

A CURRENT LOOK AT THE INTERFAITH SHELTER



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JUNE 2010 VOL 1 ISSUE 1

NEWS FLASH: WORD JUST RECEIVED FROM THE IRS -DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY: THE INTERFAITH SHELTER GROUP HAS BEEN GRANTED 501 (c) (3) STATUS. We are qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts. We greatly appreciate Faith at Work having served as our fiscal sponsor prior to this important designation, the latest step in our organization's development.

FINAL NUMBERS FOR THE EMERGENCY WINTER SHELTER
AT THE FORMER PETE'S PETS BUILDING AT 2801 CERRILLOS ROAD
OPEN FROM NOVEMBER 1, 2009 THROUGH APRIL 30, 2010:

10,159 BED NIGHTS [the term used to count the number of "beds" provided nightly, regardless of whether or not a homeless guest returned or stayed just one night]

55-76 OVERNIGHT GUESTS per night, plus between 12-30 DINNER-ONLY GUESTS

1,860 VOLUNTEERS [not a typo!] from 43 FAITH & COMMUNITY-BASED GROUPS welcomed guests at the emergency winter shelter from November 1, 2009 thru April 30, 2010, for a respite from the cold with a warm, safe haven and wholesome, delicious meals prepared off -site and brought to the shelter each evening for the 6:00 p.m. opening. Dignity and respect for our homeless guests are the hallmarks of our service.

40 TENTS were given to departing guests, if requested.

On Saturday morning, May 1, guests of the Interfaith Community Shelter were treated to Bagels and Burritos before they collected their belongings. Their backpacks, suitcases and duffels had been kept in storage areas, secure and protected each night and during the day when guests were working, looking for work or spending time about town or in the libraries where they could access computers or read to while away the day until they could re-enter the shelter at nightfall. It was a poignant yet bittersweet time for guests and volunteers who came to wish them well.

There were mixed emotions as the season ended but we can all celebrate that no deaths from hypothermia were reported. Whether those who wintered with us had plans for where they would next lay their heads at night or if they had found a suitable campsite away from harm, the sense of community that had developed over the winter was now dissipating. Those who had signed up for a one-man tent, arranged by Faith at Work, or to keep their sleeping bags, most donated by St. Bede's, were grateful for these items and toiletry bags, the parting gifts symbolic of the hospitality offered each night.

After a bumpy start last Fall, when several prospective sites fell through for NIMBY [Not in My Backyard] and other nefarious reasons, we were able to arrange a reasonably-priced six month rental at the former Pete's Pets building on Cerrillos—replete with dinosaurs on the façade to help people find us. We had wonderful cooperation from the key departments of the City—for fire and electrical inspections, etc., but there were modifications needed to make the space workable—building the storage units and covering the interior fish ponds to make way for the “penthouse” level of sleeping areas for those choosing it over the carpeted areas that later included cots loaned to us by the National Guard through the offices of Senator Peter Wirth and County Commissioner Liz Stefanics.

But cold weather was upon us and we opened as promised; for the first week of November, the men were hosted at Holy Faith and women guests were welcomed at First Presbyterian.

Our new location was lauded by guests and volunteers alike; bright and colorful, it afforded a feeling of openness and, for the volunteers and Night Staff, monitoring guest activities was far easier than last year. Okay, it wasn't perfect—we were still hampered by an inadequate number of bathrooms for the 55-70+ people we served each night and STILL no showers for those who wanted to clean up!

From our donations, it was possible to purchase and install a washer and dryer for laundering the towels and sleeping bags.

Our KITCHEN area, spelled with a small “k”—no stove, boasted microwaves and roasters for warming the meals and plenty of food storage capability with refrigerators and freezers aplenty and the sink, a tub, tho' humorous, worked well for the large pots.

Darla Swanson and **Guy Gronquist**, the dynamic duo of the Management Team, were ably assisted by **Vahid Mojarrab** who responded to multiple building needs—especially that perplexing front door!

Specially trained Team Leaders and Door Checkers / Greeters provided their expertise to assure order and safety for guests and volunteers. Kitchen “angels”, led by **Anne Maglisceau** and **Lois Morton**, joined by **Patricia Bellia**, saw to it

that items to be purchased were on hand in good supply.

Paid Night Staff came on duty after the busy hours managed by volunteers, working from 9 p.m. to shelter closing at 7 a.m. each morning. They welcomed late-comers, including the inebriates who were not permitted entry between 6 and 9 p.m. Dedicated and compassionate, they included those pursuing degrees in social work and medical school, as well as those holding other jobs to more fully support themselves.

We were blessed by the energy and assistance from Santa Fe Community College Intern **Lucille Quintana**. Among other contributions, she assisted **Pastor Bethany Carpenter** who recruited faith communities for our third year of operation.

Volunteers from the Community Closet, led by **Will Karp**, an initiative of the Interfaith Leadership Alliance, were on hand Wednesday and Sunday nights to cheerfully meet the needs for cold weather gear, clothing for job interviews and other articles needed by our guests.

Faith at Work routinely supported needs for many items and guests ready for housing received help for counseling, furniture and household goods donated by the broad community of Santa Fe.

Entertainment was supplied by various groups in the form of music and song, with guests joining in to sing or play guitar.

Medical help was available through HealthCare for the Homeless and offered through visits from the County's Mobile Health Unit for flu vaccines, cholesterol and blood pressure screenings. An accudetox session, sponsored by Santa Fe Community Services, proved a big attraction for guests wishing to reduce anxiety, especially if related to addictions.

A busy night occurred when representatives from the Census 2010 crew found a very cooperative group of guests ready to be counted!

New this year were hosting weeks by two schools; first, the Government and Economics class students of **Meredith Tilp** from Capital High and then Santa Fe Prep, led by **Monika Cassel**. Everyone marveled at their spirit, enthusiasm and hard work!

We had wonderful cooperation from the Santa Fe police and fire departments that responded promptly and professionally whenever needed.

Christus St. Vincent's Hospital, notably the folks in the Emergency Room, were responsive and caring with regard to guests who became patients

and patients who came to us after discharge.

Members of our Advisory Board responded to requests for help in various ways, especially when we remained open on Christmas Day, arriving with goodies and cheer for our guests who were without family or places to go for the holiday.

We more than doubled the number of participating faith and secular groups from last year. The total of 43 groups included:

AmeriCorps	Habitat for Humanity	Sathya Sai Baba Center
Capital High School	HaMakom Jewish Congregation	St. Bede's Episcopal Church
Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi	Holy Trinity Orthodox Church	St. John's United Methodist
Center for Spiritual Living	The Humanist Society	TaHa Mosque and Islamic Center
Cerrillos Masonic Lodge #19	Interfaith Leadership Alliance	Temple Beth Shalom
Christ Church	Light at Mission Viejo	Thubten Norbu Ling
Christ Lutheran Church	Montezuma Lodge #1	Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Christian Church/Disciples of Christ	R.S.V.P. (Retired Senior Volunteer Program)	United Church of Santa Fe
Church of the Holy Faith	Rodeo Road Baptist Church	Unity Church of Santa Fe
Eastern Star	San Isidro- San José Parish	Upaya Zen Center
Extension Homemakers of Santa Fe County	Santa Fe Friends Meeting	Venture Crew #53 (Boy Scouts of America)
Faith at Work Community Outreach	Santa Fe Preparatory School	Veterans for Peace
First Baptist Church	Santa Fe Street Ministries	Waldorf School
First Presbyterian Church	Santa Maria de la Paz	Westminster Presbyterian Church
		Zia United Methodist Church

On May 11th, a Recognition Event was held at the First Presbyterian Church for volunteers who served at the shelter.

The Rev. Msgr. Jerome Martinez y Alire, JCL gave the invocation which was followed by remarks by **Mayor David Coss**. Following a perspective shared by shelter guest **Davey Rodgers** and one from **Anna Smith** (read by the event coordinator, **Darla Swanson**) and poignant remarks by volunteer **Amber Trujillo**, certificates of appreciation were announced.

The Reverend Kenneth Semon, Interfaith Shelter Group Chairman, concluded the program with reflections on our beginnings and an optimistic look to the future. Sumptuous refreshments were provided by board members and generous contributions by local businesses.

The Interfaith Community Shelter Group is governed by a dedicated Board of Directors, each of whom offers volunteer service to strengthen the Santa Fe Community

The Rev. Dr. Kenneth Semon Chairman, Rector, Episcopal Church of the Holy Faith	Guy Gronquist Episcopal Church of the Holy Faith
Susan Odiseos Vice Chairman, St. Bede's Episcopal Church	Geri Martinez The Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi
Bob Gaines Treasurer, Santa Fe Friends Meeting, Veterans for Peace	Rev. Ray Masterson Santa Fe Street Ministries
Don Behnke Christ Church Santa Fe	Angela Merkert Unitarian Universalist Church of Santa Fe
Sue Breslauer Temple Beth Shalom	Vahid Mojarrab St. Bede's Episcopal Church
Rev. Bethany Carpenter Pastor, Zia United Methodist Church	Sandra Tompkins TaHa Mosque and Islamic Center
	L.V. West Montezuma Lodge #1, Cerillo Lodge #19

Question: How was this humanitarian undertaking funded this year, especially with the downturn in the economy?

A. We met our financial obligations, thanks to the many who contributed, and we're pleased to report the following:

- The City of Santa Fe, once again, recognized the need to support our efforts to shelter those without a roof over their heads and approved funding in the amount of \$50,000 for the winter shelter of 2009/2010.
- This cornerstone grant gave us credibility with groups, such as the Daniels Fund, the County of Santa Fe, corporations and private, family foundations.
- More than 30 faith and community based groups collectively gave over \$43,000.
- Individuals from Santa Fe and beyond have contributed more than \$40,000.
- 100% of the Interfaith Shelter Group Board contributed financially to the organization.
- Beyond needed cash donations, the shelter program received thousands of dollars of in-kind donations, especially the wholesome meals provided by multitudes of volunteers.

Question: How are funds used?

A. Monies received paid for rent, utilities, insurance and compensation for part-time temporary Night Staff, materials for repairs, office /cleaning supplies, and for the staples above and beyond what faith and community groups brought to the shelter—disposable paper goods, cutlery, plastic trash bags, milk, orange juice, coffee, cereal, etc.

We have a modest amount in our treasury, some of which is designated by donors to fund a building—a need for the near future. We will be working to have this grow as we move to the next level of fund raising—a capital campaign.

Question: What lies ahead?

A. Our vision includes working with the City to establish a year-round, 24/7, One Stop Center geared to providing shelter and the services needed to help homeless individuals achieve their potential. Collaborations with providers for counseling, employment support and language and skills training are essential for helping those we serve attain or return to their place as contributing members of society. We recognize that this will take time to bring to fruition, but in the meantime, winter is coming and we must secure a location before temperatures drop again in the fall. Our present location has promise but, at present, it is for sale, not for rent, so we are again facing the prospect of a search to assure next winter's sheltering for the "least of these". We invite questions, comments and financial commitments to help us reach our goals to alleviate homelessness. Checks to support the program and its future can be made payable to Faith at Work / ICSG and mailed to P.O. Box 22653 Santa Fe, NM 87502

"Always hold firmly to the thought that each of us can do something to bring some portion of misery to an end." – Bonnie Acker in Tools for the Chase

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has". -- Margaret Mead

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