



Goshen

Interfaith

Hospitality

Network

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Director's Comments...

by Tim Thorne

I am very sorry to say that the days of Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network may be numbered. As most of you are aware, all of the leading candidates for president have plans that, if implemented, will put an end to every social ill ever visited on the United States. There has been scant mention of a promise of whiter teeth and fresher breath for everyone, but I expect a plan for this to emerge before November.

With all of the various election-year promises floating about I—like many folks, Republican or Democrat—am confused about who to vote for this year. What a terrible thing it would be for me and my peer group of social workers if poverty was indeed eliminated! Imagine also the negative impact to vested interests if everyone suddenly starting becoming healthier under a universal health care program. Of course, the fact that environmental concerns do not seem to be center stage on the agenda of any leading candidate suggests that the planet may soon not be inhabitable for humans in any case.

Laboring under all these weighty impending possibilities, we are left with, well . . . I guess with what we've had all along: the hope, the confidence, and the leadership that we find in Christ.

In this newsletter you will see how people with various gifts have experienced and expressed their relationship to Christ as they serve homeless families. We have notes on leadership and service, reports of membership and affiliation and notices of how artists are using their gifts to help fund this program.

I do not know the political leanings of all those who are involved in this ministry. I do, however, believe that I know the hearts of all of our leaders, volunteers, supporters, and prayer partners. I know that every one of you makes a choice each time you attend a meeting, record minutes, host a meal, make a bowl or lead others in prayer. Every day, every one of you makes a choice to do this thing instead of something else, a choice to give rather than to take, a choice to serve rather than to be served – a choice on behalf of the other rather than the self. This business of ministering to the needs of homeless people is a simple work that has endured through the changing leadership of liberals and conservatives, through times of peace and war, prosperity and recession – funny how much more enduring concrete expressions of faith are than the cycles of election year candidates! Thanks for doing your part!

Writers Note: Because people value and understand sarcasm in different ways it is my hope that the point of this article is clear in my juxtaposing our faith in politics and our faith in Christ.

Board Member Reflections on GIHN by Rose Shetler

In early December, the GHIN Board met for its winter retreat. The retreat was led by Board Vice Chair, Steve Garboden, and the agenda included defining the role of the Board and identifying the owners of GIHN. We also reviewed the wording of the Mission Statement. Through both large and small group discussions we articulated what GIHN already does well and what our vision is for the future. Obviously, this work was not finished in the two-plus hours that were spent, but was a great start in an ongoing effort to further clarify these issues. At the end of the evening, Tim asked for volunteers to write about ownership and vision from a Board perspective. Consequently, this article is on the vision of GHIN and is based on our discussions at the retreat as well as my own thoughts.

The Empty Bowl Project

Saturday, February 23, 2008
5p.m. to 7:30p.m.
Mill Race Farmer's Market

212 W. Washington, Goshen

Sponsored by: Goshen Clay Artist's Guild

Purchase a handmade pottery bowl filled with your choice of delicious soup for \$15.00. Other sides are included.

Support this annual benefit dinner and enjoy musical entertainment and community fellowship.

People frequently confuse an organization’s Mission Statement with its vision. While there is some overlap, typically the mission states what is already being done; an organization’s purpose and reason for existence. The vision identifies where the organization would like to go—what is the goal? Henry Ford’s vision of a car in every garage is a great example. A strategic vision or plan, then, is the road map pointing the way to reach the goal.

At the Board retreat, together members listed the most important things GIHN currently does (mission), and the most important things GIHN should do (vision/hopes/dreams). We then individually rated our top six in order of importance and tallied the numbers together. Top priorities for the group in order of importance were as follows:

1. Provide safe shelter
2. Provide opportunity for churches to be connected to the homeless
3. Provide a nurturing environment—demonstrate love and care to children
4. Provide individual treatment to guests and

Improve life skills of guests were tied as #4

The first three priorities we identified as being services that GIHN already provides well. The two items tied for fourth we see as services that should be increased or expanded. They are visionary because we want to do them more and better. They are our new frontier.

How GIHN goes about providing more individual treatment and improving life skills of our guests needs to be answered in the coming months. It is the challenge of the Executive Director and the staff to map out a plan in conjunction with oversight, support and input from the Board. It will most likely be a major part of our focus at the strategic planning retreat in early spring.

But before charging ahead, it is extremely important that the Board’s interpretation of vision is truly the vision of the owners. As Peter writes in his article, the owners are the supporting churches and you, the reader, are an owner with your contributions of food, time, prayer or money for GIHN. The Director’s and the Board’s vision must be consistent with the owners’ vision, for we are simply representatives of the owners. Does our analysis ring true with you? Are there other areas of service to the homeless that would better reflect your hopes and dreams? I encourage you to think seriously and prayerfully about your vision for GIHN and communicate it to a Board member or the Director. It is crucial that we dialogue together to articulate a vision that will carry GIHN effectively into the future.

GIHN Ownership Question by Peter Salveson

A question was asked recently at a GIHN board meeting over dinner, “Who has Ownership of GIHN?” The answers started slowly and then began to pop out. One person answered that it belonged to the host churches, another person answered that it was sponsors and donors.

Then an interesting thing happen as the discussion continued, the answers to the questions, became questions themselves. Someone asked, “Is it the community?” Someone else asked if the families that came for shelter had ownership. And it was at about that point that I began thinking how delicious the soup was that we had for dinner. So I raised my hand to ask if I could have some more, and my timing was such that I actually raised my hand at the perfect moment to agree to write a short discussion on this question for the newsletter.

Now after having some time to think about this question, I can testify how tricky of a question it is. When we ask who has ownership of a company, it is easy to answer: the private owner or the stockholders. But with a not-for-profit organization, it changes. The GIHN board is the group that does have authority over the budget and makes decisions when assets should be bought or sold, and yet the GIHN board members do not really have ownership themselves, only responsibility.

However, the real reason that this is a tricky question is that there are so many people and churches and businesses that work toward the common goal of keeping GIHN operating well. Surely these people would have ownership in the loosest sense of the word. But no, the investment of time and money in a not-for-profit is not really investment, it is a gift. And even though with gifts there is an expectation that it will be used wisely, it is still a gift.

So I realized what you might have realized before you started reading this piece: when someone gives a gift of time or money to a charity, it is exactly that--a gift. And the expectation of the giver is not a return on the investment, but an expectation that GIHN and its board will act responsibly with that valuable donation of time or money.

Our Current Host Churches

- Assembly Mennonite
- Berkey Ave. Menn .Fellowship
- College Mennonite
- Clinton Frame Mennonite
- East Goshen Mennonite Church
- Faith Mennonite
- Goshen City Church of the Breth.
- North Goshen Mennonite
- Siloam Mennonite Fellowship
- Silverwood Mennonite
- St. John the Evangelist Church
- St. Mary’s Antiochian Orthodox
- Trinity Lutheran Church
- Walnut Hill Mennonite
- Waterford Mennonite Church
- Yellow Creek
- 8th Street Mennonite

And so I will do what got me through many an essay exam in college, I will give a short answer to the question and then ask the follow up question. Who is the owner of GIHN? The corporate entity holds the assets and the accounts, and that entity is managed by the board.

The follow up question, who does GIHN belong to? Who is the one that all this is done for? Who said that whatever is done to the least of His children is done unto Him? Who said that if we do anything without love, we are clanging cymbals? It is God. And God has done wonderful things with these gifts in the lives of those who have come to GIHN for help. He gets the gifts and the glory.

And a beautiful part of all this is that we can be part of something larger without having to own it. It is true that ownership and responsibility are not the same thing (just try to sell your children once). So we can share in the responsibility to keep GIHN serving people who need shelter and food, we can belong to something greater than ourselves, and we can see that lives are changed, including our own.

Our Needs List

Immediate needs: laundry detergent, baby wipes, feminine hygiene products, shampoo and conditioner, Clorox bleach, fair trade coffee (no decaffeinated), bath towels-new or gently used.

On-going needs: Cleaning supplies-Mr.Clean/409/Windex/toilet bowl cleaner/furniture polish, kitchen-size garbage bags, dish soap, diapers-all sizes, paper towels, sugar and creamer, copier/fax/printer paper, stamps, hair brushes, deodorant, lotion.

We also appreciate **gift cards** from grocery stores, drug stores, gas stations, Wal-Mart, and phone cards. These come in very handy when we have a specific need.

Our Host Church by Leonard Harms

Imagine your feelings if you were living with your family in a church the week of Christmas. That is what one member of Waterford Mennonite Church did when anticipating the church's week of hosting December 23-30, 2007. By enlisting the help of the coordinator and others she began to think about the things that make a memorable, traditional Christmas for many American families—stockings and toys for the children, some gifts for the parents, and food prepared specially for that day. By putting out a special offering basket at a previous service adequate money was given to provide funds for a thoughtfully prepared week of hosting.

Before the Christmas Eve service one could have observed some colorful Christmas food arrive, including a large plate of fancy assorted Christmas cookies. Earlier, Rex had seen a big bag arrive that had the tops of a few wrapped packages showing. He wanted to know right way who they were for and was told that it was a surprise. He replied, "A surprise for who?" and heard the response, "That's part of the surprise." That evening the church held a Christmas Eve program retelling the Christmas story. At the beginning of the service one of the hosts saw the same boy Rex peeking in at the door along with some other guests and invited them to join her in the service. He sat there "all eyes", but after a little while decided that he didn't want to be in there any longer and left to find his dad. He asked his dad if there would be a video later, and his dad said no that if he wanted to see the program he needed to stay in there whereupon he returned and sat with the family that had hosted a previous evening meal. Other members of the families also enjoyed the telling of the Christmas story. In the morning of Christmas Day the younger children awoke to find stockings for them to explore before their usual departure for the day center at 7:00. Under the tree at the day center were also presents for everyone, a toy, pants, a shirt, and a hoodie, for the younger children as well as gift cards for the older children and the parents. Although the evening hosts were prepared to serve a special Christmas meal in the evening, the guests decided to prepare their own Christmas meal at the center or eat with their extended families.

This account of Christmas Eve and Day characterizes the attitude of members at Waterford Mennonite Church, located on the south side of Goshen, to its week of hosting. Typically several weeks before this event announcements appear in the bulletin reminding people of the church's commitment to taking its turn as a host church, and sign-up sheets for all the different jobs wait in the foyer. Prayers for the coming families are offered during the worship service, and people are encouraged to put their name next to the task that they would like to contribute for that week. The planners would like to say that all the slots get filled immediately, but that is not the usual case. Rather some slots get filled right away; others get filled in the next week or two; and then pleas begin

to be heard about openings still to be filled. In the end the members rise to the occasion and all positions are filled. More prayers for the families are offered the morning of the day of their arrival, and attendees begin to think about how they want to relate to the families who are coming.

The hosting committee, made up of Denise Diener Perez as chair and Jan Oostland, can usually count on a few individuals who consistently sign up for meal preparation. There are often parent and child teams as well as individuals who sign up to be overnight hosts, and couples or families commit to hosting the meals. Even though Waterford was one of the original churches that helped to organize the Interfaith ministry and that began hosting in the first rotation, its commitment to this ministry is strong. Probably one could say that the ownership the members feel has increased as the experience of hosting has deepened. Many members can tell how they have been blessed by relating to these families who are living in a difficult stressful period in their lives, and one member has many stories of a loving friendship that started six years ago at the evening meal on a Saturday night.

In looking back members can see how the thoughtfulness of a few leaders at Waterford mobilized the entire congregation to provide Christmas for some families in Goshen; and yes, even living in church at Christmas can become a memorable holiday for everyone involved.

Staff Changes at GIHN by Andrea Yoder

Since our last newsletter we have had some staff changes at GIHN. In August of 2007 we hired Lindsey Saylor to replace Emmy Helmuth as the Site Supervisor. Lindsey worked in that position through January 4, 2008, and then left for a three-month maternity leave. Lindsey anticipates returning to this position in April. In her absence, Andrea Yoder has assumed the Site Supervisor role. *Nicole Bauman*, who has been working part-time/weekends at GIHN since last September has been hired to fill the Case Manager role. Nicole comes to us from Shakespeare, Ontario, and recently graduated from Goshen College with a degree in Bible, Religion and Philosophy. She has a special interest in community development, and peace and justice issues. When not working, Nicole enjoys gardening and bicycling.

GIHN has also hired two new part-time/weekend staff: *Christina Leichty and Marc Jantzi*. *Christina* comes to us from Wellman, Iowa, and is a senior nursing major at Goshen College. Christina plans to graduate in May, and hopes to find work in a children's hospital while continuing her studies in the medical profession. Her goal is to use her medical skills to serve others through going on medical mission trips and other opportunities that arise. Christina loves music, being outside and being involved in activities such as hiking, backpacking and canoeing, and she loves movie nights with her friends. *Marc* is from Goshen and is also a graduate of Goshen College, having graduated with a major in Spanish and a minor in Peace Studies. After graduating, Marc spent over a year teaching English in both the Middle East and Japan. He then spent a year and a half in southern France studying non-violent social change with Thich Nhat Hanh, before returning to the Goshen area. He is currently taking a biology class at Goshen College and is possibly interested in pursuing studies in pre-med. He is also interested in teaching. Marc's hobbies include tea drinking, yoga and meditation, and reading.

Welcome, Nicole, Christina and Marc. It's great to have you on board!

Addition to the board by Gordon Dyck

A native of Michigan, Sheldon Swartz graduated from Goshen College in 1977, and has continued to live in the Goshen area. Since 1991 he has been in private practice offering counseling and spiritual direction. His practice is called Life Development Associates and is located in the Spahn Building. Prior to 1991 he was employed by Teen Haven.

Sheldon is married to Velma. They have 4 children, 3 are married, and they have 4 grand children. Presently Sheldon and his wife attend Waterford Mennonite Church. Sheldon enjoys reading and biking. Sheldon's joining the GIHN Board of Directors is a result of his "desire to invest in those less fortunate." Welcome, Sheldon!

GIHN Board Members

Gordon Dyck Steve Garboden Leonard Harms Greg Hartzler
Marcy Kisseberth Kim Kurtz Peter Salveson Sandra Schneider

