meridian Riding Club
Pacific Lutheran University- Hawaii Club
Puyallup Eagles Club
Puyallup FISH Food Bank
Puyallup Valley Quilters
South Hill Senior Social Club
South Hill Rotary Club
Sumner Rotary Club
Sunset Chevrolet
Tacoma Model "T" Ford Club
Washington State University Extension/4-H

SCHOOLS

Aylen Junior High School
Emerald Ridge High School- Key & Interact Clubs
Frontier Junior High

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Tara Adams
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Emergency Housing Specialist: Rodney Robinson
Front Door Sumner Program: A.J. Davis
Rapid Re-Housing Specialist: Trish Mozo
Employment Specialist: Yvonne Seyler

Sign of The Times

In an effort to help the environment and to reduce costs, we offer a paperless copy of our newsletter to our supporters. If you would like to receive a paperless copy rather than the paper copy, please call us at 253-848-6096 ext. 17 and provide your email address or you can email directly to: lisah@helpinghand-house.org



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