

Spotlight on Hope

INTERFAITH OUTREACH HOME

WINTER 2014-2015

From the Desk of...

Deborah Walker-Little, Executive Director

Dear Friends & Supporters,

I have volunteered at many emergency shelters over the years. I have seen families spread out on cots in large, common areas, clinging to all of their belongings and trying to rest in a room full of strangers, while keeping an eye on all that is precious to them.



Memories of such scenes make me grateful for the 10 self-contained apartment units at IOH. Although only 420 square feet, healing is possible in the confines of these small units. At the end of day, having faced many obstacles, a weary family can gather, share a meal and rest, knowing that there is a locked door between them and the outside world.

Terri is a current client at IOH with two daughters, ages 7 and 13; both girls are on their school's honor roll. This is the family's second year in the program and they will graduate in July. Terri has saved \$12,000, pulled up her credit score, and plans to buy a house when she leaves IOH. She expressed to me how grateful she is for her experience at IOH, and recounted how much their lives have changed for the better. One recent evening, Terri was in her kitchen making dinner for the family while her older daughter was at basketball practice, and her younger daughter finished homework at the table. It was all so normal and peaceful; it reminded Terri of the fictional families she'd see on TV, but never imagined could be reality for herself and her girls.

Terri voices the sentiment of countless other families who find sanctuary here at IOH. I solicit your continued financial support in helping maintain this violence-free environment where families can heal, become self-sufficient, and give back.

Each year we spend \$24,000 on rent and about the same on utilities and other essential services for this ministry. Every donation of food, clothing and supplies is appreciated and needed, but operational expenses are our most daunting challenge. It is only through your committed support that we can continue to meet these challenges in the absence of government funding.

With Gratitude,

Deborah Walker-Little, Executive Director



Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. - *Leo Buscaglia*

Announcements

- E-Newsletter - Please save some trees (and expenses!) and receive our newsletter by email only. To do so, please send request to Singne Walker at singnewalker@bellsouth.net.
- Like IOH on FaceBook! - Like our FB page today and SHARE with your friends. Enjoy pictures, news and reports of everyday miracles at IOH. www.facebook.com/interfaithoutreachhomeIOH
- IOH has an opening for a paid, part-time case manager. We are also seeking a volunteer grant writer. Please contact Singne Walker at singnewalker@bellsouth.net for more information on both positions.

The governing board of directors, staff and especially the families of IOH thank you for your prayers, financial and in-kind donations, days of service, and all that you do in support of recovering families.



It is important for our families to stay on budget, even during the holidays when stressors can peak and the temptation to over-spend is prevalent. Volunteers and community partners made sure that families at IOH as well as recently graduated families had plenty of Christmas cheer and much to be thankful for without upsetting goals. Beautiful decorations, homemade baked goods, brunches and parties with warm fellowship, a live nativity, a chance for children to shop for their parents, and gifts galore were all provided by our community partners.



We are grateful to Brookhaven Christian Church, All Saints Catholic Church, Kappa Delta's Greater Atlanta Day Alumnae Chapter and the Dunwoody Woman's Club. More thanks go to Johns Creek UMC, Atlanta Unity Church, St. Monica's Guild of St. Martin in the Field's Episcopal, The Aspire Group, St. Luke's BSA Troop 764, Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, St. Jude the Apostle Catholic Church, the Cowart Family Ashford Dunwoody YMCA and Children's Restoration Network. We greatly appreciate the gifts from the parents and children of the Cambridge Academy, and many thanks to Tracie Penegar and Laura Soscia.



Community Service Volunteer Becomes an IOH Partner



When Anthony Brown called IOH to complete a few hours of community service for a minor traffic offense, he had no idea he would be so affected by the IOH ministry. He is a barber by trade and offered to provide his services to our families to fulfill his obligation. Since then, Mr. Brown has provided free haircuts to our families twice per month. As a young father, he brings his son to IOH to set an example and teach the importance of giving back. Mr. Brown hopes that by volunteering his services, the families at IOH understand that he truly cares about them.

An Angel Among Us

Over the years and in different situations, IOH has been fortunate to benefit from certain "angels" who show up right when they are most needed. Recently, one such angel has been Mr. John McNeil, a parishioner at St. Jude the Apostle Catholic Church. John came to IOH one Saturday to help clean a vacated apartment; instead, he ended up taking on the much bigger project of prepping, repairing and painting the upstairs hallway, as well as many more odd jobs in and around the facility. Every task John has undertaken has been completed with loving care and attention to detail. His dedication to doing these jobs right reflects his belief that our families are important, that they matter. This message is vital for our families to receive; after years of being marginalized and diminished, many believe that they and their children are invisible to the world at large. Thank you, John, for the time, effort, expertise, and expense you have donated - not only to improving the surroundings at IOH, but in letting the families know that you care.

Giving Back ~ an IOH Success Story

Cathy and her teenage son graduated from the IOH program two years ago. They did not leave as home owners, but they did graduate into an independent and self-sufficient lifestyle. Cathy has maintained her full time job for almost three years and has been promoted. She has never been late on rent in the 24 months since graduation. While they do not have many extras, Cathy is grateful and proud that they are completely independent and have not received

government assistance of any kind since entering the IOH program.

While Cathy had hoped to make a financial gift to IOH by now, she is compelled to give back in anyway possible. She and her son will be here next Saturday to clean floors and do yard work. "We will do anything else that is needed," she said. "IOH made us see ourselves in a different light. We don't have much, but we have enough to give

back to a program that gives so much to struggling families."

Allowing families to 'see themselves in a different light' is what IOH is all about. Each milestone these families surpass in working toward self-sufficiency feeds their confidence that they can attain their goals and that recovery from homelessness is possible.

Board of Directors Report by Kelly Spetalnick, Board Chair

As you may recall, our Annual Golf Tournament this past Fall was scheduled on the day that tornadoes visited Georgia and caused us to cancel the event. Although we missed the camaraderie, we were able to distribute some of the fun by awarding our prizes via the raffle. We distributed an iPad Mini, memberships to the PGA store and more. The silver lining was that IOH made \$14,000 from your generosity. We added a tennis tournament this year that brought in \$2000 and many happy contributing players. Keep an eye open for an announcement regarding an upcoming spring tennis event.

Our annual audit recommended a few procedural changes in our resident account management and charitable gift recognition, which have been addressed. We also met all other recommended practices.

Last year, we had three families that graduated from the two year program and are doing well in sustainable, safe housing with promising futures. Two families did not meet their contractual duties and were not renewed the second year. We continue to hold residents accountable, thereby, offering support to those willing to make the sacrifices to become free of all dependent services. We have found that this attitude, along with committing to the full two year program, is what it takes to make families independent.

In 2014, we met our budget with funding from foundations (44%), churches (22%), individuals (21%), resident program fees (6%), special events (5%), corporations (1%) and other areas (1%). Our expense budget was \$222,000, and like many small non-profits, our challenge is to meet our budget every year. We are constantly seeking out new sources of contributions.

As we reviewed the challenges that families face in this economy, it is no surprise that medical care is a major problem. To help our residents, we are looking for resources to alleviate some of this burden through donated screenings, counseling and care outside of the facility. Please contact us if you can offer any assistance. Additionally, part of our current wish list is to add a paid part-time case manager and a volunteer grant writer. We ask that you keep these needs in mind.

IOH Board of Directors

Kelly Spetalnick- Board Chair	Barbara Nipp-Secretary	Ora Douglass	Melinda Mischik
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"One out of every 30 children in the U.S. experienced homelessness last year. That makes nearly 2.5 million children who, in 2013, lived in shelters, on the streets, in cars, on campgrounds or doubled up with other families in tight quarters, often moving from one temporary solution to another..."
(<http://www.newsweek.com/child-homelessness-us-reaches-historic-high-report-says-285052>)

With Appreciation For In-Kind Donations

We would like to thank all the donors who continue to give in-kind donations and host special events to benefit our families.

All Saints Catholic	Cowart Family/Ashford-Dunwoody YMCA	Our Lady of The Assumption Catholic Church
Angela and Jeremy Cohen	Dunwoody Woman's Club	Robert and Carolyn Fairey
Anthony Brown	Eileen Cardillo- Caring Canvases	Ron, Karen and Austin Phillips
Atlanta Unity Church	Eric Johnson	Shallowford Presbyterian
Bernie Mullin-The Aspire Group	GADAC of Kappa Delta	St. Jude The Apostle Catholic Church
Beth Belden	Guardian Storage	St. Luke's Presbyterian Church
Bonita Atlow-Green Of Hearts	Johns Creek UMC	St. Martin In The Fields
Brookhaven Christian Church	Jo's Grille	St. Monica' Circle-St. Martin In The Fields
BryTech, Inc.	Laura Soscia	St. Teresa's Circle-St. Jude The Apostle
BSA Troop 764 - St. Luke's Pres Church	Leo Club	Tracie Penegar-Lizard Thicket Boutique
Cambridge Academy	Mary Martha Circle-Johns Creek UMC	UMW High Noon Circle-Johns Creek UMC
Children's Restoration Network	MaryAnn and John McNeil	
Connie Atkins	Mr. and Mrs. Gerry (Barbara) Howe	

How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these. - *George Washington Carver*

With Appreciation To Our Donors

We are grateful for each and every contribution and apologize in advance to any donor whose name was inadvertently left off the list.

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