

Plymouth Taskforce for the Homeless  
President's Report  
2013

### **Overnights of Hospitality Program**

We ended our ninth season of providing emergency sheltering in March, 2013. Over the 2012-13 season, we provided a total of 2,381 beds for 63 different individuals (the highest number in nine years), averaging 15.4 guests per night (also the highest average). One night, we had as many as 24 guests. There were 20 nights at which we went over twenty guests. There were over 200 volunteers from 18 different congregations and from the community at large who served as hosts and meal providers.

Beginning our tenth season, yet again we saw an increase in the numbers of individuals from the previous season coming to shelter.

We lost First Parish Unitarian as a host site as its congregation is small and aging and no one was able to step forward to coordinate the program there. This brought us down to four congregational host sites - Christ Church Parish, Zion Lutheran, Church of the Pilgrimage, and First Baptist. Church of the Pilgrimage was able to pick up another week but we still had to cut the program short by four weeks.

On Christmas Eve (2013), the Taskforce put up twelve men at the Pilgrim Sands. During the season, in emergency situations, we also put up a growing number of homeless women, each for a night or two in a hotel.

We were able to continue the weekly shower program supervised by Bill Corners.

### **Next Step House**

The Next Step was fully occupied with eight permanent residents and two house managers.

All knob and tube wiring was replaced to ensure safety and to satisfy the insurance company.

### **New Housing Initiative**

This past spring, the Town Meeting approved funds from the Community Preservation Fund to purchase another property for the Taskforce. The Taskforce is awaiting approval of the property as affordable housing. It is hoped that this will happen by spring, 2014. When purchased, the house will provide four additional units plus a unit for a staff manger. The property also includes a commercial building. The Taskforce is considering several possibilities for its use.

### **Government Housing Support**

To date, with federal and state funding, including Section Eights, through Fr. Bill's/Mainspring and Taskforce support of the Next Step House, over forty individuals have entered permanent housing.

Unfortunately, no new subsidies became available in 2013.

### **Point in Time Homeless Count**

During the annual homeless count on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013, we were able to identify twenty-six individuals – nineteen were in the shelter, seven were known to be on the streets, staying in tents or staying elsewhere for that night. We continue to enter our data into the HMIS system as needed.

### **Grants/Fundraising**

Our eighth annual golf tournament raised over \$14,000.

Through the Scrip Gift Card 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 continue to grow.

### **Public Relations**

I appeared on Steve Triffletti's *Talk of the Town* Program and was a guest on First Parish, Duxbury's program, Faith in Action on WATD.

Francis Mand wrote several articles on our program which generated some new volunteers and donations.

### **Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast**

The board decided not to hold the Volunteer Breakfast in 2013 as only a few people were coming in the last few years.

### **Taskforce Website ([Plymouth-taskforce-homeless.org](http://Plymouth-taskforce-homeless.org)) and Facebook Presence**

The website is now up and running. It includes links for Amazon and GoodSearch. By going through our website for Amazon purchases and using GoodSearch for web browsing, the Taskforce earns a percentage of sales. It is also possible to make donations through the website.

### **Goals for 2014**

- Complete purchase of second property
- Begin to explore more property for purchase.
- 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

In closing, I would like to personally thank all of our board members who, in addition to attending monthly board meetings, also assisted in other ways:

- Jan Palmer-Tarbox for taking the minutes and helping with the Golf Tournament
- James Freedman for overseeing our finances
- Ted Gwilliam for chaperoning above and beyond
- Bob Hughes for help with the Golf Tournament
- Jack Ryan for serving as Property Manager of the Next Step House
- Pamela Daikh for help with the Golf Tournament
- Valerie Peck for help with the Golf Tournament
- Barbara Wojtkiewicz, for serving as Assistant Coordinator for the Overnights program and for co-chairing the Golf Tournament

It is with great sadness that we report that long-time board member, Rich Pecorella, was diagnosed with cancer. We deeply appreciate his service on the board and his willingness to serve as a chaperone, pickup driver, and manager of the Scrips fundraising program. We hold him and his family in our thoughts and prayers.

Thanks to John Malloy for co-chairing the Golf Tournament and Bill Corners for driving and for being a frequent volunteer chaperone. A special thanks to George Berardi who helps to transport gear every week. Also, I would like to thank all of the site coordinators – , Christine DeGowin, Jamie Cowen, Valerie Peck, Dell Hammond, Sarah Barnicle, Ray Tompkins, Lawrence Silverman, Dick Skinner, and Jim Wohlander.

Finally, the success of the Overnight program was due to the many, many other people who volunteered their time to host or to prepare a meal.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Melahoures  
President

