

Plymouth Taskforce for the Homeless  
President's Report  
2014

### **Overnights of Hospitality Program**

We ended our tenth season of providing emergency sheltering in March, 2014. Over the 2013-14 season, we provided a total of 2,253 beds for 58 different individuals (the highest number in ten years, considering the fact we had to reduce the number of weeks we were open), averaging 17.8 guests per night (also the highest average). One night, we had as many as 25 guests. There were 39 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 eleventh season, we actually have seen a decrease in numbers of those seeking shelter. This may be due to the fact that several have been housed or have moved on.

Fortunately, four sites remained available to us - Christ Church Parish, Zion Lutheran, Church of the Pilgrimage, and First Baptist which allowed us to be open for eighteen weeks during the season.

On Christmas Eve (2014), the Taskforce put up fifteen 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.

### **Next Step II**

The purchase of Next Step II at 366 Court St. was completed in April. Pinehills Affordable Charitable Trust provided us with a grant of \$50,000 to use for renovations to the property. Major renovations included the installation of a new heating / air cooling system. For 2015, we will be upgrading a basement apartment to bring it up to code.

### **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 fifty individuals have entered permanent housing.

Two new subsidies became available in 2014 which we used to house two women in Next Step II.

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

During the annual homeless count on January 29, 2014, we were able to identify twenty-seven individuals – twenty-two were in the shelter, five 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 ninth annual golf tournament raised over \$14,000. We were the recipients of net proceeds of \$3,000 from the Persephone Daughters' fall concert.

### **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 2015

- Continue 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
- James Freedman and James Wohlander 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 Houses
- 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 was with regrets that we accepted the resignations of Pamela Daikh and Valerie Peck from the Board of Directors. We deeply appreciate their many years of service to the Taskforce.

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. George has since had to retire due to health reasons and an aging truck. Also, I would like to thank all of the site coordinators – Christine DeGowin, Sarah Barnicle, Marion Peterson, Ray Tompkins, and Lawrence Silverman

Finally, the success of the Overnight program was due to the many, many other people who volunteered their time to host, to prepare a meal, to provide transportation, or who assisted in any other way

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Melahoures  
President