



Homesafe & Fresh Start Programs Fight Homelessness

In the past year, ISS's HomeSafe and Fresh Start programs have helped keep 50 individuals and/or families out of homeless shelters.

HomeSafe helps clients who are at risk of being evicted from their apartments. "If it's a Section 8 situation, and the amount due is modest, we'll pay it," says Jan Stewart, manager of financial assistance. "If it's beyond what we can afford, I contact other agencies, such as the Salvation Army. It may take contributions from several agencies to make the difference. To some extent, it's like making a quilt; we have to piece it together."

HomeSafe also helps clients who are in arrears with their utility bills. "It is usually the first sign that people are in trouble," says Stewart.

Ironically, the biggest demand for help with utilities is from May to July, because the power companies cannot shut off service during the winter. "The combination of cold weather this year and dramatically higher energy costs have created more of a crisis than I've ever seen before," says Stewart. "Last year there were 18,000 people in Boston who couldn't afford their utility bills, and some of them contacted us. It was difficult, because I have guidelines to follow; we can't possibly help *everyone*. We are doing well if we can help people in Quincy and the other nine communities we serve."

Fresh Start helps those already homeless to get into an apartment. "Some of them have been homeless off

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Walkers Raise \$20,000



Aidan and Emma Ryan pose with the larger-than-life stuffed animals they won.

The rain cleared, as if on cue, at 1:00 P.M. in time for 135 walkers to begin ISS' 31st annual walk, raising \$20,000 through pledges and donations.

"The money our devoted supporters raised is vital to our work at ISS," says Laura Stracco, executive director. "It helps fund the programs and services that make a difference in countless lives."

"This year we succeeded in making the walk a fam-

ily-fun day," says Bettyanne Lang, walk co-chair. "Gene Desaulniers made balloon animals, The Bad Hats provided musical entertainment, and we had a variety of food to please palates of all ages. Having three different length routes really helped for the younger children."

ISS is grateful to everyone who made the day a success.

Editor's Note: please see page 6 for more photos.

Long-time volunteer retiring



Elizabeth "Libby" Hollidge poses in the Bureau Drawer, her home away from home.

If Elizabeth "Libby" Hollidge commits to something, you can be sure she will stick with it. When she saw a notice in her church bulletin asking for volunteers for the Bureau Drawer thrift shop, she responded. That was 24 years ago, the

year after ISS created the thrift shop. And she's been volunteering there ever since.

"None of us knew much about selling or retailing," says Hollidge. "What we lacked in know-how, we

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ISS's 4th Annual



Tournament

**Mon., Aug. 15 • Tee-off: 1:00 P.M.
\$125 includes dinner & cart
South Shore Country Club, Hingham**

**Tee and Hole Sponsors Welcome
Also need raffle & auction items!
Call Bettyanne at 617-773-6203
for information**

Homesafe and Fresh Start

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and on for two to three years,” says Stewart. “They have been really unsettled without a home. Being homeless is a major trauma; it destroys their whole life.”

Fresh Start helps by paying the security deposit, or in some cases negotiating with the landlord to spread it out over 10 months. The program also helps clients get the basic essentials to set up house, such as a bed.

“People are very good about donating furniture, but transportation is usually a problem,” says Stewart. “Many of the people we serve don’t have access to a truck to move it. Timing is another problem, because we don’t have room to store furniture donated

today to match with a client who needs it in a month or two.”

Some clients have furniture in storage, but can’t afford the bill for accrued storage. ISS sometimes pays the storage bills so they can retrieve their belongings. “I try to help with the most urgent needs that will get them out of a shelter or motel and into an apartment,” says Stewart. “A lot of the people I serve are on disability and have very limited income. One large bill, such as a high utility bill or repair on an old car can upset their whole existence.”

ISS expects the demand to continue rising due to the high costs of living, so additional help is always appreciated.



The Career Closet recently hosted *A Day of Beauty* for 15 women who are striving to reenter the job market. “It was wonderful,” says Bettyanne Lang, director of material assistance. “The women came away with very practical tools they can use, first for their interviews, then ultimately in work settings.”

Julie Foley, Consultant of Style and a longtime ISS volunteer, presented an overview about choosing appropriate clothing based on figure type, personality, and coloring. She also showed the participants how to sit, stand, and carry themselves in an interview. Then she consulted with each woman individually, showing what styles work best for them.

“One of the women was stunning, with a full head of curls that made her look like a model. Although she was beautiful, her look may not be appropriate in an office setting,” said Lang. “Julie restyled the client’s hair, pulling it back, which changed her image dramatically. The other women could see the difference it made.”

Evey Freed, an independent Mary Kay consultant, demonstrated proper skin care techniques, including makeup application.

The women then browsed through the clothing in the Career Closet; those who are ready to begin interviews made appointments to select their outfits.

The Career Closet provides interview attire for low-income women who are entering or reentering the job market. Referrals come from agencies that are helping women develop employment skills.

“We are grateful to all of the women who donate new and gently-used clothing to the Career Closet,” says Lang. “It is so exciting to see the incredible transformation when a client puts on a new outfit.”

The Career Closet is currently accepting summer and fall interview attire in all sizes—clean, pressed and on hangers—as well as shoes, scarves, and other accessories.

Call Lang at 617-773-6203 for more information about the Career Closet.



Interfaith
Social Services

105 Adams Street
Quincy, MA 02169
617-773-6203

Mission Statement

Interfaith Social Services, Inc. (ISS) is a private, non-profit agency serving people of all faiths on the South Shore. ISS seeks to serve the communities by strengthening family life and offering assistance to anyone in need. ISS works to ensure that individuals and families have access to food, clothing and counseling.

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INTERFAITH SOCIAL SERVICES

Dear Friends:

This past spring has been the gloomiest on record. Fortunately for most of us, the dark days are temporary. Not so for many of the clients we serve.

Imagine...

- ...worrying each and every day whether you will have enough food to feed your family.
- ...struggling with depression—depression that doesn't simply lift because the sun shines.
- ...needing to find a job, but not having the right clothes to wear.
- ...feeling alone and that no one cares about you.

The reality is that many people struggle with these issues, and more. Spring in New England offers each of us a "fresh start." And with your financial support ISS can continue to offer fresh starts to the parents, children, and singles seeking our help.

Due to the current economic climate, the demand for Interfaith Social Service's programs is higher than ever.

Since last year...

- ...The Pantry Shelf provided food for 3,787 households, for a total of 8,587 individuals of which 3,096 were children, a 12% increase over the year before;
- ...the caseload for our New Directions Counseling increased 50%;
- ...our Fresh Start and HomeSafe programs helped 50 families and individuals escape the demoralizing clutches of homelessness; and
- ...telephone requests for financial assistance are up 50%.

Thanks to your generous support in the past, we have been able to help more people in our community.

We need your help to continue in these trying times. As you make plans for your summer vacations, remember that poverty never takes a vacation. Please consider making a donation to ISS. We have enclosed a remittance envelope for your convenience.

We'd love to hear from you. Please call us if you would like to join in our efforts or just to let us know how we are doing.

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity.

James F. Thorne

James F. Thorne
President

*P.S. Please remember to help stock the shelves
in The Pantry Shelf, our food pantry, this summer!*

Please put us
on your shopping
list this summer!



ISS is requesting that when you do your grocery shopping this summer that you add The Pantry Shelf to your list. "Donations to The Pantry Shelf seem to slack off during the summer," says Bettyanne Lang, manager of material assistance. "Yet the need for food is the same year round.

"When you are picking up those extra summer treats or goodies for the grill, remember that our clients still need the basics," says Lang. "If everyone gives a little extra, it will go a long way."

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Volunteer retiring

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Libby Hollidge, left, with other
volunteers in 1985.

made up for with enthusiasm and innovative ideas."

The only reason her term of service is ending is because she is moving to Maine to be near her children.

"This is a bittersweet type of move," says Hollidge. "I live in the house my grandfather built in 1889, and it has always been in the family."

Hollidge applied for senior housing in Maine, but there were no open-

ings. So this spunky woman bought a house near her children.

She enjoys reminiscing about her tenure at the thrift shop. "I recently saw a woman who had a large family and came in every week to buy clothing. She remarked again what a Godsend the Bureau Drawer was for her.

"There were many nice things that happened...a doctor's wife lived next door, and she donated all of her costume jewelry to us. It was lovely."

"Libby is one of the kindest people I know," said Laura Stracco, executive director. "She treats everyone who walks through the doors as if they've just entered a shopper's paradise."

"Last year, when I was so busy with Thanksgiving baskets and holiday gifts, she brought dinner to me and said, 'Here, I thought you might like not having to prepare dinner tonight,'" says Bettyanne Lang, director of material assistance. "It was so caring; it made me cry."

"Everyone here will miss her," says Stracco. "I'm sad that being new, I'm just getting to know her."

**Bureau Drawer
Summer Hours
Wed., Thurs., Fri.
10 A.M. to Noon**

ISS STAFF

Laura E. Stracco
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Beverly Farrell
Office Manager/Bookkeeper
Claire Hagan, RN, LMHC
Counseling Coordinator
Bettyanne Lang
Manager of Material Assistance
Jan Stewart, LSW
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Message from the Executive Director



Laura E. Stracco

The spring has been quite busy here at Interfaith. The Wollaston Church of the Nazarene chose ISS as a community outreach site for its "Living Faith" weekend in March. Thirteen students and a student leader sorted donations, built and stocked shelves, vacuumed, and discarded old boxes and desks. They worked tirelessly and accomplished so much on our behalf.

During the past few months I had the opportunity to work with Lauren Boyd, a very caring Eastern Nazarene College (ENC) student, who was working on a community service project. She prepared a grant

application to Sovereign Bank for the HomeSafe program and organized a fundraiser with Papa Gino's of Wollaston. Lauren's work did not stop there. She organized a team of students to participate in our walkathon, and arranged for me to speak with a group of students at ENC about ISS's various programs and how college students could become more involved helping those in need.

This year's Women's Prayer Breakfast was quite successful, raising \$810. We are most grateful to the members of the committee for organizing such a wonderful morning.

More than 20 volunteers of all ages filled 205 Easter baskets with goodies donated by many generous local merchants. It was exciting knowing that Easter morning would be brighter for our Pantry Shelf clients.

Tom Williams, of Tom Williams and Associates

Law Offices, held a pre-St. Patrick's Day party at The Fours in Quincy Square for all the Plymouth County and South Shore Realtors, and donated the proceeds of a 50/50 raffle to ISS.

The Plymouth and South Shore Association of REALTORS® held a huge clothing drive for our Career Closet program, as did the First Trinitarian Congregational Church of Scituate. We are most grateful for their continued generosity.

This year's 31st annual South Shore walk was a great success, as you'll note from the cover story and photos in the newsletter.

Not only was Bettyanne Lang quite busy with the walk committee in April, she was also very involved with the Quincy Hunger Network coordinating a blood drive in honor of the Rev. David Wooster, executive director of the Quincy Crisis Center.

ISS was selected to participate in Lord & Taylor's first South Shore Plaza Benefit Bash in May. Those who

attended enjoyed wonderful savings opportunities and a great day of fun, and ISS received almost \$500.

We recently received a \$5,400 grant from the Alice Willard Dorr Foundation to help defray building improvement expenses.

I had the opportunity to tour the Quincy Career Center and to meet with members of the South Coastal Workforce Investment Board and My Turn, Inc. (Massachusetts Youth Teenage Unemployment Reduction Network). We discussed the potential for future grant collaborations and our ability to be resources for each other.

As always, it is an honor to serve as executive director of this remarkable agency. I am reminded of the following quote by Maya Angelou: "If you find it in your heart to care for somebody else, you will have succeeded." It is apparent that our many supporters have indeed succeeded!

From a New Directions Counseling Client:

"Thank you for seeing and believing in me...you were very patient in working with me. God definitely used you to touch my life. You've taught me a lot about myself and life itself. You have a very good heart towards others. May God richly bless all you do."

Save the Date!
Feed the Hungry
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at Lombardo's

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They're Off! Walkers braved inclement weather to support ISS.

SOUTH SHORE WALKSM

Helping our Neighbors in Need



A large contingent of walkers start from this year's host, Bethany Congregational Church, which was instrumental in the success of the walk.



Walkers enjoy refreshments generously donated by local merchants, including Outback Steakhouse, Fasano's Catering of Braintree, and Domino's Pizza in North Quincy.

Top Fund Raisers

Under age 18

Samantha Fishman
Christopher Burkara
Ian MacLean

Age 18-64

Linda Schatz
Adam McGhee
Laurel Wainwright

Age 65+

Herman Mersereau
Betty DeCristofaro
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*please see story,
additional photo on page 1*

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