



Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network

Fall 2011 Newsletter

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Director's Comments by Tim Thorne

Working at Goshen Interfaith, I experience a lot of coming and going - families, staff, and Board Members. Like anyone, I have grieved most goings, while celebrating some others. However, in truth, I do not ever remember an active Board Member leaving and thinking it was good.

Sitting here reflecting, I believe I can remember every Board member who has served GIHN. As I think of these folks by name I recall gifts that each brought and how those particular gifts were what was needed at the time and how their particular contributions have continued to shape GIHN into the present. Despite the angst I always feel when terms expire, I trust that any of these good folks could be called upon and they would make time to help me or the current Board with a project or need.

This year, on the first day of July the GIHN Board said good bye to six year board member Steve Garboden. Fortunately, Steve will serve for the next year on the Program Development Committee so he is not fully gone but he is no longer quite as near. Every member of the GIHN Board has expressed regret about Steve's stepping down and everyone wanted a public acknowledgement of the gifts he brought to the table.

Steve is a business person; he sees data, interprets what it means, makes measured responses and executes a well thought out incremental plan. Steve's plans are productive, inclusive and clearly articulated. Steve is a consistently nurturing presence. He is careful with his emotions and he has an ability to leave those working with him feeling confident that something good is happening at a pace that everyone can manage.

One early morning meeting, then board chair Gordon Dyck began the meeting with a sharing moment by asking all present, "If you were an animal what animal would you want to be?" Steve responded that he'd like to be a rabbit. I can see Steve as a rabbit. He is comfortable being low on the food chain but keeps his eyes open for the best harvest opportunities. Given the choice Steve

THANK YOU EVENT



**ALL GIHN VOLUNTEERS
ARE INVITED BY THE
BOARD AND STAFF**

***SUNDAY OCTOBER 9TH
3 PM TO 6 PM
TO GATHER AT
THE ELECTRIC BREW
FOR A FREE BEVERAGE***

Event Sponsored by Everence

will use the mowed path as opposed to ramming through the brush; but he knows those trails as well. In the business world I can well imagine Steve accepting that things are competitive and that there are a lot of predatorial personalities out there with which he must contend and yet he never shies away from doing the necessary tasks. In short, Steve is competent while being calm, non-threatening and gentle.

Steve, thank you so much for what you have brought to GIHN. Thank you for your willingness to continue to serve in a leadership role and for the support and guidance that you have offered me personally. You are already missed and I grieve the loss of our planned regular contacts but I (and GIHN) will continue to benefit from your many contributions. You have been a gift to me and to the GIHN program. Thank you.

Summer Fun at the Day Centre

by Denise Reesor

As a child, there is no better time than the summer. A break from school, the chance to play outside and a sense of fun and freedom. Thanks in part to the youth at Siloam Mennonite Church, the children at Goshen Interfaith have had their own dose of summer fun. Earlier this spring, Siloam Mennonite youth decided they wanted to gather their own collection of money for GIHN. They wanted to see this money put specifically towards the needs of children who spend their days at the Center.

With many children filling the house this summer, the staff was excited to brainstorm how we could use the money: perhaps towards school supplies for the fall, socks and underwear, or educational posters for the kids' room. While all are worthy ways of using the money, the mothers at the Center provided the winning idea – why not buy a kiddie pool big enough for the kids to play in together?



What a hit! The kids, ranging in ages from 2 – 10, absolutely loved splashing around, dunking each other and making up water games. During many days of heat, the pool provided hours of outdoor entertainment for the gang. I enjoyed sitting and chatting with the parents while they watched the kids play; some true moments of summer contentedness.

The more time I spend at the GIHN Day Center, the more I realize how crucial it is for children to have opportunities to play. Play provides the chance for kids to learn to get along with others, experience the world, and develop positive memories. I'm certain that the kindness of the Siloam youth has enabled positive development for our GIHN kids as well as some good old, honest, summer fun.



Letter Series/Letter 1

by GIHN staff

*****The rest of this series will be posted on the
Gosheninterfaith.org website***

Dear Elizabeth,

Sometimes we start something, thinking we can do it and then figure out it is more than we can follow through on. And so maybe you thought about being my friend but then figured out

you couldn't..... and anyway you didn't promise. ... I think I was just hoping for something when you were sitting there and we started talking. I thought maybe you liked me and wanted to be my friend. I thought that your hand on my knee and your warm embrace meant that you were connected to me. I thought that when I told you about my life and how bad some things were and you said nothing like that had ever happened to you... well I guess I was just hoping to be your friend because I never had a friend like you that had a life that was perfect or at least that seemed really good.

It's been a little weird for me these past few years. Once in a while there have been some nice people along the way who have offered to help fix one thing or another, brought me a meal or even given me gas money to look for a job, but no one who seemed to really want to talk to me. Sometimes people have been out and out mean, looking at me as if I was ugly or stupid. Sometimes people point their finger at me and tell me my kids are bad. And sometimes they don't say it but I know they think it's my fault when they start trying to "help me" be a better parent.



You were so nice to me and I ended up telling you more than I had planned to – in fact more than I planned to tell anyone. I told you that I was sad and confused. I almost told you the worst part – how I'm angry a lot – but then I really wanted you to like me and I don't even like me when I'm mad.

I know it is really too quick to be friends but you seemed to have so many and I have so few that I thought you might want another friend and maybe you would even let me be your friend. I really, really wanted to learn how to be a good friend to a nice person. You just seemed so safe and when I gave you my phone number I thought that you really were going to call.

The truth is that I worried you might call and it might be weird. It's not like I could have you to my house or I could say let's go have coffee – I never met anybody for coffee. The truth is that the only time I ever met anybody for anything was when...

Anyway, for the whole first week after we met, I worried you would call. The whole second week I worried you wouldn't call. And then I felt stupid because I told you things that I wasn't going to tell anyone. At one point I got really angry at you... and then really angry at me and then I got angry all over again about my life and then I felt stupid again. It would be nice to have a friend but I know that I can't have a friend like you because I don't fit in and the people I do fit in with I don't want to be friends with anymore because... I don't know... anyway, I'm sorry I got angry at you for not calling... and thanks for being nice even if it was only for a few hours.