

Plymouth Taskforce to end Homelessness  
President's Report  
2015

### **Renaming**

To better reflect our mission, the Taskforce board voted to change our name to Plymouth Taskforce to End Homelessness.

### **Overnights of Hospitality Program**

We ended our eleventh season of providing emergency sheltering in March, 2015. Over the 2014-15 season, we provided a total of 1,665 beds for 60 different individuals, averaging 13.2 guests per night, a decrease from the previous high season's totals. One night, we had as many as 21 guests. There were 21 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 twelfth season, we actually have seen another decrease in numbers of those seeking shelter. This may be due to the fact that several have been housed or have moved on.

In the spring we were informed that the Church of the Pilgrimage and Zion Lutheran would no longer serve as host sites. This left us with just two remaining. The Board knew that it couldn't continue with the Overnights as previously structured. We reached out to Fr. Bill's for help. After some discussion, it was decided to ask the First Baptist if it would be willing to host the Overnights for the entire season. First Baptist graciously agreed to do so, but wanted the guidelines to be tightened up. In a meeting with the Building Inspector and Fire Chief, we were told we needed to have at least one another site to maintain the rotation aspect. Christ Church agreed to continue to be the second site.

After a several meetings, the guidelines were revised and approved to the satisfaction of First Baptist and the Taskforce. Fr. Bill's/Mainspring agreed to provide a paid chaperone for the entire season and to meet and transport the men to the shelter each night. The Taskforce would provide a second volunteer chaperone and continue to provide volunteers to prepare and serve the meals. Because this would no longer be an all-volunteer program, money would need to be raised to pay for staff, insurance, utility, and transportation costs. It was estimated that the total cost would be approximately \$100,000 with about \$50,000 to be in-kind and the remaining \$50,000 in cash. Fr. Bill's/Mainspring and the Taskforce agreed to share in raising the amount needed.

The Taskforce was introduced to an online volunteer sign-up website, called Meal Train. This has proven to be a huge time saver. After an article written by Frank Mand for the OCM, we were able to gain new volunteer meal providers and chaperones.

We were able to continue the weekly shower program supervised by Phil Izzo.

### **Next Step House**

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

### **Next Step II**

Renovations were completed for Next Step II. We are very grateful to the Pinehills Affordable Housing Trust for supplying us with a very generous grant for this purpose. There are now four formerly homeless women in residence with a house manager.

### **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 February, 2015, we were able to identify 22 individuals – 16 were in the shelter, 6 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 tenth annual golf tournament raised over \$14,000.

Thanks to the efforts of Plymouth resident Walter Robinson and his wife, Barbara Wojtklewicz, we were extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to do a Plymouth premiere showing of the movie *Spotlight* at the Plimoth Plantation in November. Walter (Robbie) was the lead reporter of the Spotlight team that uncovered the clergy abuse scandal and its subsequent cover-up. The movie was followed by a panel discussion which included Walter, reporter Michael Rezendes, and Kingston actor residents Chris Cooper and Marianne Leone Cooper. We raised another \$14,000 with this event.

### **Taskforce Website (Plymouth-taskforce-homeless.org) and Facebook Presence**

The website is now up and running. It includes links for AmazonSmile 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 2016**

- 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

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
- Phil Izzo for overseeing our finances and supervising showers
- Ted Gwilliam for chaperoning above and beyond
- Jack Ryan for serving as Property Manager of the Next Step Houses
- Barbara Wojtklewicz, for serving as Assistant Coordinator for the Overnights program and for co-chairing the Golf Tournament

It was with regret that we accepted the resignation of James Freedman from the Board of Directors. We deeply appreciate his years of service as treasurer to the Taskforce.

Thanks once again to John Malloy for co-chairing the Golf Tournament. Also, I would like to thank all of the 2014-15 site coordinators – Christine DeGowin, Sarah Barnicle, Marion Peterson, Leigh Lench, Martha Zinger and Lawrence Silverman.

A huge thank you to Ray Tompkins, Jeanne Hunter McCartin and the rest of the members of First Baptist for offering their church as a host site and serving as site coordinators for the 2015-16 season. Also to Nancy Carini of Second Church for taking on the responsibility of doing the laundry at the end of every week.

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