

THE INN-SIDE VIEW

*The Inn-Side View is a publication of Citizens for Adequate Housing, Inc.
Over 20 years combating homelessness...providing shelter and affordable housing for families.*

Citizens for Adequate Housing in Motion “School on Wheels” Has Arrived

Citizens for Adequate Housing, Inc. (CAH) is continuing to move in a great direction. The agency, celebrating its 25th anniversary next year, has introduced *School on Wheels* at its shelters as of this fall. The mission of *School on Wheels* is to provide academic support for homeless children in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 by providing after-school tutoring, school supplies and educational assistance for families.

School on Wheels was founded in 1993 by Agnes Steven in California to help shrink the gaps in education for children experiencing homelessness. A similar *School on Wheels* program was founded in Indianapolis, Indiana in 2001; and thanks to Cheryl Opper, a child advocate and educator living in Easton, MA, *School on Wheels* rolled into Massachusetts in 2004. With three

program sites currently in southeastern Massachusetts, *School on Wheels* has come to the North Shore, and Peabody specifically, thanks to the efforts of Dina Dressler, Regional Coordinator for *School on Wheels* and a Board member of Citizens for Adequate Housing, Inc. Ms. Dressler states, “The program is part of Citizens for Adequate Housing’s offerings to its families once or twice a week for an hour each session. The initial goal was to recruit and train volunteer tutors and collect school supplies. A tutor is matched one-on-one with school-aged children living at Inn Transition and Inn Between. The tutors will also work with pre-kindergarten students to provide school readiness skills.” Continues Dressler, “At the start of the school year each student, ages 5-18, got a new

backpack filled with necessary supplies, and throughout the year children will receive supplies for school projects they are working on. “

In addition to one-on-one tutoring, the *School on Wheels* volunteers will provide support to the Inn Transition and Inn Between parents with parent/teacher conferences. There are three components to *School on Wheels* – tutoring, supplies, and work within the school itself. During the summer there is a continuation of *School on Wheels* with a family read-aloud program that includes reading books and puppetry.

The *School on Wheels* Executive Director of the program on Boston’s South Shore is Cheryl Opper who says, “ In the fall we will be doubling the amount of children being served

between our new program site in Brockton, and two new placements in Peabody. We will be expanding from 3 sites to 6 sites by the end of this year.” She continues, “When you change one life, you change the world. We are the only organization in Massachusetts providing comprehensive academic support exclusively for children experiencing homelessness. The average age of a homeless person in Massachusetts is 8 years old. “ There are over 20,000

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One “School of Thought” Makes All the Difference to Mother’s World

Born in the southern part of the United States, and then growing up in Lowell, MA, Chrissy has much to say and much insight to share about how she got to where she is today. Now thirty, Chrissy has experienced more than many, if not most, her age.

The mother of three children didn’t finish high school, and her road to having her own apartment today took an interesting path that led her through the doors of Inn Transition (IT).

Chrissy came to the Inn Transition

(IT) when it was a long-term intensive recovery shelter program. Her second child was born, a beautiful daughter, and she had to leave the Lowell shelter she had known as “home” since it was for adults only. Chrissy had been homeless for 6 months prior to her Lowell shelter stay. Her first child was separated from her, as a result of Chrissy’s involvement with drugs. Pregnant a second time, she had to find a roof over her head. Her case worker in

Lowell referred Chrissy to Inn Transition (IT). She moved to Inn Transition with her new baby, and it was here that she was counseled and professionally guided to re-connect with her older child, also a daughter. She reflects back at much she has come to realize and says, “I was done with drugs when I came to Inn Transition. It was no fun anymore.” A new road to a better life began.

Under the tutelage of CAH

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“Hello Dali!”, an artistic creation by artist Ian Cameron that will be up for bid at the November 1st event. He is one of the many artists sharing their talent for the “Faces Inn Places” segment of the Auction.

Dignitaries and Homeless Family Members Learn From Each Other

CAH Legislative Breakfast Provides Forum for Dialogue

Citizens for Adequate Housing, Inc. (CAH) hosted a Legislative Breakfast this summer at its Inn Between shelter. The yearly event allows family members living at the Inn Between and Inn Transition shelters, government officials from local towns, and state legislators to come together to share concerns and offer some possible direction to alleviate the quagmire that homelessness creates. Parents who are experiencing homelessness asked: How do we prevent it? What are the solutions?



Stephanie Brown, the Director of the Housing and Homelessness Unit of the Department of Transitional Assistance (left) and Peabody Mayor Michael Bonfanti

Coordinated by Stephanie Brown, the Director of the Housing and Homelessness Unit of the Department of Transitional Assistance in conjunction with Jessie O'Keefe, case manager at CAH's Inn Between, the standing-room-only meeting was well attended, as many spoke of their predicaments, and legislators listened intently. Government officials

present were State Representative John Keenan, State Representative Joyce Spiliotis, State Representative Mary Grant, representatives from State Senator Frederick Berry's office and State Senator Thomas McGee's office, and the Honorable Mayor Michael Bonfanti of Peabody, and the Honorable Mayor William Scanlon of Beverly. All the dignitaries concurred that the legislators are concerned and want to find a better path to end homelessness.

Ms. Brown addressed the issue of family homelessness, why it happens and how we can fix it. She said, "People who have experienced homelessness are the ones who create the solutions. It is important to educate the legislators, they want to listen." Ms. Brown emphasized how together we can make the change. She continued by saying, "Policymakers are very supportive of these issues. What do we have to do to get the message out? We need to ask legislators to advocate for the solutions to homelessness, and then get the solutions in place."

As the legislators listened, a young woman said she had been at Inn Transition for 8 months. "My story is we ran out of money. I'm very grateful to be living where I am right now, at Inn Transition, because the alternative is not so sweet. I knew only how to be a mother, how to take care of everyone

else, but not how to take care of me. My daughter is an inspira-



A guest of the Inn Between shares her views at the Legislative Breakfast

tion. She has come a long way." Another resident from outside of the United States said, "I am homeless because of the immigration policy in this country. My husband was deported. I can't stay somewhere if I'm pregnant, that's why I'm here. If my husband were here it would be different." Impassioned she looked at the legislators as she said, "Please address the issue of legal family residence. I want my husband here with me."

State Representative Joyce Spiliotis said, "Every child deserves a home", and added that the biggest problem is we only have limited Section 8 vouchers available. "If the rents were lowered we could get more vouchers from the same amount of funding," she said. It is important to make sure that for what we are spending, we get our monies' worth." Representative Spiliotis emphasized the need to look at where we

are spending our money, and how we are spending our money. "Let's work with the Housing Committee to make it better," she said.

Another client of Inn Transition said, "There is no way I can pay rent. I am a drug addict, that's why I became homeless. My addiction got me here. I'm clean for a year now. It is what it is because of the staff here. They are always there for me." She said emphatically about the Inn Transition staff, "We talk about the issues of life. I have a roof over my head because of Inn Transition. We are all wanting a home." This young woman is starting college in the fall.

At the conclusion of this dynamic breakfast meeting, a citation was presented to CAH Executive Director Nancy Crowder by State Representative Joyce Spiliotis in recognition of twenty years of service in providing housing for homeless families.



State Representative Joyce Spiliotis (left) and CAH Executive Director Nancy Crowder at the Legislative Breakfast

“Youth Works” Volunteers Live Up to Their Name at Inn Transition & Inn Between

by **Betty Reynolds,**
Case Manager at Inn Between

This past June, the Inn Between (IB) and Inn Transition (IT) were very fortunate to have had the Youth Works Volunteers come to do work for both IB and IT. They painted at Inn Transition, and installed air conditioning units, organized the food pantry, the stockroom, garage and the supply closet. In addition, they put together bicycles for the children at Inn Between. They cleaned the play area used by the children. In fact, they did whatever was asked of them even if it was a dirty and dusty situation!

Betty Reynolds, Case Manager at IB states, “I have been involved with the Youth Works group since 2003. They are an outstanding group of young adults. They work and save their money to go to other states to help people in whatever way they can. Wherever they go, they leave a good impression.”

The Youth Works group comes here from different churches around the country. This recent group came from Virginia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Maryland.

They show that helping others is what it is all about!

Face of Wonderment



Antonio,
age 1,
celebrates
his birthday
as the
world lies
before him

Marriott Hotels Adds Garden Embellishments to Inn Between

by **Kathy Adams,**
Case Manager at Inn Between

Employees from Marriott Corporation came to the Inn Between (IB) this past May to spruce up the front yard. They raked, weeded, put grass seed in bare spots and planted an array of colorful flowers. The Inn Between has looked lovely all summer long due to

the efforts and hard work of the Marriott personnel. And, a few Marriott staffers also washed down the children’s outdoor toys. All of this was greatly appreciated by IB staff, families and visitors. We hope they enjoyed being here with us as much as we enjoyed having them here!



Ready to “Roll” at Inn Transition This past spring several ambitious individuals came to the Inn Transition to do some sanding and painting in the community room. These volunteers were ready to “roll” in no time! The volunteers included Judy Sapanski and her son Jason, Debbie Wood, and Linda Fabrizio and her two sons Nick and Dan Fabrizio.

My Name is Not “Those People”

By **Julia Dinsmore**

My Name is not “Those People”

I am a loving woman, a mother in pain, giving birth to the future,
Where babies have the same chance to thrive as anyone.

My name is not “Inadequate”.

I did not make my husband leave us-he chose to,
And chooses not to pay child support.

Truth is though, there isn’t a job base for all
Fathers to support their families.

While society turns its head, my children pay the price

My name is not “Problem and Case to be Managed”

I am a capable human being and citizen, not a client.

The social service system can never replace the compassion
And concern of loving Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, Fathers,

Cousins, Community-all bonded people who need to be

But are not present to bring children forward to their full potential.

My name is not “Lazy, Dependant Welfare Mother”.

If the unwaged work of parenting, homemaking and community
Building was factored into the Gross National Product, my work
Would have untold value. And I wonder why my middle class sisters

Whose husbands support them to raise their children are

Glorified -and they don’t get called lazy and dependant

My name is not “Ignorant, Dumb, or Uneducated”.

I live with an income of \$621 with \$169 in food stamps.
Rent is \$585. That leaves \$36 a month to live on. I am such a genius
At surviving that I could balance the state budget in an hour.

Never mind that there is a lack of living wage jobs.

Never mind that it is impossible to be the sole emotional,

Social and economic support of a family

Never mind that parents are losing children to

The gangs, drugs, stealing, prostitution, social workers,
Kidnapping, the streets, the predator.

Forget about putting money into our schools-just build more prisons.

My name is not “Lay Down and Die Quietly”

My love is powerful and my urge to keep my children alive

Will never stop. All children need homes and people who love them,
They need safety and the chance to be the people they were born to be.

The wind will stop before I let my children become a statistic.

Before you give in to the urge to blame me,

The blame that lets us go blind and unknowingly into

The isolation and disconnects us, take another look.

Don’t go away.

For I am not the problem, but the solution.

And... My name is not “Those People”

“School on Wheels”

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children in Massachusetts that have no home to do homework. A recent study shows this number has actually doubled.

Says Nancy Crowder, Executive Director of Citizens for Adequate Housing, Inc, “We are very pleased to be part of this forward-thinking program. Our goal is our families’ well-being, always. The children who reside here today may indeed be the leaders of tomorrow. We are glad *School on Wheels* is part of what we can offer to help make that happen.”

The volunteer response has been wonderful says Ms. Dressler, in fact with a wait list of volunteer names for the next training session. What is needed are donations of school supplies such as dictionaries, square root calculators and scientific calculators; and backpacks. To make such donations please contact Dina Dressler, the Regional Coordinator for *School on Wheels* at 978-273-8461, or by e-mail at dsdressler@verizon.net. Check out the *School on Wheels* website for more information at: www.sowma.org.

**Footnote: As a result of the Boston Globe North article relating to the School on Wheels program instituted at the Inn Transition and Inn Between, Costco-Danvers donated backpacks to the children residing at the two shelters. Christopher Laurence, the Marketing Manager for Costco-Danvers said, “Costco has found that for at least 10 years the backpack program has been extremely helpful to communities and students in need. As with most of Costco’s charities, it is directed towards schools and children.” Accompanying Mr. Laurence to deliver the backpacks were Judy Dott and Theresa Holmes Costco-Danvers Membership Representatives. They delivered 29 backpacks to each of the shelters. Kim Alford, the Program Director at the Inn Transition said, “It’s wonderful to get a donation like these from supportive people in the community, such as Costco, because as all parents are aware, the high cost of school supplies that kids need today makes this a very nice gift.”*



Luis, age 5,
enjoys the Inn Between playground

“School of Thought”

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Director of Family Services Virginia Sidmore, and the IT Program Director Kim Boyd-Alford and her well-seasoned staff, Chrissy learned a new way of living. Simply, yet emphatically stated, this intuitive young woman knew she had to make a change in her life. “What did I get at Inn Transition?” Chrissy reflects. “I got structure, guidance and support.” Chrissy speaks with determination and gusto as she shares more of her life and growth at Inn Transition. “I got my oldest daughter back. I got a GED, and I got a Section 8 voucher to allow me to get my own apartment.” (a lower-rent apartment that is owned by Communities Land Trust, another arm of Citizens for Adequate Housing that owns 16 such apartments for lower income families). Continuing, she states, “The Inn Transition staff was very helpful. I moved to Inn Transition while I was at a

Methodone clinic, and I de-toxed from that while I was at IT.” She speaks so fondly of the IT staff and of Virginia Sidmore. Ginny, as she is warmly known to many families residing at IT and to those who have moved on to their own apartments, encouraged Chrissy as she moved into the apartment with 3 bedrooms to accommodate her growing family. Chrissy now has an adorable, energetic one-year old son, and lives in and cares for the apartment that is theirs with her significant other and her two daughters now aged 5 and 9. She, in fact, was speaking to the writer of this article, as she had just finished the family’s dinner of homemade chili. Very caring, very pleased with her accomplishments, she shared her current educational and employment status.

There is no stopping Chrissy now. She boasts proudly that she recently went to college on-line at North Shore Community College to get certified as an Infant-Toddler & Pre-School qualified teacher. “I am enrolled for the fall 2007 semester in a class for

expressive art for young children,” she says. Her own precocious, inquisitive daughters and happy baby reflect Chrissy’s exuberance and curiosity. Chrissy teaches by day in a childcare center.

Looking back she says, “I don’t know what made me get involved in drugs. Perhaps certain influences of people around me.” She continues, “Life became completely unmanageable.” Chrissy shared that she didn’t want to realize she had a problem.

She speaks warmly and knowingly of the Inn Transition staff as she emphasizes that during her stay at IT the staff helped her come to the realization that life was a mess for her because of using drugs. “Now”, she says, “life feels good, much better. I’m on the right path. I have 3 beautiful kids and an education.”

Some things are learned in school, and some are life’s lessons. Chrissy has benefited from both. She is on a path with determination, gusto, and a smile bigger than she is!

We Are Excited About Our New Website, Please Visit Us There!

Yes, Citizens for Adequate Housing has a new website, and we’re shouting about it with delight! Created by teens at Cyperspace.com, a not-for-profit agency based in Salem, the new website is indeed something to crow about. The new look is the brainchild of these students, who, for a

summer project, take on the creation of websites. Overseen by staff well-versed in computer technology, the students went to work on creating the imagery, the color palette, and the feel of this new site. Once given the necessary history, current events, philosophy, and programs of CAH, they faced

the challenge of creating a website that would make people want to read on, and come back and visit the site often. The end result speaks clearly of their efforts. So, do stop by the website, read about CAH, take in the new look. We know you’ll be as pleased as we are.

www.CAHNS.org

CAH, Inc. Announces New Officers at Annual Meeting

Citizens for Adequate Housing's Annual Meeting took place the evening of Tuesday, October 9th at East Boston Savings Bank, 67 Prospect Street, Peabody. The invited guest speaker was Stephanie Brown the Director of the Housing and Homelessness Unit of the Department of Transitional Assistance. The new slate of CAH Board of Directors Officers was announced: CAH President Thomas J. Barrett; Vice President John Krawczyk; Treasurer Karl Wilson; and Secretary Janice Kaplan, who will also serve as Chairperson of the Development Committee.

Board of Directors: Stephen Britton, Dina Dressler, John Flynn, William Jackson, Darren Kelly, Maureen Macione, Ruthann Remis.

Citizens for Adequate Housing, Inc. Executive Director: Nancy Crowder

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Partnering for Prosperity: Housing and Economic Development on the North Shore

Affordable housing and jobs that can sustain a family on one income are the greatest challenges for homeless families. Emergency shelters, like the Inn Between, are designed for stays of less than one year. This is a very short time for a family to find affordable housing, appropriate childcare and a job that can sustain the household long-term, and in many cases, to heal from the trauma of domestic abuse. It is further complicated without an employment history or job skill. If English is not the primary language or if there are immigration issues, establishing an independent household feels nearly impossible.

The reduction in rental subsidies over the last few years has greatly complicated the work of all agencies caring for homeless families since there is often no place for a family to go after shelter. Even for agencies like CAH who have some grant funding for rental assistance, the demand far exceeds the supply.

CAH has joined forces with NSCAP (North

Shore Community Action Project), HAWC (Help for Abused Women & Children) and Wellspring House on a community-wide planning process to work toward innovative solutions to address the challenge of family homelessness here on the North Shore.

We invite you to attend “Partnering for Prosperity: Housing and Economic Development on the North Shore,” hosted by NSCC President Wayne Burton, on Friday, November 16, 8:30 am to 4 pm at the Danvers Campus of North Shore Community College. We are bringing together local businesses, public policy makers, communities of faith, real estate developers, human service providers and others to explore innovative partnerships that will make the North Shore a leader in addressing the local challenge of affordable housing for families and work force education. Please RSVP for this free event to Tatiana Burgos-Espinal at tburgos-espinal@NSCAP.org.

Wish List

Items for the Shelters, Families and Agency Offices:

- **Transportation:** A reliable van to be shared by both shelters for client transportation, maintenance of van, tires, etc.
- **Baby Items:** Monitors, baby gates, disposable diapers and baby wipes
- **Housewares:** New towels, linens, blankets, bedspreads, twin-size comforters, dressers, hampers, TV with DVD/VCR, bedroom lamps, throw rugs, pots and pans, paper products, cleaning products, 40W light bulbs, and non-perishable food.
- **Office Supplies:** Copy paper, pens, pencils, notepads, paper clips, post-it-notes, etc.

- **First Aid/Safety Kits:** Including: thermometers, bandages, over-the-counter cold medicine (alcohol free), nail clippers, ice packs and toothbrushes.
- **Gift Cards:** Including: gas cards, phone cards, home-improvement store cards, and grocery cards.
- **Basic Tools:** Hammer, screw driver, pliers, 10' ladder, outdoor furniture (2 picnic tables).

If you are interested in contributing to the Wish List please contact the CAH office at 978-531-9775.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and concern.

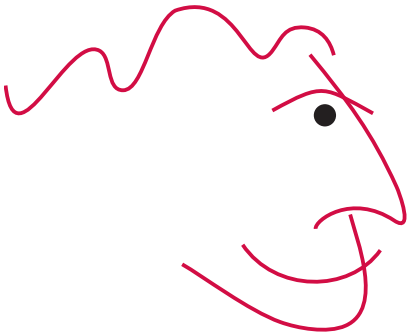


CAH Citizens for Adequate Housing, Inc.

Inn Between • Inn Transition • Communities Land Trust

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Citizens for Adequate Housing Event “Heading” Your Way

November 1st Inn Auction 2007 - Save the Date!

Citizens for Adequate Housing, Inc. (CAH) is holding a live and silent auction having an artistic “Faces Inn Places” theme, with a cocktails, hors d’oeuvres and food stations reception on Thursday evening, November 1, 2007. *Inn Auction 2007* will be held at the Danversport Yacht Club in Danvers, MA from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Adding to the fanfare will be guest auctioneer Billy Costa, of NECN’s *TV Diner* and *KISS 108* radio fame and Miss Massachusetts USA Despina Delios. Jazz guitarist Mark Michaels will add a musical dimension. Honorary Co-Chairpersons for the event are Senator Frederick and Gayle Berry, and Congressman John and Patrice Tierney.

“Faces Inn Places” is an ingenious, unique and exciting approach to objects d’art created by area artists that will be up for bid at the November 1st gala. Carved wooden faces will be displayed across the North Shore at various spots prior to the event. With the energy and dynamic personality of Billy Costa that guests adored last year, along with the other notables, this

year’s event should be outstanding! The silent and live auction will highlight the buzz of the evening with the artistic creations causing an “about face”.

All of the proceeds from the evening will benefit the **Inn Between**, a shelter for homeless parents and children; the **Inn Transition**, a sober-living transitional housing program for homeless families with a parent in recovery; and the **Communities Land Trust** that provides affordable family housing.

Tickets are priced at \$75 each, or a table of ten for \$700. To obtain a sought-after ticket, or for additional information, please call (978) 531-9775, ext. 11, or e-mail to devasst@shore.net. “Let’s face it”, you can make a difference for a very worthwhile organization. Be sure to save the date!

