



BIRMINGHAM HOSPITALITY NETWORK



P.O. Box 531233 / Birmingham, AL 35253 • www.BirminghamHospitalityNetwork.com • (205) 918-0246

February 2010

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Host Congregations

All Saints' Episcopal Church
Baptist Church of the Covenant
Canterbury United Methodist Church
Covenant Presbyterian Church
Huffman United Methodist Church
Mountain Brook Baptist Church
Saint John's United Methodist Church
Saint Luke's Episcopal Church
Saint Mary's Episcopal Church
Saint Peter's Anglican Church
Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church
Southside Baptist Church
South Highland Presbyterian Church
Temple Emanu-El
Trinity United Methodist Church
Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church

Support Congregations

Beloved Community Church
Shades Crest Baptist Church
Temple Beth-El

Letter from the Board President

Here in Birmingham, freezing temperatures, snow threats, cold, dreary days - all of these make us grateful for the warmth of our homes. Now imagine all those same things, but no home. The families we serve may not have homes but they are warmed by the welcoming volunteers who greet them week after week at each of our congregations. The surveys we receive from the families each week tell us that they receive more than just food and shelter. Their lives are being changed daily by so many who cook and share a meal or spend the night or share time in fellowship. All of these are simple things that warm the lives of our guests as they work toward permanent homes.

In Haiti, the devastating images of survivors who search for food, water and shelter remind us of the blessing of basic necessities we so often take for granted. Losing a loved one or an entire family is more than most of us could bare. Add to that the heart-breaking realization that you no longer have a home. That finding shelter means draping a sheet over

make-shift poles in the middle of a field, that your next meal may not come for days, or that medical care may not be available for weeks. We should stop and thank God for all that we have and all that we can share with those whose lives were irreparably damaged by an earthquake. We pray that relief is swift and that God's grace and mercy shine especially bright on all Haitians in the months to come.

How wonderful it would be to have an organization such as BHN in Haiti right now. Can you picture it? The sight of hundreds or thousands of volunteers sharing a meal or offering a bed or holding a hand or just lending an ear. To make a difference in someone's life isn't hard. It just takes heart. Our thanks to all those at home and abroad who lead with their hearts... what a difference you make.

Sincerely,
Paula Williamson,
President
Board of Directors

News from the Day Center

A new year is always a time to look at our accomplishments of the past and the challenges we face in the future. We had a great start to 2010 - three wonderful BHN families have moved into their own homes in the past month! We have hosted over 3,575 shelter nights and served over 10,725 meals. Our success rate was 86%.

As we look to the challenges of the New Year, we can expect to see even more families losing their homes due to the difficulties of the economy. We have already seen the length of time it

takes for a family to get back on their feet increase significantly. However, whether it's due to loss of employment, break up of families, or medical problems, we will be here to serve the homeless families who need us.

Our volunteers provide more than shelter and food- they provide love and encouragement to families who are indeed strangers when they meet. If you feel up to that challenge and don't already volunteer- please consider contacting us to see how you can help. You really can make a difference in someone's life.

Donations of Sweet Treats and Smiles

13 year old Temple Emanu-El member Joely Nadler has a long history of service and volunteerism. For the last year as her Mitzvah project she has been making monthly for The Table, which is a volunteer group that provides weekend meals at the Old Firehouse Shelter. When planning her December 5, 2009 Bat Mitzvah, she wanted to incorporate baking supplies into the centerpieces to reinforce what she had been doing throughout 2009. Each centerpiece contained a large mixing bowl, boxes of baking mixes, and baking utensils. Her goal was to remind those attending that everyone can help people in need.

When Joely became familiar with BHN through Temple Emanu-El and learned that it focuses on helping families in need, she decided to donate the centerpieces to BHN and extend the gift of baking to our families. Joely loves to bake and truly loved seeing the joy that something as simple as a brownie brought to people. When creating the centerpieces, she wanted to make it easy for someone to bake, and create some of life's simple pleasures for themselves.

Thanks to her, as a family moves from BHN into their own home we are able to give them a parting gift full of sweet treats and smiles. Her year of working with those in need has been more of a blessing than she realizes. Hopefully Joely can set an example for others with her thoughtfulness and creativity. BHN wants to thank Joely and wish her all the best in the future.



That's A Wrap!



This past holiday season BHN volunteers spent the 28 days between Thanksgiving and Christmas wrapping presents at the Colonial Brookwood Village. Thanks to everyone's support the 12th annual fundraiser was a huge success, and we raised almost \$12,300.

Each year, the number of volunteers has grown. Only through the help and tireless efforts of many is this fundraiser possible. We would like to thank the following:

All Saints' Episcopal Church
Baptist Church of the Covenant
Canterbury United Methodist Church
Covenant Presbyterian Church, PCA
Huffman United Methodist Church
Mountain Brook Baptist Church
St. John's United Methodist Church
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
St. Peter's Anglican Church
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
South Highland Presbyterian Church
Southside Baptist Church
Temple Beth-El
Temple Emanu-El
Trinity United Methodist Church
Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church
Action Civitan
Realty South Mountain Brook Office

"Kudos to Bryant Estate Sales"

Many, many heartfelt thanks to Kenneth Bryant and all the folks at Bryant Estate Sales who conducted a recent jewelry sale to benefit BHN!

Bryant Estate Sales priced and sold over 1500 individual pieces of donated jewelry resulting in proceeds of \$1,929.00 for BHN.

Bryant Estate Sales waived its sales commissions and absorbed 100% of the costs of the sale. It was a tremendous effort and a great two days of fun. We can not thank you enough!



Very Special Thanks
go to all of those individual
who are friends and volun-
teered and to Colonial
Brookwood Village for do-
nating their space for the
past twelve years and mak-
ing
this all possible.

A Note of Encouragement

Dear Friends,

I had been involved as a volunteer with BHN for about three years before I became the coordinator at Temple Emanu-El. In all honesty, the only reason I volunteered was because a good friend of mine was the coordinator. She asked if I would be interested in staying the night, and I have an amazing inability to say no. I became a volunteer “regular”, I would stay the night at least once each rotation, I even did it twice when a school assignment reared its ugly head for a parent who was scheduled to stay. (Just for future reference, I can be bribed.)

My friend, who was the coordinator, was forced to relocate to one of the Carolinas (I can never remember which one), and I made the mistake of saying the following, “If you can't find someone to be the coordinator, I'll do it.” I found out later that she quit looking the instant the words came out of my mouth. That was about two months before the next rotation that we were hosting at Temple Emanu-El. We met and, over drinks, we had the passing of the BHN folder. She laid it out for me, what to do, who to call, when to panic, when to start roping friends in.

I was a nervous wreck by the time my first rotation started. Not only was I responsible for organizing the volunteers to keep 14 people housed and fed, I was moving into my very own house that same weekend! In retrospect, I don't really remember much about that week, it's just one big blur. Thankfully, some of the “regulars” were there to show me the ropes about the things I didn't know (there were a bunch) and I always knew that help was only a phone call away.

I know that every rotation will teach me something new. It will bring me an experience that can never be replaced, it will allow me to help the people within my community, it will keep me humble and grateful, it will show me things that I didn't know existed, and it will give me the honor of being able to help a complete stranger. What could ever be better?

Sincerely,
Amy Trammell

The Shelter Always Needs....

- Cleaning Supplies
- Laundry soap
- Paper towels
- Gas gift cards
- Birthday cards
- Clear book bags
- Long distance phone cards
- Trash bags
- AA batteries
- AAA batteries
- Hygiene products
- Blank note cards
- Wal-mart gift cards
- School supplies
- Stamps
- Computer paper

Get To Know Our Board of Directors

What better way to learn more about BHN than to introduce you to our board members? The Board of Directors is a crucial part of how BHN continues to run smoothly year to year. So much of what our board does is behind the scenes and many times goes unappreciated. Each board member took the time to answer some personal questions and in this newsletter. We would like to introduce you to Cheryl D. Cobb.

Where did you grow up? Birmingham, Alabama

Where did you attend school? W. A. Berry High School, University of Texas at Austin, and Cumberland Law School

What is your degree? Bachelor of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin, Doctor of Jurisprudence, Cumberland School of Law

How did you become a part of BHN?

Volunteer hosting through my congregation (VHUMC)

How long have you been serving on the BHN board?

Approx 1 year

What is your favorite BHN memory?

Being an overnight host once when one of our guests was a single mom with a fretful baby. The young mom was very tired and I offered to rock her baby for her while she took a break. I have never felt so completely calm and happy. At that moment in time, I knew I was where I was supposed to be doing what I was supposed to be doing and the joy was inexplicable.

Where do you go to Church/Temple?

Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church

What is your favorite scripture? Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are

plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

Are you married/to who/ and how long?

Cheryl and her husband Tim Cobb just recently celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary.

Do you have children?

One son Alex who just recently turned 23. He was born on our 7th wedding anniversary.

What is your favorite book?

The gospel of John

Cheryl has only been on our board for a brief time but, has not hesitated to jump in head first and get her hands dirty. BHN would like to thank Cheryl for all her time and hard work in helping to make our shelter more effective.

*"A Community Response
for Homeless Families"*



*Would you rather have an electronic copy next time?
Email us - bhndmin@earthlink.net*

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