

Plymouth Taskforce for the Homeless  
President's Report  
2008

**Overnights of Hospitality Program**

We ended our fourth season of providing emergency sheltering in March, 2008. Over the 2007-2008 season, we provided a total of 1,372 beds for 46 different individuals, averaging 8.5 guests per night. One night, we had as many as fifteen guests. There were 249 volunteers from eleven different congregations and from the community at large who served as hosts and meal providers.

We began our fifth season beginning the last week of October, 2008. By the end of December we were seeing an average of 10.4 men per night, with many nights reaching double digits. Despite the fact that we have managed to provide permanent housing for fourteen men, we have seen a definite trend upwards in the number of men coming to the Overnights. Most nights we needed three drivers for transporting due to the increased numbers. On Christmas Eve, the Taskforce put up fifteen men at the Radisson. During the season, in emergency situations, we also put up several single homeless women, each for a night in a hotel.

Our weekly shower program expanded to sometimes three days per week using the shower facility at Christ Church Food Pantry. Thanks to John Malloy, David Tassinari, and Fran Obin for supervising this activity.

Seven congregations continue to provide their space for the Overnights: Christ Church Parish, Zion Lutheran, Congregation Beth Jacob, First Parish Unitarian, Church of the Pilgrimage, and the First Baptist.

**Next Step House**

Five men are currently living in the Step House., One of the residents continues to serve as house manager, thus providing a consistent presence in the house.

**Government Housing Support**

Through funding from the Home and Healthy for Good program and HUD (MckInney / Vento), eleven individuals have been housed. Three additional men are supported by PTH at Next Step for a total of fourteen. It is hoped that more funded units will be coming to Plymouth in the next grant cycle. Since the Overnights program began, several others have been able to secure their own housing.

**Homeless Count**

During the annual homeless count in January, 2008, we were able to identify twenty-nine single individuals, most of whom were frequent or occasional guests at the shelter during the season. We still don't have an idea of how many others there may be (men or women) who are couch surfing with friends or relatives in illegal or unsafe conditions.

We began entering our data into the HMIS system as needed.

**Grants/Fundraising**

We had two very successful fundraisers in 2008. Our third annual golf tournament raised over \$7,000. Thanks to Doris Johnson for her hard work in chairing this event. The fourth annual Crop Walk brought in \$700, less than last year. Thanks to Jack Ryan for his leadership.

A kayak was purchased by PTH for a raffle. Enough tickets were sold at \$15 each in 2008 to more than cover the cost. The goal is to sell 500 with the drawing to occur in the spring of 2009 or whenever the 500 are sold. Thanks to Judy Erikson for organizing this event.

The Scrips gift card program was implemented this past year. Through this program, folks are offered the opportunity to buy gift cards from hundreds of companies. PTH

earns a varying percentage of the sales. We hope that this program will grow. Thanks to Rich Pecorella for chairing this effort.

PTH continues to garner donations from individuals and organizations.

### **Project Development**

With a grant from Episcopal City Mission, PTH hired consultant Al Scott to help develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a housing project. PTH received two responses, one from Fr. Bill's and one from Neighborhood Housing Services. As of now, we are still in conversation as to how best to proceed.

PTH is still pursuing the possibility of buying a multi-family unit independently if we can get funding from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Several properties for sale were visited with these two possibilities in mind.

### **Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast**

Our annual volunteer breakfast was held in April. At that time we honored all our volunteers with certificates of appreciation. Special mention once again was given to Dave Tassinari for being a host for the most nights during the season (sixteen).

### **Goals for 2008**

- Continue to develop partnership with Fr. Bill's and Neighborhood Housing Services and/or obtain housing through independent funding
- Attempt to identify the "invisible" homeless population
- Seek and apply for additional grants
- Seek new fundraising avenues
- Increase membership and/or to do a general fundraising campaign
- Recruit more congregations to offer their space
- Develop a website
- Publish more frequent newsletters,

In closing, I would like to personally thank all of our board members – Judy Erikson for managing our funds, Jan Palmer-Tarbox for taking the minutes, Amy Palmer for writing thank you notes, Doris Johnson for producing publicity and attending meetings of the PCHA and other groups, and David Tassinari, John Malloy, Jack Ryan, Don Didomenico, Pamela Daikh. And Carol Tagg for their valuable insight and willingness to help with fundraising. Thanks also to Helen Evans, co-coordinator of nightly screening process and thanks to Dave and Linda Tassinari, Judy Erikson, Rich Pecorella, and Don Didomenico for providing backup driving when needed. Finally the success of the Overnight program was due to the many people who volunteered their time to host or to prepare a meal. Truly, God's work is being done!

And my personal thanks to Carl Finer, Senate President Therese Murray, and Representative Vinny DeMacedo for nominating me to receive the Unsung Heroine Award from Plymouth for 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Melahoures  
President