



Wooster Interfaith Housing Corporation

Housing a Community



Interfaith Rentals

FAITH House

HELP House

Turning Point



Newsletter

February -April 2008

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Letter From Home

February-April

2008

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We received the full amount requested of \$8,000 for HELP House and FAITH House programs from the Orrville Area United Way. Included in the letter was the following statement: "Our volunteers were **very impressed** with the work of your agency, and had no specific recommendations."



News From Wooster Interfaith Housing Corporation

Happy New Year! We have some good news to share with you. WIHC is happy to announce two new additions to our Board of Trustees: Nancy Grace with The College of Wooster and Tracey Pauley with Cutler Real Estate. We hope to benefit and grow with their participation and expertise. We are also pleased to announce the funding award from the Orrville Area United Way in the amount of \$8000 for 2008. This additional funding assists us with our HELP House and FAITH House programming. The Orrville Area United Way exceeded their fundraising goal for this year. Congratulations to Helen Myers and Sandra Sheffield and their crew of dedicated volunteers on this achievement in these difficult economic times.



This two-story Interfaith Rental was built in 1920 and features four bedrooms, 1 1/2 baths, and a large backyard with a back porch. WIHC purchased the property in 1975 and has replaced the siding and windows.

We would like to take this opportunity also to thank all of you who donated to us directly in 2007. We rely heavily on our community for support in addition to federal, state, and local grants. With your generous contributions, we have already been able to assist more members of the community with housing, transportation, childcare, food, and other basic needs, as well as upgrade our properties and service delivery. Please continue to remember us in this new year.

In addition to financial support, we are currently in need of paint rags. Our properties constantly require painting, and clean T-shirts help us tremendously with this task. Donated paint rags can be dropped off at our office at 203 S. Market St.

You can also help us by attending this spring's Chocolate Fest, our popular fundraising event that features vast amounts of chocolate for a good cause. Support WIHC's programs and its mission of providing transitional housing to Wayne and Holmes counties' homeless and low-income residents by attending our event, providing financial support, or volunteering for setup, cleanup, or baking. Please see page 2 and the insert of this newsletter for details on how you can participate.

Also in the works this quarter is the renovation of our property at 576 E North Street. With the help of The Donald and Alice Noble Foundation, National City Bank, and the Frick Foundation, we are ready to give that wonderful house a new lease on life. Our thanks to these generous foundations for helping us revive this house so that it can be made available to those who need a home.

Lastly, we would like to wish a fond farewell to one of our own staff: Julie Miller, who as FAITH House and HELP House program specialist has done a terrific job, is leaving us to start a new adventure living in Columbus with husband Eric. Good luck to them. She will be missed sincerely by all of us.

As staff join us and leave us, so do our clients. Please take the time to read our "Client of the Quarter" article. This story is inspiring and will help you understand a little more about our mission and how our staff helps individuals in your community achieve their goals.

Chocolate Fest 2008



Muddy Waters Café manager Jace Willard and owner Paula Tafoya pose behind a plate of their popular no-bake cookies. Muddy Waters took first place at Chocolate Fest's 2006 bake-off, winning with their triple threat chocolate cheesecake. "Chocolate Fest," said Tafoya, "is a great way to raise money for WIHC."

Loosen your belts, because Chocolate Fest is back! Missing in 2007 due to organizational transitions, the famous sugar-filled fundraiser for WIHC will be held April 19 from 6 to 9 p.m. at Greenbriar Conference & Party Center (50 Riffel Road) in Wooster.

Started in the early 1990s, Chocolate Fest brings together some of the area's best bakers and restaurateurs as well as at-home amateur bakers to offer up an all-you-care-to-eat smorgasbord of chocolate-inspired treats. "We ask them to keep it very small, basically bite-size pieces, so people can go through and taste the different types of chocolate," said Steven Glick, WIHC board chairperson, who is directing his fourth Chocolate Fest. "Over the past years we've had everything from cookies and cakes and cupcakes to chocolate mousse," he said. "I've never tasted anything I didn't like—and I've tasted a lot of chocolate in three Chocolate Fests!"

Ticket prices this year are \$20 for a single person, \$35 for two, and \$150 for a table of eight. "Ticket gets you in, gets you a chance to get every piece of chocolate that's there if you'd like. I wouldn't recommend it; you'd probably get sick. But you can do that if you'd like," Glick joked.

This year's Chocolate Fest will also once again feature a silent auction, which will offer up items such as a creative and decorative piece by local artist Jim Spires, four Cleveland Indians tickets, a scrumptious gift basket from Montavino's Wine Market, and more.

"It's a very low-key event," said Glick, "but we've had very good success with it over the years in raising funds for WIHC. People seem to have a good time. It's a nice, relaxing evening where people can get together and talk and have some chocolate. It gets WIHC's name out and people talk about WIHC then for a little bit." According to Glick, Chocolate Fest generally raises \$5000, but WIHC would like to see that number increase this year. "I think people will be happy to see it come back. The last one we had was very well attended and it was unfortunate that we couldn't pull it off last year, so hopefully 2008 will be able to bring it back up again," Glick stated.

Chocolate Fest is in need of sponsors and volunteers to help make it as successful as Glick hopes it will be. "People who would sponsor would help us with the overhead costs, the costs of rentals, the room we rent, supplies. Then we would obviously get a chance to keep more of the proceeds to use in our programs," he said. WIHC also welcomes volunteers who can assist in decorating the hall, selling tickets door-side, and performing all-important clean-up duties. There is also room for additional bakers, professional and individual. Interested donors and volunteers should call 330-264-8791.

Chocolate Fest is an original and truly unique event to WIHC. According to Glick, at the time WIHC held its first Fest, it "was something that hadn't been done before locally. And we did it. We do it at a time when you don't normally see chocolate as part of the festivities around holidays or special days. I think it's worked well for us."

Truck or Van Needed

WIHC is looking for a maintenance vehicle to help our clients. The vehicle would be used for moving large items for clients and for carrying supplies that won't fit into cars. If you have a small pickup or cargo van in good condition that you would like to donate or sell, please contact us. Your donation is tax deductible. 330-264-8791.

Financial Newsflash: With the help of a volunteer, Leslie Baus, we completed a proposal to "fix-up" the 576 E. North Street home. We applied to the Frick Foundation, National City Foundation, and the Donald and Alice Noble Foundation. We requested \$18,200.00 based on multiple estimates for all the work. We have received \$25,613.00. National City and the Frick Foundation chose to jointly pay for the windows at \$5,613.00. The balance of the donation is from the Donald and Alice Noble Foundation and does include dollars to help cover administrative costs.

Client of the Quarter



Jean Hollenbaugh and Mitch Amlotte at WIHC

Mitch Amlotte, a 57-year-old native of El Pina, Michigan and Vietnam veteran, "fell through the cracks and needed help," said WIHC Turning Point program leader Jean Hollenbaugh. "He was too young for social security and not eligible for so many other types of assistance, being a single, adult male."

Amlotte became homeless in the spring of 2007 after divorcing, losing his job, and coming out to Ohio to reside with family members, who, he claimed, turned him away. "I had virtually nothing. I had no vehicle, no money, no nothing," Amlotte stated.

He started Turning Point July 9, a date Hollenbaugh considers remarkable, because it was exactly 6 months later, January 9, that Amlotte finished the 6-month-long self-sufficiency program that offers rent assistance to the homeless, income-earning residents of Wayne and Holmes counties.

Amlotte was staying at the Salvation Army in Wooster, Ohio. He quickly met Turning Point's qualification of having a source of income when he found employment at Habitat for Humanity's Restore, a discount building materials store. Amlotte was also able to secure permanent residency in Wayne county.

Turning Point, Amlotte said, was a "god-send" in his life. Amlotte was motivated to

find more than just permanent housing—he finally won the disability pension he had been fighting for the past three years. "This is not someone who should have been doing manual labor or who should be employed," Hollenbaugh said, citing Amlotte's extensive physical disabilities and mental health problems, including bad knees, vertigo, severe depression, and Vietnam-inspired post-traumatic stress disorder.

Hollenbaugh credits Amlotte for what she called "a full transition out of a poverty situation." "He's a shining example of how it works if you just do the work," she said. Turning Point pays a client's first month's rent and gradually reduces the percentage of aid as the client becomes more independent, offering guidance for budgeting, goal-setting, job placement, and referrals to health and counseling services during the process. "It's up to the client to make the appointments, to call the caseworker and tell us what's going on and what his needs are. It's a really great program if you cooperate and are earnest, and Mitch did that and that's all it takes, really. I credit him for his success. We're just the leg

"It was nice to hear somebody say 'Yes. Let's do this'—with enthusiasm."

up, but you need the other leg, too," Hollenbaugh stated. "All I did was point him in the right direction."

Amlotte attributes his success to Hollenbaugh and WIHC's small, personal approach. "She showed me respect, she showed compassion, understanding, and she was willing to listen. I thought 'if this lady is willing to do this and feel this way and be this understanding, how in the hell could I disappoint her?' I

knew what I needed, but I just needed to hear somebody else say 'Hey, come on. If you do it, I'll help you any way I can. It was nice to hear somebody say 'Yes. Let's do this'—with enthusiasm."

Today Amlotte is retired and continues to receive his retro-active disability pension from the military. He lives comfortably in an apartment, owns a truck outright, and has access to Medicaid. Turning Point provided direction, encouragement, and financial aid to Amlotte and he did the legwork necessary for bettering his life. "I've got my old self-respect back, got more of my self-esteem back. Better isn't handed to you, that's something you've got to work for," Amlotte stated.



Amlotte poses in front of his truck: "It's nothing fancy. It's just something to take me place to place so I don't have to be in pain the rest of the day."