



# IN-HOUSE

## InterFaith Shelter Network

Winter 2008

### Our Mission:

InterFaith Shelter Network (IFSN) provides housing and a hand up for homeless men, women, and children in Sonoma County, in an atmosphere of dignity, respect and kindness, towards an outcome of empowerment, self-sufficiency and independence.

### Wish List

#### Hygiene products

- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Hairspray/Hair Brushes
- Lotion
- Feminine Hygiene items
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste

#### Household products

- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels
- Cleaning Supplies

#### Medical (first aid)

#### Phone cards

#### Bus tickets

#### Umbrellas

#### Gloves/Warm Hats

#### New Socks/Underwear

#### Coffee

#### Non-perishable foods

#### Pillows

#### Towels

#### Children's toys/books

#### School Supplies

IFSN is a public benefit 501 (c) (3) agency, depending largely on community support. To make a donation please contact Christy at 546-7907 extension10.

## Fresh Outlook, Community Volunteers Clean House



Exchange Bank crew

Armed with paint brushes, hedge clippers, and ladders, volunteers tackled 5 InterFaith Shelter Network sites providing a fresh look for the client's houses. Wednesday, September 12th, marked United Way's 18th Annual Day of Caring. Hordes of

volunteers fanned out to help Sonoma County's service providers complete one day projects.

Working toward a common goal, IFSN, hosted over 70 volunteers from Exchange Bank and Agilent Technologies. While some volunteers coated the walls with fresh paint, others pulled weeds, trimmed hedges, cleaned gutters and completed lists of household repairs. One group of Agilent volunteers assembled a long awaited play structure for the children living at the Rabbi Michael A. Robinson Mother-Child Reunification House.

Taking a break from their normal schedules, IFSN's staff and some clients worked along side the volunteers getting to know each other. The laughter, conversation, and community spirit

was apparent and eased the day's labor.

A few weeks later, IFSN enjoyed a second round of community giving as Spring Hills Community Church sent a group of volunteers to IFSN's Soroptomist house. Church volunteers with expertise in contracting and electrical knowledge helped install house hold appliances and complete both outdoor and indoor painting projects.

IFSN is very grateful for all the volunteers who helped with these projects. Their work helped to beautify the houses and promote the feeling of dignity and order for our clients to come home to.



Agilent staff assembles play structure at the Rabbi Michael A Robinson Mother/Child Reunification Program

## Celebration of Life

Wesley Winfred Ebert  
March 22, 1926-July 2, 2008



Caronella House



Caronella Kitchen

### From Our Houses to Yours

- Fresh Outlook page 1
- Directors Note page 2
- Success Stories page 3
- Holiday Giving page 4

View this newsletter on-line at [www.ifsn.org](http://www.ifsn.org)

---

---

# InterFaith Shelter Network's Faces of Success

## A Home of My Own Brea's Story

In the fall of 2006 I decided it was time to make a change. After my divorce I had moved from house to house and eventually ended up living with my mother and brother in an unhealthy setting. For most of my life people took advantage of me; using me, stealing my money and running out when I needed them. I found InterFaith Shelter Network online and turned in an application on Friday. The following Monday, InterFaith's Program Manager called me and I was living at Acacia house within a month.

I used to work as a CNA at a Santa Rosa convalescent hospital. I enjoyed my job but had to stop working after I was injured at work. A patient pushed me and my body could not fully recover from the fall; this incident put my health problems into full swing and I never returned to work. While living at



InterFaith I finally received a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis and begin getting the treatment my body needed. Multiple Sclerosis is a terrible illness. My body hurts and sometimes I have trouble walking. My mind is not as sharp as it once was causing me to forget things and have trouble with daily tasks. Living at InterFaith gave me time and support while I applied for Social Security Disability benefits and started taking care of my health needs. I have a brace and a cane to help me walk and I am

on a waiting list for a wheelchair. I even have an In Home Health Worker who comes to help me with daily errands and tasks.

InterFaith provided me with a safe place to land. I received counseling and my therapist helped me a lot to see how much of a better person I am. I've learned to set boundaries and become a bolder person. My case managers helped me navigate my program and provided support the entire way. I was able to get a computer with internet and join an on-line bible group and MS support group. All of these tools helped get me to where I am today.

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, I got the keys to my new apartment. It's a beautiful place with a big living room and a yard. The best part is that it's handicap accessible! I've learned to

budget my money and can afford to pay my rent and bills. Now my son can come and visit me in my own home.

## Breaking the Mold Carmen's Story

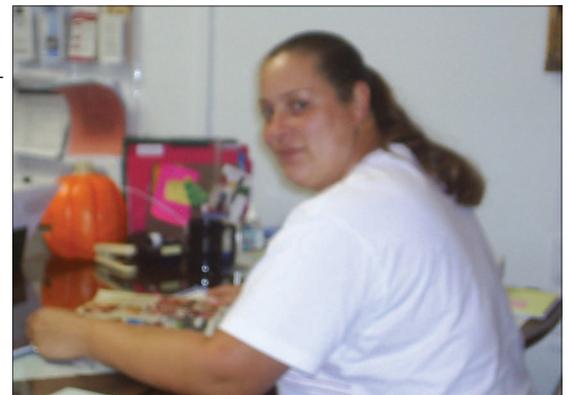
I am proof that it is possible to break the cycle of addiction and poverty.

Both my parents are addicted to drugs and have been since I was a child. Growing up with addicts is hard (maybe that is why I have always loved reading, for the escape from reality it provides). My siblings and I were lucky to have our grandfather. He was our primary provider growing up and I helped him care for my 3 siblings. But like the children of many addicts, I begin using at age 14 and eventually dropped out of school due to severe depression my senior year.

At age 28, I decided to ask for help. I took my two children and we moved away from my husband who was also a substance abuser and had been abusive for years. By this time, I could not turn to my family for support; I had burned too many bridges. I moved to Women's Recovery Services, a treatment program for women with children. I got sober and graduated but still needed time to get back on my feet. That is when I found InterFaith.

I have been at InterFaith for over a year and have made so much progress since then. When I arrived my only income was from Temporary Aid for Needy Families

(TANF). I started volunteering at InterFaith's office and was recently hired. This is my first job since 2001. With my employment income, I have been able to open a bank account and start saving for the first time in 6 years.



*Carmen working at IFSN front desk*

My life is on track. My children are in stable schools and I have graduated from my recovery programs. I've been clean and sober for 18 months. InterFaith has helped me get to where I am today by guiding me to local resources, providing case management, counseling, and employment.

APPLICATIONS FOR OUR HOUSING PROGRAM ARE AVAILABLE IN THE LOBBY OF THE SONOMA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, LOCATED AT 1440 GUERNEVILLE ROAD. (BEHIND THE SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE, NEAR EXCHANGE BANK, ACCORSS FROM CODDINTOWN).

***Last year 68% of IFSN clients secured income and graduated to permanent housing***

---

---

# Note from Executive Director, Pamela Wallace

## Dreaming BIG!!!



Pam. Sadie & Scrubby

In 2009 we will celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a very special event—a dedication ceremony to re-name our program “The Wesley Ebert Transitional Housing Program” in honor of one of our most beloved, influential founders, who passed away on July 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year. Wes voluntarily guided the agency for 7 years, until passing the reins on to me in 1997. Wes was a brilliant, compassionate, modest leader (and... my mentor); he will be sorely missed!

Thinking back through our years of experience—operating the emergency, wintertime shelter at the armory in Santa Rosa—invokes bittersweet memories. The vision of up to 190 human beings stretched out on gray concrete with only a foam pad, blanket and sheet for comfort. The “wake up call” at 5:30 AM; huddled masses shuffling in and out of the rain...the cold...the night.... The shelter was safe and dry, dinner was hot and nutritious, compassionate staff and volunteers treated the homeless with dignity, respect and kindness, but—human beings deserve so much more!

We recognized the emergency shelter was necessary, a part of the continuum of services for the homeless; but it couldn't provide the continuity and structure needed to prevent or break the cycle of homelessness; and, in many cases, people utilizing the shelter fell deeper into the cycle of hopelessness, desperation, and survival, and—remained homeless longer! Forced to vacate during the day, homeless people struggle to find basic resources—food, transportation, health care—and just *a place to be* when the shelter was closed! Shelter occupancy was limited to night time only, and a few short months, complicating consistency and contact with the programs and service-professionals needed to help homeless people break the cycle.

In 1998, with the help of key leaders, a seed was planted into the collective brain of the IFSN organization—Transitional Housing. Concurrently, after many unsuccessful attempts to relocate the armory, the shelter strategy in Sonoma County changed. Anticipating the inevitable (1) armory shelter replacement (2) dwindling local funding, and (3) the need for *effective, structured year-round* housing with coordinated ser-

vices, it was clear that IFSN needed to evolve along with the changing community strategy. The Board of Directors tossed the idea of transitional housing around for a year before finally giving it a tenuous nod of approval. So, in 1999, we opened the first transitional house—“Wesley House”—and set an ambitious goal to implement 10 houses or 100 beds within 5 years. It took 6 years to achieve our goal!

On October 21, 2008, we received approval—legal use of the property—from the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department. So, we celebrate moving into the final phase of the purchase of our fourth property—“Meadow Lane”—thanks to California voters who passed Proposition 46 (the Housing and Emergency Shelter Trust Fund Act of 2002). Prop 46 grants forgivable loans of up to one million dollars to nonprofit organizations for acquisition, construction and rehabilitation of facilities specifically for the homeless. IFSN has received nearly two million since the implementation of the Prop 46 program, enabling us to purchase: Elsa, dedicated the “Rabbi Michael A. Robinson Mother/Child Reunification Program,” “Soroptimist House,” sponsored by the Soroptimist International of Santa Rosa, and “Meadow Lane!” Meadow Lane, located in Glen Ellen, is a 2 acre property with two houses and a studio, a total of 10 bedrooms and 7 bathrooms; Meadow Lane can comfortably accommodate 10 families or 20 individuals!

Now, as the Transitional Housing Program approaches its 10 year anniversary, and the organization approaches 20 years as a nonprofit serving the Sonoma County community, I reflect on the development of the Transitional Program—from one to *twelve* houses—and our capacity to provide *comprehensive supportive services* to the most vulnerable and challenging homeless populations. Each client's successful transition from our program to independence in their own home touches my heart, and I am incredibly grateful for every individual, every hour and every dollar that made their success possible. Then, I think back to our humble beginning, the inadequate emergency shelter at the armory, the thousands of homeless faces, the compelling stories, the trials and tribulations—and one message echoes clearly in my mind. I share this message with you, our community, our board, our staff, our volunteers, and most especially, our clients.... This message has guided both me and the direction of our agency.

Think positive, have faith and dream BIG!

## InterFaith Behind the Scenes

### Staff

Pamela Wallace	Director
Dew Mazer PhD	Clinician/Psychotherapist
Charmaine Rable	MFTI, Program Manager
Rob Durborough	MFTI, Assistant Director
Shari Tucker	Lead Case Manager
Derek Broeck	Case Manager
Sienna Cheek	Case Manager
Christy Borg	Housing Coordinator
Carmen Bonin	Receptionist
Julie Morgan	Counseling Intern

### Board of Directors

Eric Haugen	President
Andy Pearson	Vice President
Allan Jones	Secretary
Bill Ronchelli	Treasurer
Dick Latimer	
Patrick Paul	
Mickey Simmons	
Marsha Vas Duprey	



Board Members join staff and clients at Summer Picnic

2500 Vallejo Street, Suite 200  
Santa Rosa, CA. 95405

Tel: 707-546-7907  
Fax: 707-546-1544  
www.ifsfn.org

Mailing Address Line 1  
Mailing Address Line 2  
Mailing Address Line 3  
Mailing Address Line 4  
Mailing Address Line 5

---

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."  
~Mead~

---

---

## Adopt a Family

As the last of Sonoma County's golden leaves fall from the trees, we at InterFaith are preparing for the holidays. With over 125 individuals, including children, living in our 12 houses, there is a lot of work to do.

Holiday stress and depression compounded with homelessness makes the winter months difficult for our residents. IFSN offers a variety of services to alleviate this pressure including counseling and one-on-one case management. In addition to these services, our goal is to provide a minimum of two gifts to each person in the IFSN program along with food items for holiday meal preparation.

Help brighten the holidays for our residents by adopting a house, family or individual. Adopters can purchase items from holiday wish lists and contribute to food collections for holiday feasts. Call IFSN at 546-7907 for adoption.

If you would like to participate on a smaller scale you may purchase a single gift by visiting The Volunteer Center at 153 Stony Circle, Suite 100 or local business sponsors where you see the Secret Santa Red Heart ornaments. Select an ornament, purchase the gift, and return



*Happy Holidays from InterFaith Shelter Network*

unwrapped gift and ornament to The Volunteer Center. Please contact The Volunteer Center with questions or for a list of local business sponsors at 573-3399.

A very warm happy holidays from the IFSN family to yours.

## Welcome New Staff

Three new staff members have joined the IFSN team.

**Derek Ten Broeck** is the case manager for the Barnett and Meadow Lane houses. He brings with him several years of experience working as a drug and alcohol counselor in Sonoma County.



**Sienna Cheek** is the case manager for the Acacia, Soroptomist, and Caronella houses. She recently relocated to Santa Rosa after working for four years as a case manager for homeless families in Santa Barbara.



**Carmen Bonnin** has recently been promoted from her volunteer status to a paid employee. She works as IFSN's receptionist. To read more about Carmen, see her story on page 2.

