

Brother Francis Shelter Newsletter



A Catholic Social Services publication

September 2008

Shelter Wish List

C o f f e e
B r e a d
8 o z . S t y r o
P l a s t i c f o r
spoons
P a p e r b o w l s
B l e a c h & P i
3 3 g a l l o n t
C l e a n i n g s p
W a r m h a t s ,
socks
U n d e r w e a r (& women)
S h o e s & b o o t s
B l u e j e a n s & women)
S p r a y d e o d
T o i l e t p a p
D i s p o s a b l e
F e m i n i n e p
T o o t h b r u s h
paste
S a n d w i c h b
V i n y l g l o v e
M e n ' s b e l t

BFS Advisory Council

Pat Byrne
Kay Gajewski
Greg Kimura
Tom Kron
Don Lederhos
Lottie Michael
Doug Poage
Chuck Szopa

BFS Guest Takes Pride in Clothing the Homeless

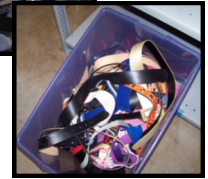
Marcia Cramer has tremendous pride in her work. She is a BFS guest participating in the in-house volunteer program at Brother Francis Shelter and is responsible for operating the BFS clothing donation room. She believes strongly that the power of work helps to transform lives. Marcia is happy to give back to the shelter in such an immediate and meaningful way, in a safe place and off the streets –this is the first time I have ever been homeless and I was absolutely terrified not knowing what to expect. It makes me feel good to continue to be productive here and help the shelter by working in the clot

ting room. Marcia has always been a very organized individual and was happy to have the chance to put this valuable skill to good use at BFS. Marcia has been at BFS for 3 months and works diligently to run a smooth clothing room operation. Her first few days on the job consisted of doing a complete clothing inventory and then arranging all the donations by size and item. Her system of organization has ensured a quick selection process & which is very important since the clothing room serves approximately 200 people a week within 6 hours!

Marcia wants to have gainful employment again soon but right now she is fighting breast cancer — no small task without health insurance and a home. She wants to thank the many donors that support the clothing room and to remind them that items of good quality are needed – especially warm winter clothing for men.

Homeless people s t
don't feel comfort a
have excessive stains or rips. Wearing items of poor quality hurts our self- e s t e e m .

Dewayne Harris, BFS program director, explains that the clothing room is for BFS



A U f W] U ' 7 f U a Y f N g ' c f [U b] n U h] c b U
BFS Clothing Room. She would like to receive
a c f Y ' X c b U h] c b g ' c Z ' a Y b N g ' V Y ' h g

guests and is also open to community members in need twice a week. In addition, BFS works collaboratively with the CSS Refugee Assistance & Immigration Service program to offer clothing to the newly arriving refugees. Approximately 600 items a week are distributed !

I a m t r e m e n d o u s l y g r a t e f u l
help; she has made a huge difference. I would also like to say a special thank you to the many donors who supply the clothing inventory – without your generosity we could not provide
t h i s v a l u a b l e s e r v i c e . D

Please visit the shelter for our annual **St. Francis of Assisi Mass** on Sunday, October 5th at



10:00 a.m. celebrated by Archbishop Francis T. Hurley and the **Spirit of Denali** event, a celebration of Alaska Native culture through music, dancing and food, Friday, October 24th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

t h a t

Provide Help
&
Create Hope

by
conveniently
donating all or
a portion of
your PFD to
Brother
Francis
Shelter/ CSS



PFD Non -
Profit Check
Off starts
January 1,
2009.



Volunteer Spotlight ô Greg Bragiel shares his motivation

When Greg Bragiel first moved to Anchorage from Ohio in 1999 he had four major things on his list: find a dental clinic where he would be working, find a place to live, find a church and find a place to volunteer. Yes — volunteering made his top four list! He certainly found a good fit at Brother Francis Shelter — fast forward nearly a decade and he can still be found every Friday night at Brother Francis Shelter serving dinner. Now he is happy to report that he has a wife to accompany him, Mary Beth Bragiel, CSS Director.

Greg believes that volunteering allows him to have a strong desire to help people and make them smile. That is why he can occasionally be seen dressed up in silly costumes at BFS. He knows this brightens the day for the guests; many of whom react with a smile.

Greg not only shares his time with Brother Francis Shelter. He also consistently volunteers at the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group, Marriage Encounter, Boy Scouts and provides annual dental exams to the athletes participating in Special Olympics.

Pictured left Greg & Mary Beth Bragiel in costume.

Caring Clinic Restored to Health

In our December 2007 issue of this newsletter, we featured Sr. Jackie Stoll and the challenges guests at BFS face when needing medical services and medication. These services were cut when Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center grant was reduced. Since that time CSS held several meetings with leaders from the medical community to seek viable short-term and long-term solutions to the unmet need of accessible and affordable health care for the homeless in our community.

As a result of those meetings, a plan was formed for CSS to seek funding for medications and supplies. Under the supervision of Sr. Jackie, medical professionals were recruited to volunteer their time at the BFS Caring Clinic.

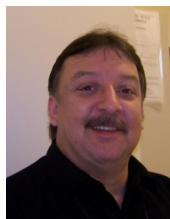
The first organization to step in and assist was Providence Health & Services Alaska. Their support in the form of medications and supplies made it possible to reopen the clinic, allowing shelter guests who would have gone without medical services to receive quality medical care. CSS applied for and received a grant from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to purchase additional supplies and medication to

meet the needs of shelter guests for one year. This generous grant has enabled Sr. Jackie and other community volunteers to open the clinic two times a week. Over 150 individuals were served in the first 6 months of the grant.

Volunteers from the medical community have been the heart and soul of our efforts to continue to provide the much needed medical care in an accessible location. With homeless individuals, medical cost and transportation are often barriers to accessing quality health care.

The commitment of the clinic volunteers does not stop at providing direct care services to their patients. Many hours each week are spent in record keeping for each patient, ordering and stocking the shelves with medications, and helping to keep the clinic clean and sanitary. The dedication each volunteer brings to the

*Dewayne Harris,
BFS Program
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at 277-1731 or
dharris@cssalaska.org*



clinic has had such an impact on those receiving services. Often, getting healthy is the first step on a path back to self-sufficiency for shelter guests.

Without this community collaboration and dedicated volunteers, this desperately needed service to our most vulnerable brothers and sisters would be absent from our shelter. I would like to extend a special thank you to Sr. Jackie, Heidi Hurliman, NP, Alisa Chard, Harold Johnston, MD, and Mary Catherine Shumacher, MD, for their willingness to volunteer!

**In Fiscal Year 2008 BFS
served 56,621 guests**

BFS had a nightly average rate of 170 guests and provided 56,621 nights of shelter.

*Your generous financial donations, volunteer hours, supplies and prayers make it possible to serve our homeless brothers and sisters throughout the year. **Thank you!***