



# Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network

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## August 2008 Newsletter

### Director's Comments by Tim Thorne

If you have read my articles from past newsletters you may recall that they have been varied in style and content – with the quality of some perhaps better than others. I hope that these short essays offer some insight into my thinking and, by extension, provide a window into how and why Goshen Interfaith operates as it does. When I am able to weave these things into a story that vividly captures something that I am struggling with, I believe that it is so much better.

Perhaps a newsletter should stick to reporting on accomplishments in the recent past that will merit the ongoing support of our readers. This approach is usually accomplished by including pictures, success stories, and statistics where the figures are all increasing in the right direction. In Goshen, however, many organizations like GIHN have newsletters that tend to be a little softer on pitch and longer on encouragement. We can do this, I think, because we are a community of giving people – we give our time and our money more freely than in any other community in which I have lived.

Goshen is unique in other ways as well. A great many jobs in Elkhart County are dependent on a single industry that is doing poorly at the moment. As we all know, many people who have been self-sufficient in the past are suddenly looking at a potential personal crisis.

This newsletter will include a few stories, some pictures and our usual needs list. But I decided to replace my usual article, on the work of GIHN, with a short statement of our larger situation. At present, GIHN is filled to capacity with guest families and we have turned away several families already this summer and, for various reasons, paid for motel rooms for several others. Our first expanded wave of requests for shelter is coming from families who have been living near the edge for a long time. However, we expect that as businesses formally terminate positions and as unemployment insurance benefits expire, we will soon be receiving requests from people who have lived higher on the economic ladder. I do not want to sound the alarm bells unduly here, but GIHN supporters should know that we

will be hearing from these people very soon. Already, many of our sister organizations serving those in need are low in supplies, and we are increasingly unable to refer guests to these organizations for services we have heretofore not provided. At present, we are running far behind in our financial and material donations while our giving to our current and past guests is running far ahead of other years. Both of our fundraisers this year netted about half of what we had hoped for and other forms of financial support have been down as well. Every single item on our needs list is now close to depleted.

Of course, the implication here is that we are asking you to give more to GIHN. But I hope that this is not the only message you hear. There are many good organizations in our community that need your financial, in-kind and volunteer support, and I trust that all of them – like GIHN – are deeply appreciative of what you are already doing. Nonetheless, extra efforts are needed and perhaps from more people.

Here are two ideas for you to consider. First, if your teens enjoy stringing toilet paper in the trees of their friends, challenge them to consider dropping it off at a local community service organization instead. We use plenty of toilet paper at GIHN and we give away plenty more each week to families who come to us for this very basic need.\* Second, I encourage all of you to purchase from businesses who give back to the community with integrity and commitment. While we see businesses that exploit the use of organizational names to further their own profits, there are also many business people who give generously to those in need and to other important community projects. I'm sure that any not-for-profit would be glad, if asked, to tell you which businesses support them.

I believe that this is a time of opportunity to reconsider how we live and the choices we make.

\*Many teens might be perfectly willing to buy multiple rolls of toilet paper on a Friday or Saturday night with their buddies. Try sending them instead to the convenience store on a week night to buy two rolls of toilet paper. Then ask them to imagine how it would feel to walk into an organization like GIHN and ask someone there if they can have a roll of toilet paper.

## Host Church Update by Sheldon Swartz

What do East Goshen Mennonite, North Goshen Mennonite, and Siloam Fellowship have in common? Well, I wouldn't know either, but perhaps some people at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship would know. Each of these churches has used Berkey's facilities for their week of hosting when they could not host at their own facility, for whatever reason. Thanks, Berkey Avenue!

Unique to Berkey is that it is Tim's home church. Tim and Tracy and their family have hosted a meal every Friday evening for years and have been readily available to coordinators. The sense of being supported goes both ways.

Ruth Roth, part of Berkey Avenue's coordination team, reports that their biggest challenge is adequately thanking the many volunteers who give their time during the host week (45-50, not including children). Over time they built in the concept of having permanent volunteers with substitutes so they don't "reinvent the wheel" every host week. The schedule is sent out a couple of weeks ahead of time as a reminder. Schedule conflicts are handled by trading or using a substitute volunteer. They also use particular menus each night to simplify decisions about food. The system works well.

Why be involved in hosting? "This is a way to put my faith into action," reports Susan Garboden, a regular volunteer. She reports that during that week she finds that she is more disciplined and less selfish with her time. She also recalls with fondness her many conversations with a particular female guest who used GIHN services a couple of times, the second time asking if Beth Berry would be serving a meal that week since she had loved the first meal so much she saved a portion of it for the next day! It is always special when relationships can form out of the hosting experience.



**Volunteers serving GIHN guests**

### Our Needs List

**Immediate needs:** laundry detergent, dryer sheets, kitchen-sized garbage bags, paper towels, diapers, size 4 & 5, deodorant, creamer and sugar.

**On-going needs:** Clorox, cleaning supplies (Mr. Clean, 409, Lysol – at this point we do not need Windex or toilet bowl cleaner), baby wipes, feminine hygiene products, blankets (new or gently used), bath towels (new or gently used), pillows – standard size, toilet paper, razors, body lotion, stamps.

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

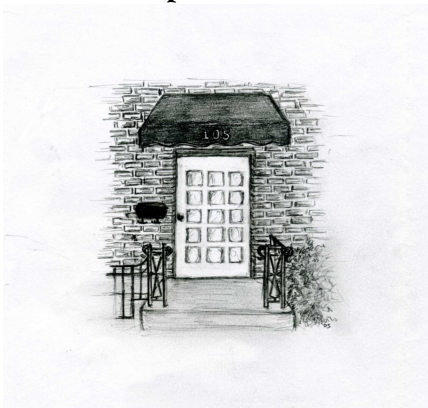
### GIHN Updates by Andrea Yoder

From time to time GIHN volunteers will ask about families who have moved out of GIHN and into their own place, wondering how they are doing or how things are going for them. Many of our families do keep in contact with us, some regularly, some only once or twice a year. Below are updates from three families who stayed at GIHN and then moved out into their own place.

# Tenth Annual Fall Gala

Thursday, October 9, 2008

6:30 p.m. Social Time  
7:00 p.m. dinner



Location:  
Bread & Chocolate conference Center

1401 Lincolnway East  
Goshen, In  
574-533-9876

Entertainment will be provided by:  
Les and Gwen Gustafson-Zook

Ticket Sales:  
\$45.00 per ticket  
or  
\$325.00 per table of 8

For More Information Call:  
574-534-2300

## Three Cheers for Golfers

**Thanks to all:** golfers, hole sponsors, golf sponsors, and volunteers. Your efforts netted Interfaith \$5,067.57.

The Board appreciates all those who gave talent, time, and money to make this a profitable day for Interfaith and congratulates those who won golfing and door prizes. Watch for a similar event next year.



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## Our Host Churches

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

GIHN updates continued...

**Willie Mae and her son Kar-Dai:** Willie Mae is working at a daycare in Elkhart. Kar-Dai is attending school and is in second grade. Willie Mae is still working at getting her GED. She passed everything but Math, so is taking classes again to work on her Math skills. Willie Mae says “we’re doing OK.” It has been several years since Willie Mae and her son stayed at GIHN, but she still remembers the churches and volunteers who hosted them. A few weeks ago, while riding on the Interurban Trolley, Willie Mae recognized another passenger as a volunteer for GIHN from 8<sup>th</sup> Street Mennonite, and chatted with her for awhile.

**Fred, Chris, and their daughter Katie:** This family moved into their own apartment the beginning of May. Chris says “Fred is still working at Kinro, that’s a blessing and he’s doing some painting on the side. I’m feeling better, and looking for part-time work. Katie just started first grade, and is liking it so far.” Chris met one of her neighbors, who had stayed at GIHN last year, and they have become good friends and enjoy visiting back and forth while their daughters play together.

**Cynthia Thomas and her granddaughter, Corianna:** Cynthia and her granddaughter moved from GIHN to a two-year transitional housing program here in Goshen in August of 2007. Cynthia says “things are going wonderful. I’ve come a long way from where I was when I first came to GIHN. I was a mother and grandmother who was homeless and on drugs. I just completed my first year of the transitional housing program, I’m in school, I’m thirteen months clean from drugs, and I’m doing better for myself and my granddaughter.”



**"People don't care how much you know--  
until they know how much you care."**

--John C. Maxwell



**Greta Weaver, part-time staffer, with her young friends from GIHN**

**GIHN Staff Members**

Tim Thorne, Executive Director  
Andrea Yoder, Site Supervisor  
Nicole Bauman, Case Manager

**GIHN Board Members**

Gordon Dyck	Steve Garboden
Chris Gill	Leonard Harms
Greg Hartzler	Marcy Kisseberth
Kim Kurtz	Ken Mullet
Peter Salveson	Sandra Schneider
Rose Shetler	Sheldon Swartz
Evelyn zumFelde	