



Goshen

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Director's Comments...

by Tim Thorne

Dirty and sweaty from ripping off shingles on a hot Saturday morning in July, two men in my church family stop to say, "thank you for the invitation" as they prepare to call it a day. I thought they were joking. Before the job was complete on the following Tuesday evening, my brother-in-law, my wife, my children and our church family, had sheeted and shingled 2300 square feet of roof in some of the hottest weather of summer. In addition to help on the roof, we had help on the ground, including meals prepared and served. One evening as we were finishing up on the roof, hot and tired, there came a gift I was most grateful for, seemingly the best watermelon I have ever eaten was delivered to us chopped and ready eat. Men, women and children over a broad range of ages came to help. In all of this, the most spiritually profound moments were the *thank you's* I received from these two guys for inviting them to come help. They were serious!

Sixteen years after becoming a Christian I am reminded of how we as servants operate or perhaps aspire to operate differently. As for me, I have spent a good part of my life working to be of assistance to others, including having worked on many roofs. However, try as I might, I can not recall having ever been thankful for the opportunity to strip shingles off a roof – much less on a hot Saturday in July. Perhaps I should seek to be more grateful for all of the opportunities I am given.

One opportunity that brings me much joy is the opportunity to work in this ministry to homeless families. Helping those who are down and out and often without hope is not, as one might imagine, always an uplifting and energizing experience. Rather it is the joy of serving in this role as part of this community of God's people, this community of believers who despite inconveniences, frustrations and cost, press on to serve others and thank GIHN for the opportunity to do so. To be sure, we are blessed by the occasional successes – a fixed roof or a stable family – but it is not only these that keep me motivated. It is Ken Mullet walking out to the van to spend several moments saying good-bye to a guest family, or Genie Kehr hugging a woman with whom she has made a connection, or the gentle manner of Delores Bartel as she hosts families in her church home. It is also walking away from Maple City Fire Protection with the fire extinguishers again recharged at no cost, or picking up the GIHN van from Monteith

SEVENTH ANNUAL GALA

to benefit

Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network



Thursday, October 12, 2006

Greencroft Senior Center

6:30pm Appetizers

7:00pm Buffet Dinner



Individual tickets can be purchased for \$40

or a

Table of eight for \$300

Call (574) 534-2300

Our Needs List

Immediate needs:

- Clorox bleach
- Table napkins
- Garbage bags
- Dryer Sheets
- Laundry detergent

On-going needs:

- Hair brushes
- Diapers
- Coffee – Maxwell House, no decaf
- Cleaning supplies – Mr. Clean, Windex, Pledge
- Paper towels
- Stamps
- Copier, fax, and printer paper

We also appreciate **gift cards** from grocery stores, drug stores, gas stations, and Wal-Mart and Meijer. These come in very handy when we have a specific need, i.e. a child needs a pair of pajamas, or a sick baby needs Pedialyte, or someone gets a job and needs work clothes, or needs gas to get to work.

Tire for years and never being billed for an oil change. It is opening the mail and finding the \$100 check that comes every other month like clock work from folks who I know are giving to the top of their ability in the service of this ministry. These and the thousand or so like them who are the saints that I, the staff here and the staff of many ministries in this community are lifted up by time and time again.

It is truly a blessing for me to be among all of you in a community where I have come to believe all earthly things are possible. Here where we shelter the homeless, clothe and feed the poor, work with troubled youth, build homes for those who are willing to work with us and bury our dead with celebration for lives blessed by the richness of community. It is with humility that I sit here in peace while the fortunes of evil ravage many through both-man made and natural calamity. And yet it is my way, and the way of those who claim a personal relationship with Christ to accept that we live in a fallen world but in a world where we are called to remain faithful, in all ways possible, as we serve those around us, and are thankful to be able to do so.

Current GIHN Board Members:

John Auer	Myron Schrag	Peter Salveson
Gordon Dyck	Marcy Kisseberth	Rose Shetler
Steve Garboden	Carol Miller	
Greg Hartzler	Janice Eigsti Miller	

Former Guest Interview with Willie Mae Grant

By Emmy Lou Helmuth

In the February GIHN Annual Report Willie Mae Grant wrote an article sharing about her life and how she and her son, Kar'Dai, came to live at GIHN. Since that article Willie Mae and her son have moved into their own apartment in Elkhart. Recently I met with Willie Mae to discuss with her some questions I had regarding her extended stay at Goshen Interfaith.

Question: What are two positive experiences you had at GIHN?

Willie Mae's response:

I went through my GED classes and followed through with my tests. Another positive thing was working with the staff at the center. They helped me get to know my way around and find out how I could help myself.

Question: What is an aspect of the GIHN program that made it easy to stay at GIHN? And what is one aspect that made it difficult?

Willie Mae's response:

The easy part was meeting the different people at the churches each week because they were so encouraging and uplifting. The hard part of living here was learning to live with so many different families.

Question: What would you change about GIHN if you were in charge?

Willie Mae's response:

I believe the only thing I would change would be to enforce the rules more strictly.

Question: Describe for us some of the relationships you formed through being at GIHN.

Willie Mae's response:

I still talk with some of the families that lived here. We've had some of the same troubles and our kids know each other so we still talk. I remember lots of people from different churches. I don't always remember their names, but I do remember them. I think of Miss Delores, Miss Mary, Mr. Ken and Mrs. Sheril, and many more. I got to know Miss Marianne from College Mennonite and she helped me so much with moving my things and getting settled in my new place. I appreciate people getting involved. They didn't have to talk to us folks when we were at the church, but they did it anyway.

Question: What do you see as the needs of the families that come through Interfaith? How would you compare them to your own?

Willie Mae's response:

A lot of families need counseling and guidance about how things work like housing or looking for a job. They got to know that whether it takes a long time or a short time for things to work out that they will work out, if you try your best. For myself I needed child care and transportation so that I could get out and try to better myself.

Overall, Willie Mae shared that although there were many frustrating times during her stay here at GIHN it was also enjoyable because she was blessed to talk with and get to know many people. During her time at Goshen Interfaith I was able to see how difficult it can be for a single mother to get out on her own without having affordable childcare or reliable transportation. Willie Mae is a strong woman and made a way to get through her struggles. It was a joyful day for all when the Grant family officially moved into their new place. Willie Mae quickly made her apartment a cozy home, using many donated items she picked up throughout her time at GIHN. Her next steps are to complete her GED tests, study for LPN certification, and to eventually move back to Goshen.

Reflections On GIHN

by Richard Litwiller

It doesn't seem so long ago that I sat in a meeting with a group of pastors and other interested parties at LaCasa to talk about homelessness in Goshen. At that time, in 1994, I was pastor at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship. The economy in the Elkhart County was really quite good. Much of the homelessness problem was due to a shortage of housing. There were those who were homeless for the more usual reasons, but there were also families sleeping in cars with money in their pockets who couldn't find housing.

Jeff Gausted, pastor at First English Lutheran, had come to Goshen from Cincinnati, OH. His church had been involved with a ministry to homeless families called Interfaith Hospitality Network. Jeff thought this ministry could meet the need discussed at the meeting. After more meetings including several with representatives from the National IHN network, Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network was formed.

Our congregation at Berkey Avenue was just going through a building project and we were asking the question of how we could share our facility with the community. GIHN seemed a perfect fit – a way to open our doors to others in the community and a way to give in a personal way through our time, not just through our money.

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THANK YOU!

by Carol Miller

Thank you to the golfers who turned out on a beautiful June day for our second annual golf fundraiser. Participants enjoyed cool sunshine, lunch, and prizes for all at the Spring Meadow Golf Course in Middlebury. We are grateful for the many prizes donated by area businesses and individuals. The total raised was \$7,365. We are planning a "third annual" outing for next year.

I grew to love what IHN stood for and how it brought so many volunteers together in ministry to others in need. When I left Berkey Avenue in 2000, I still wanted to stay involved. The church our family became involved in was part of the network. I was then invited to be part of the board in 2001. It has been a joy to see God answer prayer time after time as the ministry has continued and grown. In a very uncertain economy, shortfalls have been met time after time. It is evident to me that God’s hand is on the ministry.

As a board member, I have seen a necessary transition take place. The board has moved from a very hands-on board that was seeking to keep the ministry alive to one that is thinking more long term. While the basic purpose remains the same, the budget has increased, staff has been brought on, and a day center has been purchased and paid for. The focus for the board is less on day to day operations and more on strategic planning for the future.

It has been my privilege to be involved with GIHN in various ways since its beginning. I am just as excited now about the ministry as when I first caught a glimpse of the vision 11 years ago. GIHN is fulfilling its purpose in providing safe housing for homeless families and giving them an opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Our Host Churches by Emmy Lou Helmuth

Each church that hosts Goshen Interfaith has unique ways of scheduling, organizing, and hosting GIHN guests. As we continue our Host Church series we hope that each congregation and individual will learn from the experiences and practices of other congregations. Our focus this issue is on College Mennonite Church. College Mennonite has been hosting GIHN since the ministry began in 1995.

Throughout the years of working with Goshen Interfaith, College Mennonite has fine tuned their planning process and this is what keeps their host weeks running smoothly. Four weeks before College Mennonite hosts they have a meeting of the GIHN Ministry Group. Presently the team is made up of nine members: Mabel Brunk, Gordon Dyck (GIHN Board Chair), Kathleen Massanari, Don Miller, Marianne Pletcher, John Smith, Tim Stair, Barbara Thomas, and Jim Yoder. This team meets to discuss and plan for the GIHN week of hosting.

Part of this preparation is maintaining various “duty checklists” that are used throughout the host week. These checklists, along with an orientation sheet, are given to each volunteer when they sign up to help host. The list is specific to the job they have volunteered to do. These detailed lists make it easier for new volunteers to begin helping out with the GIHN program.

The planning meetings of the Ministry Group consistently have the same format. Part of that plan is to look at the week ahead and see if there are any holidays or opportunities for involvement in area activities. One activity that College Mennonite has been able to make a regular outing is going to the Goshen College Recreation and Fitness Center. We are glad that the Recreation and Fitness Center has been so gracious to open their doors to our guests twice a week when College Mennonite hosts GIHN. On numerous occasions College Mennonite has hosted over a seasonal holiday. It is always fun to hear from guests the festive activities that are planned for those special days.

We want to say thanks to all the volunteers and coordinators from College Mennonite Church. Thank you for your long-time dedication and creative outreach to the guests of Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network.

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
Zion Chapel
8th Street Mennonite