

Building *on faith*

Spring 2013

www.beaconinterfaith.org

 @BelieveInHome



Features

Families Moving Forward partnership is mutually beneficial, says longtime congregation partner

April with her youngest son

Photo by Shelly Mosman

April and her three boys came to Families Moving Forward after almost a year of homelessness. Now they've lived in stable, supportive housing for two years, happy to have a home base where they cook and play board games together, with a balcony overlooking green space and trees. Your gifts have made April's family's stability possible.

For nearly 20 years Wayzata Community Church and Families Moving Forward have shared a commitment to serve families experiencing homelessness. Hundreds of church members plan and carry out each hosting week when the congregation provides sleeping rooms, meals and activities for parents and children. But it's not just about the logistics of feeding

and housing four families—that's about 30 parents and children—during those weeks. Jo Buchanan, who has volunteered with Families Moving Forward for many years in many capacities, described the congregation's approach to hospitality in the words of spiritual writer Henri Nouwen: "not just 'doing for,' but 'being with,' meaning

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Rev. Dr. John Ross

opening doors, sharing space, and allowing oneself to truly befriend another person.” “That’s the part that I think really touches me the most- that we’re not just a door and four walls and a ceiling,” said Shelley Perkins, a church member whose parents were the first host coordinators there. “Historically we have been a very outward looking church. We have so many different ways of giving and our church does a great job, whether it’s money or time or resources. But to actually join these families and have meals with them and help them care for their kids is the piece that makes the program so special and rewarding for us.” “We have a good history and great relationship and the work has been incredible,” said Perkins, who chairs the congregation’s Local Housing Task Force, a small group currently exploring options to take members’ desire to end homelessness

to “the next step.” The congregation’s generosity is incredible too - including its Christmas offering of more than \$27,000 donated to Families Moving Forward to match gifts at The Journey Home. (See page 5: The Journey Home information) Wayzata’s senior minister, the Rev. Dr. John Ross, said the ongoing partnership “is helping our congregation achieve its newly discerned vision: to inspire the world with the inclusive love of Jesus. We have seen this love of God working not only to place homeless families literally in the center of our community, but also drawing our community toward the homeless. Families Moving Forward anchors our mission in an effective and transformative experience. Along with the world we seek to serve, WE are inspired!”



Beacon

INTERFAITH HOUSING COLLABORATIVE

A Message from the Board of Directors

You will notice that our name has changed. We are now Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative. Our past name raised concerns on the part of another nonprofit organization, and as a result we chose to rename, staying focused on our mission to provide shelter, housing and advocacy to end homelessness.

A beacon is a source of light or inspiration. We enlighten others that solutions to homelessness are within reach. We shed light on the reality of homelessness and how our congregational partners are creating solutions. We invite people in our congregations, our neighbors, and community decision-makers to become informed and inspired by the possibilities we create together. We thank you for being part of this important mission.

Everyone can fit a gift into their monthly plan



Sheila Engelmeier

Q: What did the Tea Party member and the “leftie” have in common?

A: They both believe in Families Moving Forward.

It's not a joke. Sustaining donor Sheila Engelmeier and a sister on the opposite end of the political spectrum don't agree on much - except that supporting Families Moving Forward is a good idea.

The sisters grew up in a North Minneapolis working class family with a mom and dad who worked outside the home. Having pop once a week was “a very big deal.”

So at the luncheon, the personal testimony of former shelter guests about their determination to provide for their children found the sisters' sweet spot.

Engelmeier first attended The Journey Home in 2008 at a friend's invitation. She “cried her eyeballs out” at the video and volunteered to host a table the next year. The next year she invited her three sisters and two could attend. The personal testimony of families' paths from homelessness into housing moved the siblings the same way.

“My oldest sister looked at me. She said, ‘I can do \$88 a

month. No problem.’ There is something everyone can fit into their monthly plan,” Engelmeier said.

With a one-year-old, an 11-year-old and a law firm to run, Engelmeier simply doesn't have time to spare. But in addition to her financial gift, her firm, Engelmeier & Umanah, P.A., conducts an annual hair care product drive for the shelter and has donated tickets for families to attend local sports and entertainment events.

“This is an opportunity to make a difference in somebody's life. It's a very deeply moving cause - helping folks who are having a hard time raising their kids. It takes a village, and we're just being village members.”

That's something Engelmeier learned about when her daughter, then seven years old, had open heart surgery - during the same week Engelmeier opened her business. Family and friends stepped up to do child care, provide meals and cleaning.

“To have had the pleasure of having my own little village support me in my time of need is a reminder of being part of the village that helps FMF families.”

Property Briefs

Riverview Grand Opening



At Riverview Apartments Grand Opening in March we celebrated our long-awaited newest building -- 42 affordable apartments for seniors with limited incomes developed and co-owned with CommonBond Communities through our congregational partnership with Minnehaha United Methodist Church and Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church.

The event gathered those who imagined, organized, designed, constructed and financed the building with the people who now call it home.

Lawrence Harvey, who lives on the second floor, loves the view and the fact that he could remain in the neighborhood where he's lived for 43 years. "It's a beautiful place. It's a blessing.



L to R: Rev. Drew Flathmann, Senior Pastor, Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church; Allison Johnson, Beacon Congregational Partnership Organizer; Kat Vann, Riverview Task Force, member of Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church

L to R: Nancy Johnson, Riverview Task Force, Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church; Eric Garcia Luna, Office of Sen. Amy Klobuchar; Sandy Colvin Roy, Minneapolis City Council Member; Wanda Driver, Riverview Task Force, Minnehaha United Methodist Church.



Lawrence Harvey shows his new apartment to guests..

Left, Winni Christopherson and her mother, Betty Henry, a new Riverview resident.



L to R: Todd Rhoades, Vice-President, Cermak Rhoades Architects; Lee Blons, Executive Director, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative; Paul Fate, President and CEO, CommonBond Communities; Dale Forsberg, President, Watson-Forsberg Construction.



Families Moving Forward

*The Journey Home Luncheon
May 1, Noon – 1 pm*

The Journey Home

Planning for our annual fundraising luncheon is well underway. We are grateful to have 44 Community Builders filling tables of 10. We're rehearsing speakers and planning menus. We know that guests will be moved and motivated to support our Families Moving Forward shelter program.

With the support of generous people like you, Families Moving Forward makes a life-changing difference to the parents and children experiencing homelessness. We count on you to raise \$240,000 before June 30. Those funds will allow us to shelter, support and mentor 75 families this year so they can overcome their barriers to housing and create home for their children.

If you can help but are unable to attend the luncheon you can make a donation at www.beaconinterfaith.org. Click the red Donate button on the top right corner, and you can designate your gift to Families Moving Forward. Or send your gift to Beacon at the address on the back cover.

When: Wednesday, May 1, 2013, 12 - 1 pm

Where: Earle Brown Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center. Free parking is available.

Details: Sarah Mollet, individual giving manager, can answer questions about the event at smollet@beaconinterfaith.org or 651-789-6260 ext. 208



Night on the Street

What: Our annual spring sleep out for youth to educate, donate and advocate to end youth homelessness!

What's missing: YOU! 36 congregations have already registered.

More: Yep, you sleep in cardboard boxes. Outside. It's interactive, reflective and FUN. Oh, yeah, and meaningful!

Where: Plymouth Congregational Church, 1900 Nicollet Avenue

When: Friday, April 19 - Sat. April 20, 6 pm-8am

RSVP required:
Gwen Paul, 651-789-6260, ext. 220

Why we're nuts for NOTS

"In our congregation, we look at issues like homelessness not only on the charity side, but also how we can answer the long-term questions on injustice. Night on the Street provides both the charity and the advocacy aspects. This is a way to give back in both ways."

- Donelle Poling, Youth Ministry Director, St. Joan of Arc Church, Minneapolis

Donelle is returning to NOTS this year with 44 youth and 6 hardy adults.



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Visit Us

Be informed and be inspired

We offer scheduled tours for Prior Crossing, Nicollet Square, the Families Moving Forward Program Center and night shelter sites at congregations. Spend one hour with us, meet tenants, guests or staff and get the insider view of how we operate.

Find our schedule of upcoming tours at

www.beaconinterfaith.org/events

or contact Marlys Weyandt for information at

651-789-6260 ext. 200

www.beaconinterfaith.org

We Believe in Home

Advocacy Update

Our advocacy to support meaningful funding for services and housing for homeless youth is working!

By the numbers **1,366** people have signed our petition for \$8 million for the Homeless Youth Act.

300+ Beacon Citizens have called, emailed or written to lawmakers urging support.

Gov. Dayton has included \$5 million for this legislation in his proposed budget. We're still urging the Legislature to fund the full \$8 million but that's great news!

The session doesn't end until May so you can still get involved.

Call **Michael Dabl**, our advocacy coordinator at **651-789-6260 ext 221**

or visit www.beaconinterfaith.org/what-we-do/you-can-help/be-an-advocate