

THE



IHNsider

A Publication of Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati

The Community's Interfaith Response To Family Homelessness

Letter from Georgine Getty, Exec Director



How did you spend summer vacation when you were sixteen years old? I spent mine working a terrible temporary job in a hospital cafeteria. After work I'd hang out with my

friends. Then in July, a week-long car trip with my mom and dad from Iowa to Maine. I thought I might die of boredom, but that was the first time I ever saw the ocean. However, I did not spend the summer I turned sixteen wondering where my family and I would lay our heads.

At IHN, we help put families back on track so that teenagers can focus on teenager things and not homeless things.

Over a year ago, IHN initiated a Childcare program to help better serve children under the age of 18 who make up 65% of the people we serve. We have been continually lucky in attracting talented, compassionate people to this position; first Will Leever, who was with us a year before leaving for graduate school. Jeanne Haungs will step in as our new Childcare Coordinator.

When Will was leaving, I asked him the biggest challenge our children face. He did not hesitate: parental stress. When mom and dad don't know where they'll sleep or how they'll put food in bellies, children absorb that uncertainty and it manifests itself in heartbreaking ways.

We talked about T, aged 2, who would not leave her mother's side. She didn't have the words to express her fear yet, but her world was so anxious that she lived in terror that if her mother left her sight, she would disappear forever. This fear was the guiding force in T's life, and as a result, she was falling behind developmentally and socially.

We talked about G, age 4, who manifested his fear through aggression. I was baffled one day while playing catch with G when he suddenly turned to me, screaming and punching. Will explained to me that this is how G behaves when he wants to fall asleep. He picks a fight so he can cry himself to sleep. He is a bright little boy who doesn't know how to channel all the bad things he's feeling.

The concept of IHN is simple: put faith in action by taking care of the families who need it the most. Open your place of worship to them. Give them safe beds, clean sheets and a hot meal. More than that, give them conversation and hope. Take the time to watch your children play together and marvel that every person in creation has a unique spark inside of them that needs to shine.

I end with the story of L & R - twins under a year old. I think of how many strangers held them in their 30 days with us. How many cooed over them and helped them learn to stand. How many lovingly set up their cribs, cooked them food, brought them toys. And I think of their mother, now in her own apartment, going to college at Cincinnati State. L & R won't remember their time at IHN or their time being homeless, but they will know is that they are loved.

This summer, IHN served 42 families and got them on the path to stability. That's 150 individuals working to put the nightmare of homelessness behind them. And that's 99 children who now have a space to call their own.



So how did you spend your summer? If you are part of the IHN family, you can honestly say that you spent it saving lives. For that, all of Cincinnati is blessed.

Introducing Our New Staff

Although we will miss them dearly, we wish Betsy Wones (former Volunteer Coordinator) and Will Leever (former Childcare Coordinator) the best as they move on from IHN. However, they have not gone very far, as both have graciously volunteered to assist in training their replacements.

Please join us in welcoming our newest staff members:

Jeanne Haungs, Childcare Coordinator, comes to us with a Master's Degree in Special Education. For the past four years, she worked as an Intervention Specialist in a public elementary school. Before becoming a teacher, she volunteered at many organizations around Cincinnati. She still volunteers at Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, hosting a weekly radio show on Radio Reading Services. She spends her free time with her husband, Chuck, a local actor, and their pug dog, Smalls. She is excited to be at IHN and hopes to continue to develop the childcare program at the Day Center.

Beth Wanat, our new Volunteer Coordinator is a native Cincinnati. She graduated from University of Cincinnati in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in History. Formerly, Beth worked at the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. In that role, Beth led programs for girls ages 5-17 and recruited, placed, and trained adult volunteers. She was also the project manager for the adult recognition event. She is excited to work with our Coordinators, and to appreciate them for the hard work they do to improve the lives and personal histories of the guests served through IHN.

Bring the homeless poor into your house; then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly." *Isaiah 58:6, 8*

Success Story

As a mom with three kids, Danae had been struggling to make ends meet for a long time. She worked as a waitress at a local restaurant to support her children and pay her bills each month. Several years ago, she became a victim of domestic violence, at the hand of her children's father. As is often the case with domestic violence, this instance was history repeating itself; she was raised in an abusive home. Danae has complicated health issues along with a managed mental health disorder. Further, two of her three children also have severe mental health/behavioral problems. When Danae came into the shelter she was unable to identify one person or place that she considered supportive to her and her family. Despite all the odds stacked against her, Danae has successfully obtained and maintained affordable housing after leaving IHN.

Danae and her three children came to IHN in December. Nearly all of our families were adopted for our annual Holiday Giving Program at that point, except for a few that joined the shelter very close to the holiday, including Danae's. Thanks to last minute contributions of generous friends and supporters of IHN, the IHN staff was able to go shopping for basic needs for the children and a few things on their wish list: a hair straightener for the 13 year old girl, art supplies for the 6 year old boy, and a Binnacle for the 9 year old boy. Their holiday was a little better last year because of their stay at IHN.

Danae and her family had been in four shelters in the past three years. But this was a new year and time for a new life for the family who had previously gone from shelter to shelter, never fully recovering from homelessness. The IHN case managers worked together to create a comprehensive plan for Danae and her family. IHN connected her with a long-term transitional housing program that works intensively with the client for one year - paying their rent, developing life skills, budgeting, and supporting positive change towards self-sufficiency.

IHN's Housing Retention Program linked all of the family's service providers to ensure they were working toward the same goals and took the lead to address concerns from all agencies working with the family. Our Housing Retention Case Manager conducted regular home visits as well as kept the entire family connected to much-needed mental and physical medical attention. IHN's Case

Manager worked fervently to ensure that Danae's children were connected with therapists who work one on one with children, both in the school setting and in the home on a weekly basis. IHN's Housing Retention Program continues to be a reliable resource and support for Danae's family; Danae receives bus tokens for the family to access important services and goods such as medical care, dental care, mental health services, housing case management, and school uniforms and supplies.

Danae has been in housing for seven months now. Her health has improved. Her income has increased. Her housing is safe, stable, and secure. Her support system has grown exponentially to include local faith communities, IHN volunteers, community agencies, and the local school system. Her children have supportive services in place and are consistently improving at school

and at home. Danae's life would not be this way without IHN. The warmth and patience of our dedicated coordinators and volunteers was crucial as this family struggled toward stability. IHN's ability to go above and beyond was significant in this family's ability to break their cycle of homelessness.

We wish Danae's family continued success as they embark upon their journey to a brighter tomorrow.



A sincere thank you to those of you who have contributed to United Way the last few years and that have specified IHNGC as a designee of those funds. Your support and dedication to United Way, your community and IHNGC is admirable. We thank you for your continued support and appreciate your decision to *live united*.

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Heartfelt Thanks To:

- Becky Lee for continually teaching both our weekly life skills and parenting classes
- Jasmine Linck for continually volunteering at the Day Center twice per week-helping out with childcare and other various tasks as needed
- Hannah Berger and Kelsey Stratman for coming to play with the kids over the summer during class time
- Angela Pancella for volunteering with our childcare program during peak times of need for child supervision
- Stephanie Fiorelli for organizing friends and Girl Scouts to make gifts for IHN families while earning her Girl Scout Gold Award. Congratulations Stephanie!
- Stephanie Spenny and Shawntae Hull for spending the summer helping with childcare, administrative tasks, and the Housing Retention Program through The College of Mt. St. Joseph's summer employment program
- Barb and John Fillion for continually teaching our weekly budgeting class

Coordinator Spotlight:



Jane Lapointe has been a familiar face at IHNGC for years. She has volunteered with IHNGC for 18 years. Before her church, Hyde Park Community Methodist,

became involved, Jane cooked meals for IHNGC at a church in Norwood and at Knox Presbyterian. When Hyde Park Community Methodist became a host, Jane served as co-coordinator for 2 years and solo coordinator for 5. Jane had her last host week as coordinator in September, 2010 but she is proof positive that once you become a part of the IHNGC family, you are here to stay. Jane has stepped up as the newest member of our Congregational Relations Committee, where she will continue to share her IHNGC experience with new congregations and coordinators. She is also busy recruiting high school volunteers for the IHNGC Childcare Program. We caught Jane by phone for this interview.

What was your favorite thing about being a coordinator?

Getting to meet the folks. There were tough weeks, but I always felt my life was enriched by getting to meet the men and women. There were times on a Sunday that I didn't want to say goodbye to people.

What was the funniest thing that ever happened during a host week?

We had these two sisters who always hosted together. They were hosting one night and I was going somewhere so I gave them my cell phone. Of course they called. One was stuck in our elevator on the first floor. Laura Warren's (current IHNGC board chair and member of Hyde Park Methodist) girls were little then and they were making signs saying "please don't use" to put on the elevator. One IHN guest was sitting outside of the elevator just talking away to keep her company while the volunteer's sister mercilessly harangued her from the hallway saying things like, "if you were going to get stuck in the elevator you should have taken a book." No one panicked, but we looked all over for the number to call to get her out of there. Finally we realized that we should just call the fire department.

Do they still volunteer with IHN?

They still host together every Saturday night of our host weeks!

How does IHN fit in with your faith?

To me, I have the belief that we're all here to help each other and we need to . . . it's just what you do if you have faith. It's just second nature. You just do it. You think of folks as peers and someone right now who needs a little help.

Tell me about the recipes.

I don't even know how it started. Someone had asked me to do a recipe a month in the InterCoordinator. It was fun. I'd go to coordinator meetings and people would see my nametag and go, "oh, you're the Recipe Lady!"

Any advice for new coordinators?

Surround yourself with a lot of supportive people who can help you. Don't try to do it all yourself.

Thank you to Jane for your years of service as Coordinator and your continued time and talent in your new role with IHN!

And in honor of the "Recipe Lady" here's a recipe that she recently emailed. If you decide to try it out at your congregation, don't forget to invite the IHN staff!

Murphin Ridge Baked Apple French Toast

3 Golden Delicious apples - peeled, cored and sliced
3 tablespoons butter
Juice of 1 lemon
1 pound loaf of white bread sliced
8 eggs
2 cups of milk
2 cups of half and half
2 teaspoons vanilla
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Topping:

1 cup butter
1 2/3 cups of brown sugar
3 Tablespoons corn syrup
2 cups of chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350. Sauté the apples in the butter until they are soft but still firm. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Grease 9x13 pan and fill it with sliced bread. Blend the eggs, milk, half and half, vanilla, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Pour this over the bread. Cover the top with of the bread with sliced apples. Mix together all the topping ingredients in a bowl, and spread the mixture over the apples. Bake for 50-60 minutes.



House for All People

IHN's mission is "to provide emergency shelter and hospitality to homeless families through interfaith communities and to work with these families to find and retain stable housing." We all know, however, that much more happens along the way. Guests work with IHN case managers, attend life skills classes and take care of employment and health issues while they are at IHN. This all happens at our Day Center in Lower Price Hill, which has been "home" for many years.

For those of you who have visited or volunteered at the Day Center, you know we are stuffed into our current space. We see our expansion as a positive result of our program's many successes. The Board and Staff of IHN want to let you know that we are in the process of identifying potential new day "housing" opportunities that might better suit our current as well as future needs.

While we remain committed to the Lower Price Hill neighborhood, we realize that it may not be the best location for our agency as we continue to grow and serve our clients. We are working with a reputable real estate firm and will keep you all posted on our progress, so stay tuned.



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Mark Your Calendars!



Ten Thousand Villages Shopping Spree: Sunday, December 5, 2010

Your holiday gift giving will not only be easy and fun when you shop among the beautiful handicrafts from around the world at Ten Thousand Villages, Sunday, December 5th, 2010, but a profit of the sales will go toward Interfaith Hospitality Network! Located at 2011 Madison Road in O'Bryonville, the store is a non-profit organization that provides fair income to Third World craftspeople by selling their high-quality wares and telling their stories. Delicious drinks and snacks will be there too, for tasting while you shop. Park in the ample lot across the street and prepare to spend an afternoon or just a couple hours supporting two wonderful causes - fair market wages and Interfaith Hospitality Network!



Souper Bowl of Caring: Sunday, February 6, 2011

The Souper Bowl of Caring is right around the corner, Sunday, February 6th. If you are interested in participating to raise funds on behalf of IHN while also enjoying the Super Bowl, please contact MerryBeth McKee, Director of Operations at merrybeth@ihncincinnati.org for more information.



Mission Fair?

Does your congregation host a Mission Fair or an Alternative Gifts Fair? Would you like a representative to be present during your fair to help raise awareness of IHN through the sale of hand-crafted pins and note cards? Please contact MerryBeth McKee, Director of Operations at merrybeth@ihncincinnati.org for more information or to request coverage of your fair.

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For a full listing of all the hosting, supporting and funding congregations, please visit our website at www.ihncincinnati.org. We sincerely thank all the volunteers and donors for their support.

*"IHN saves lives and keep families intact during difficult times."
 -- IHN Guest*

The Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati provides shelter, meals, and assistance to homeless families. The program mobilizes existing community resources: churches and synagogues for overnight lodging, congregations for volunteers, social service agencies for screening and referrals, and existing facilities for day programs. Each host congregation furnishes overnight lodging for one week every two to three months, on a rotating schedule.

Family Promise, formerly the National Interfaith Hospitality Network, a national nonprofit organization, was founded on the belief that Americans are compassionate people who want to make a difference. One of its goals is to help low-income and homeless families reclaim and maintain independence through its Interfaith Hospitality Networks. To learn more, visit www.familypromise.org.

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