

Plymouth Taskforce to end Homelessness
President's Report
2019

Overnights of Hospitality Program

We ended our fifteenth season of providing emergency sheltering in March, 2019. Over the 2018-19 season, we provided a total of 1,887 beds for 75 different individuals, averaging 15 guests per night, an increase from the previous season. Our highest total was 22 for four nights and our season low was 2. There were 16 nights that we had 20 and over. There were over 200 volunteers from 25 different congregations and from the community at large who served as hosts and meal providers.

The Taskforce also provided hotel stays for 12 women for a total of 11 nights.

In the fall, we began our fifth season in collaboration with Fr. Bill's/Mainspring which provides us with one paid chaperone which we supplement with one volunteer chaperone.

Meal Train Plus continues to be a valuable tool for signing up individuals to chaperone and prepare and serve meals.

For the past five years, the Taskforce has also been providing rental assistance to folks in danger of losing their housing. For 2019, 14 such individuals received help. We also provide gas cards and funds for securing ID's and prescriptions.

The weekly shower program continued when supervisors were available.

Laundry Program

One of the problems for our homeless folks was that there was no opportunity for them to do their laundry.

We are now partnering with New Hope which provides the volunteers to supervise and partial funding which allows the homeless folks to go to Washing Well every other week to do their laundry.

Next Step House

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

Next Step II

There are four formerly homeless women in residence. There is one soon-to-filled space available. We just hired (February, 2020) a house manager for 366 Court St.

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 70 individuals have entered permanent housing.

Housing Solutions

The Taskforce is very fortunate to have been the recipient of Community Preservations funds which allowed us to buy Next Step I and II.

The Taskforce is continuing its search to buy a piece of land of about 1-3 acres, centrally located, on which to erect a building which would contain 12-15 studios, some commercial space for offices and a backdoor emergency shelter. A subcommittee, chaired by Rick Edwards and Barbara Wojtkiewicz, leads this search.

Point in Time Homeless Count

During the annual homeless count on January, 2020 we were able to identify 22 individuals – 15 were in the shelter, 7 were known to be on the streets, staying in tents in the hospital or staying elsewhere for that night. Interestingly, this was the same number as in 2018. The Point in Time count only captures what we know to be true for that one night only. It does not accurately reflect the total number.

Grants/Fundraising

Golf Tournament

Our fourteenth annual golf tournament raised over \$19,000.

“Care-oke” Night

New board member, Julie Cloherty came up with the idea of a “Care-oke” Night fundraiser. She single-handedly organized and ran this program which raised almost \$10,000! It was held on March 29th at the American Legion. Several community leaders participated in a friendly contest for the “best singer(s)”, providing great entertainment. Unfortunately, Julie had to resign from the board due to new work responsibilities. We are looking at the possibility of having another such night in the fall of 2020, providing we can find someone else to organize it.

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

Our website 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 2020

- Continue to explore more property for purchase.
- Seek new fundraising avenues
- Work with Father Bill’s/Mainspring to develop a Resource Center

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:

- Alan Schwartz for overseeing our finances and for chaperoning above and beyond
- Jack Ryan for serving as Property Manager of the Next Step Houses
- Barbara Wojtkiewicz, for co-chairing the Golf Tournament
- Julie Cloherty for organizing our “Care-oke” Night fundraiser

Thanks once again to John Malloy for co-chairing the Golf Tournament. Also, I would like to thank all of the 2018-19 site coordinators – Ray Tompkins, Irene Caldwell, Mary Bell, and Lawrence Silverman.

A huge thank you to Ray Tompkins and the rest of the members of First Baptist for offering their church as a host site and serving as site coordinators for the 2018-19 season. Also, thanks to Nancy Carini and her crew of Second Church for have been responsible doing the laundry at the end of every week. Second Church continues to fund the laundering sheets, but responsibility for organizing, has been assumed by Alan Schwartz.

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