



BIRMINGHAM HOSPITALITY NETWORK



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

October 2011

Board Members

Greta Hogg, President
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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 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
Saint John's United Methodist Church
Shades Crest Baptist Church
Temple Beth-El

Letter from the Board President

Dear BHN Community,

With the hot summer days behind us the BHN Board has just completed the Annual Silent Auction event – it was so much fun! And, now we are looking forward to the holiday season and the Gift Wrap fundraiser at Brookwood Mall. These two fundraisers supply a significant part of the annual operating budget and BHN is blessed by all of you that volunteer your time and talents to help make these events happen. On behalf of the Board of Directors and BHN Staff we want to say THANK YOU for your tireless work and support of these fund-raisers and this organization. Please stay tuned for the BHN Auction Recap article later in this newsletter and announcements about Gift Wrap and volunteer opportunities coming soon!

The guest families are getting settled back into the school year routine which helps them achieve a sense of normal to a time in the life of the family that is anything but normal. The BHN community provides our guests with the encouragement they need to secure permanent housing and help them restore daily activities that once seemed impossible and out of reach. We are very grateful for everyone who gives their time hosting and preparing meals and extending hospitality to make all of this possible.

Our Executive Director, Rana Cowan, is busy preparing to attend the 11th Family Promise National Conference in Salt Lake City where she will meet with network leaders

from all over the country and share experiences and ideas that can benefit our program. Even though it is “work” we hope Rana has some fun and we are excited to hear the information and ideas she will bring home to us.

We have two new members who recently joined the BHN Board. Richard Goldstein will be representing Temple Emanuel and replaces Neil Roth. Also, Don Acton is the new board member from Saint Peter's Anglican Church. Welcome Richard and Don and a huge thank you to Neil Roth for his time in service to this group!

Would you like to receive this newsletter via email? You can email Meredith Showacre at bhnadmin@earthlink.net with “EMAIL ME NEWSLETTER” in the subject line to be added to our newsletter email distribution list.

The BHN Board of Directors meets at 6pm on the 4th Monday of every month (except July and December). We welcome anyone who shares our interest to serve the homeless families of Birmingham to come and visit and share suggestions and ideas! We are thankful for all of you who continue to support BHN and our guest families.

Sincerely,

Greta Hogg, President
Board of Directors

A Warm Welcome To Our New Board Members

During this past year we have seen quite a few new faces join our Board of Directors. Ben Goldman is one of our new Board members from Saint Luke Episcopal Church. We asked Ben to share with you a little bit about his experience as a volunteer and a Board member. We hope you see the warmth BHN provides for Birmingham's families just like Ben did the night he walked through the snow to fulfill his commitment to BHN:

Friends and Supporters,

Since 2006, I have volunteered for the Birmingham Hospitality Network by spending the night at my church and sharing time with the families. Sometimes, we break bread and share a meal. Sometimes, we run outside and play. Sometimes, we just sit together and watch a movie. Always, we make a home for those without one. My Rector, Rich Webster, describes St. Luke's as a "village church." It is when I am serving through BHN that I most feel a part of the village.

My first two times to stay with our BHN guests in 2011 were unusual, but they were also telling of BHN's purpose. In January, I stayed at the church on the night of the severe snowstorm that shut down the roads in our area. Consequently, I had to walk to and from the church through the snow to fulfill our commitment to our guests. The next time that I stayed with the BHN guests was the night of Wednesday, April 27, when the tornados were rolling across Alabama. I believe that these experiences are symbolic of BHN's mission as a whole: to provide shelter (physical, spiritual, and emotional) from life's storms for those who are in need. I am blessed by the shared experiences that BHN offers and blessed to have the opportunity to serve on the Board. Our best day as an organization is that BHN will continue to minister so profoundly to our guests and to our hosts.

Sincerely,
Ben Goldman

Ben and all our new Board members have been a gift to BHN. We are extremely grateful for all the men and women that serve on this Board. Becoming a Board member for an organization such as BHN is a time consuming decision because we are a working hands on type group. We are thankful for the commitment of each of our board members and glad to have them all as part of the BHN family. If you are interested in learning more about what you can do for the homeless families of Birmingham feel free to contact our office. We love to hear from our readers and are grateful for your continued support.

News from the Day Center

The end of September marks the previously mentioned 11th annual Family Promise National Conference, "Moving Mountains." Our Executive Director, Rana, headed out to Salt Lake City, Utah to discover new ideas and approaches to benefit our work with Birmingham's homeless families. The conference offers a wide range of workshops that address the needs of Family Promise affiliates. Just of the few of the workshops include topics such as how to fundraise, getting volunteers involved, housing retention services, and avoiding burnout. These are all crucial aspects of keeping BHN a healthy and happy organization. The Conference is something Rana is grateful to be a part of. Not only is it a wonderful learning experience, it is the perfect opportunity for her to network with other program directors. It is encouraging for her to be with others who can relate to the experiences we have at BHN. It is conferences like this that help keep BHN running strong from year to year. We are glad that BHN is able to provide this opportunity for Rana. While Rana is "Moving Mountains" business as usual continues at BHN. We are excited to say that we are at full capacity. We have four fantastic families residing at the shelter and are thrilled to be the important stepping stone to help get them back on their feet. Rana will be comforted to know that she left BHN in good hands. However, we are all eagerly anticipating her return to Alabama.

Tom Dingley Passes The Coordinator Torch

Two years ago our Rector, Russell Kendrick, asked if I would consider becoming BHN coordinator for our Parish, Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church. My predecessor, Susan McAlister, served as parish coordinator for the prior seven years had joined the BHN board. I said yes with the exception that it would be a two year commitment. Come January 2012, my term as coordinator is over and I will relinquish the position to Joe Link of Saint Stephen's. Joe is a long time member of the church and a regular volunteer for the network. He is also a quick study and has taken a leadership role with BHN at our church the last several rotations. I am confident that Joe will do an exemplary job. There is a lot of lip service given to "family" and "family values" in this country, but often time woefully little action. BHN volunteers give of their time and of their resources to insure families that find themselves temporarily homeless can stay together as a family. I believe in the mission of BHN and will continue to support it by staying involved as both a volunteer and an advocate.

-Tom Dingley

“A Community Response for Homeless Families”

Auction Recap 2011

First and foremost, THANK YOU to all whose tremendous efforts made this year's event so wonderful. This event could not possibly take place without hundreds of hours of our devoted Volunteers' time. We are all truly grateful to be blessed by so many of you. A special “thank you” to Fred Martin for his development and continued support of our auction software. We are so appreciative of all of the time he gives us each year for this fundraiser.



The new venue, caterer and even a new Auctioneer combined to make for another great evening for BHN and our volunteers. And a successful evening, as our net proceeds totaled just over \$39,000 this year! We hope that you were able to be there and enjoy all the fun. If not, we hope that you will join us next year. Truth is, this event gets better with each passing year so 2012 should be a ball! Your support of BHN is always appreciated, especially when we can enjoy an evening together.

Sincerely,
Greta Hogg & Paula Williamson

Lets Get Wrapping

Colonial Brookwood Village is generously granting us space again this year for our Gift Wrap Project. It will be in the Food Court—an excellent spot with lots of mall traffic.

Holiday Gift Wrap is BHN's second larg-est fundraiser and crucial to our operating budget. Last year with your support we made almost \$20,000. We are open during the mall's operating hours from 7 am the day after Thanksgiving until 5pm on Christmas Eve.

*Consider becoming a sponsor or assisting in soliciting sponsorships. Forms are avail-able on our website after October 1.

*Volunteer to wrap! Each congregation is responsible for particular days and has a coordinator responsible for scheduling those days. Check our website or ask your congregation's board member for this formation.

*Bring all your holiday gifts for us to wrap! Since all of our expenses are cov-ered by sponsors' donations, the prices we suggest are a donation and tax de-ductible.

We will be selling holiday greeting cards again this year. Each card was created by a child sheltered at BHN. The cost is \$10 for a package of 10.

*Help spread
Holiday Cheer by
supporting BHN.*



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**



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JOY Sunday School Class of Canterbury UMC
in Honor of Paula Williamson
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*“A Community
Response for
Homeless Families”*



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