



# House of Hope Newsletter

812 Merrimack Street, Lowell MA 01854 (978) 458-2870

[www.hopelowell.org](http://www.hopelowell.org)

Spring/Summer 2010

**Mission Statement:** House of Hope, a temporary shelter, provides advocacy and care for homeless individuals and families. Rooted in a belief in God, and under the direction of an ecumenical board, it seeks to affirm the dignity of life to all who are served.

## *A Message from the Executive Director:*

**“The time is always right to do what is right.”**

- Martin Luther King

Dear Friends,

Once again I am writing as the season changes, the warmth of summer promising renewal and, hopefully, some fun for you and for our families in shelter, our own apartments, and those housed throughout the Greater Lowell Community. We have been very fortunate over these past months as our business and individual friends continue to support us with their time, talent and treasure. We continue to make good use of these generous resources resulting in 23 families sheltered daily, 15 families permanently housed in House of Hope Housing properties, and more than 60 families housed in the community with support services since the beginning of our fiscal year.

It is really difficult to pinpoint the primary reason for our success. Is it you, our faithful community of friends? Is it the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who continues to support our program while developing new and innovative ways to end homelessness in Massachusetts? Or, is it the City of Lowell, who has embraced a ten year plan to end homelessness and has directed Federal resources to this end? These are some of the reasons for HOH's success, but there are others, which include our committed Board of Directors who, after asking the right questions and ensuring the strategic and business rightness of a decision, support the staff every step of the way as we embrace the challenges of doing more for the families that we serve. However, the question is still not fully answered because the role of the staff has not been acknowledged, and it is the staff of House of Hope who understand that our first responsibility is to the families that we serve – to treat them with care, courtesy and respect. All who work at House of Hope understand that we have a moral and maybe sacred responsibility to believe that every homeless person deserves our compassion and respect. We know that no one wants to live in a shelter, even one as loving as House of Hope or H20 (Hope to Opportunity). But while our families are here it is up to the staff to help them move out, to move beyond shelter to a home that is safe, secure and sustainable.

Moving families quickly out of shelter is a welcomed new approach by our public funders and is known as Housing First. House of Hope embraced Housing First years ago when, as a result of strategic and business planning, we created a separate non profit, House of Hope Housing, Inc, to build and supportively manage our own housing. And, with help from lots of people and public funders we have proven the cost efficiency and effectiveness of this approach, as formerly homeless families in our housing become increasingly self sufficient and their children now know the security and resulting stability of having a home.



We continue to embrace this approach as we have moved our Housing Placement and Stabilization department to a discreet office directly across the street from the shelter. From this space all of our families will begin the arduous journey home as they engage in housing search, credit reconciliation, realistic budgeting, job and career planning, skill set development, group support, individual housing counseling – whatever it takes to move quickly out of shelter. Having separate space for these activities sends an important message and gives us the tools to ensure that rapid re-housing is the most important task that engages our families; moving quickly from shelter to home!

House of Hope continues to be grateful and our gratitude empowers us. Thank you for being a part of our efforts and success.

Sincerely,  
*Deb Chausse*

## THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY

*Edna Gustafson, Operations Coordinator*



Easter egg hunts, egg coloring, baking, goody baskets, Oh, my! The children and parents in both of our shelters have been busy with fun springtime activities. Thank you to **Gath Insurance Agency**, **Saint Joseph's Church** in Pelham and St. Catherine's in Westford for providing our families with beautiful baskets. **Saint Malachy Parish** in Burlington provided our children with much needed new spring outfits. All of the parents were very excited and grateful. Students from **Carlisle Public School** collected \$729.11 for House of Hope. They did this by having a penny war among the classes and pooling together loose change! And, thank you to **Saint Francis Youth Group** for cooking wonderful Sunday breakfasts for our families. We can't thank you all enough for your continued support.

*Many thanks to everyone for another great Holiday Season. This year, through tremendous community support, we were able to help 129 families provide presents for their children.*

### Summer Volunteer Opportunities

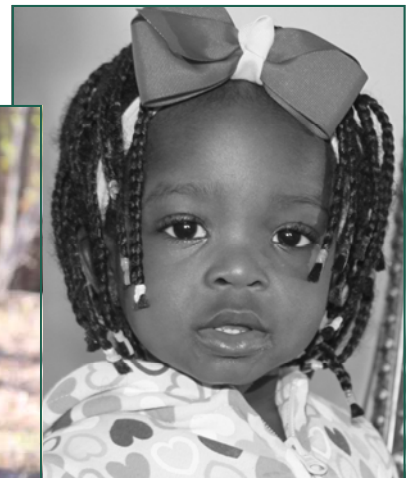
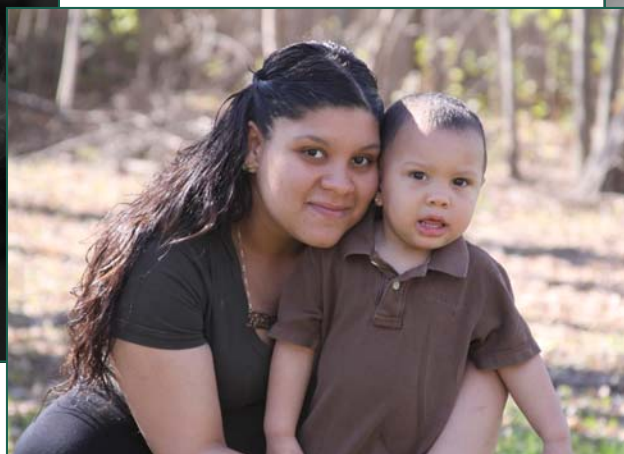
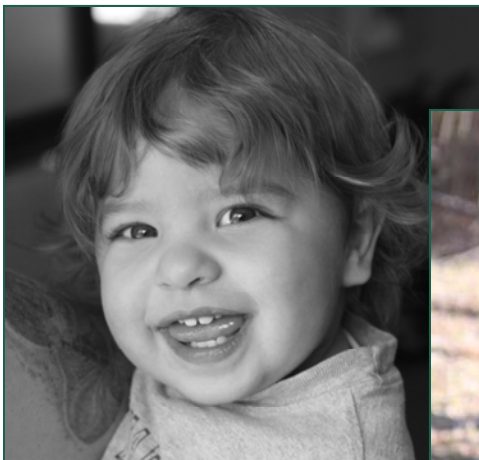
**Monday - Thursday 6-8pm: Playrooms at HOH and H2O**  
**Mondays, Tuesdays & Fridays: Dinner Service 4:30-6:30pm**

If you are interested in hosting an ice cream social, arts & crafts for children and/or adults, or some other fun activity, please contact Edna Gustafson at (978) 458-2870 or [edna.gustafson@hopelowell.org](mailto:edna.gustafson@hopelowell.org)

## HOPE TO OPPORTUNITY: H2O

*Julie Lemire, Program Manager*

Next month will mark the 1st year anniversary for the H2O Program and things are busier than ever. There are a lot of great things happening with our five families. One young mother has just passed her GED tests and will have a graduation in June. Another resident is enrolled in the Work Readiness Program at **Middlesex Community College**. We have a literacy program going on, and **UMass Lowell** has developed a wonderful curriculum to help enhance literacy and reading within our shelter. Also, a parenting group through **Families First** began in late May. I have also started a walking club which is really a great way to stay fit and have families get out and see the neighborhood. If you are interested in volunteering your time and talent at H2O, please contact Edna Gustafson at (978) 458-2870 or [edna.gustafson@hopelowell.org](mailto:edna.gustafson@hopelowell.org)



## SETTING GOALS

*Marianne Staid, Director of Shelter Programs*

Our goal at House of Hope and H2O has always been to create an environment that provides a warm, attractive, safe, inviting and supportive home for our residents, many of whom have suffered much trauma and past abuse. On the other hand, our focus is to help families move out of shelter and into affordable housing as quickly as possible. From the first day our residents move in to our shelter, case workers are meeting with them regularly to develop re-housing goals and to help them overcome the barriers that may prevent them from being permanently housed. Since July of 2009, we have placed more than 60 families into permanent housing. Another area of effort is to help residents enroll in education and training programs and to help them find suitable employment. We have had 7 residents enroll in a Customer Service Training Program funded through the State of Massachusetts' Department of Transitional Assistance and, so far, 2 residents have found employment. We also have 3 residents attending the Young Parent Program, working on their GED, and 1 of our residents is training to become a Medical Assistant. Our families attend weekly Life Skills workshops and many are involved in the Parent-Child Home Program through a grant with the public schools. Working on their housing search by applying to housing authorities across the state is also a task for our families. Many of our families are referred to counselors and therapists to access support and healing with their mental health and emotional issues. While in shelter, our families are working on activities that can enhance their ability to gain more independence, insight and economic stability and growth while being surrounded by positive and supportive staff.

## HOUSING STABILIZATION

*Lisa Krikorian & Marta Vega, Housing Advocates*

This past year has been an extremely busy time for the Housing Stabilization Department. We are currently serving over 70 families across the state - and we expect that number will continue to grow. Our families are involved with many area agencies, such as International Institute of Lowell, South Bay Trauma Institute, Early Intervention, Lowell Parent Child Program, Career Center of Lowell, Lowell Adult Education, Middlesex Community College, Merrimack Valley Legal Services, Department of Transitional Assistance, WIC, The Lowell Wish Project, Lowell Community Health Center, Community Teamwork Inc, Department of Children and Families, Lowell General Hospital Center for Weight Management and Head Start of Lowell and Lawrence. Many of our families are employed at local companies and businesses. Some continue to job search, while also volunteering their time and adding to their resumes. As the summer gets underway, we are helping families search for summer camps and jobs for the school aged children and teens involved in our program.

## SAVE THE DATE!

22nd Annual  
**Teal Invitational**  
Golf Tournament

Monday, July 26, 2010  
Passaconaway Country Club  
Litchfield NH

Please check our website for details

## House of Hope gets a Facelift!

Thanks to a generous grant from the **Franklin Square House Foundation**, House of Hope's 18 bedrooms will be receiving a huge makeover with all new furniture and accessories. Many pieces of furniture have been in our shelter since the doors opened in 1985. As a way of "paying it forward", many of these older items (which are still in very good condition) will be given to other families in the community, as well other area agencies, such as the Lowell Wish Project.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**OFFICERS:** Marc Teal, President; Laurie Gould, Vice-President;  
Brian Stafford, Treasurer; Jill Adamy, Secretary

**DIRECTORS:** Brian Bonenfant, Andrew Boyle, Ellen Cataldo, Mary Jane Creegan,  
Diane Earl, Mary Ellen Fitzpatrick, Louise Griffin, Rev. Cecilio Hernandez,  
Richard Jumpp, Daniel Mansur, Jacqueline Moloney, Jack O'Connor, Nels Palm,  
Pasquale Russo, Patricia Sullivan Talty, Diane Trowbridge, Peter Zarrilla

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** Deborah Chausse

*[www.hopelowell.org](http://www.hopelowell.org)*

Our website offers visitors the option of using their credit card to help support our fundraising efforts. If you'd like to make an online donation, our website makes it quick, secure, simple, and user friendly.

*Remember: Your contributions to House of Hope are tax deductible.*

### HOH NEEDS LIST

Napkins  
Plastic Cups  
Baby Wipes  
Cleaning Supplies  
Ketchup, Mayo, Mustard  
Salad Dressings  
Sugar/Coffee  
Jello Pudding  
Powered Juice

*Your donations are always appreciated!*

Keep up with HOH by checking out our blog!

*[www.hopelowell.org/blog](http://www.hopelowell.org/blog)*

**Would you like to see us in color?**

This newsletter, including all of the wonderful photographs, can be viewed in its original format on our website:

[www.hopelowell.org](http://www.hopelowell.org)

Special thanks to **Neoprint Inc. of Chelmsford**, a long-time supporter of House of Hope, for donating their services in bringing you this newsletter.