

# Brother Francis Shelter Newsletter



A Catholic Social Services publication

December 2008

## Shelter Wish List

- Coffee
- Bread
- 8 oz. Styrofoam cups
- Plastic forks, knives & spoons
- Paper plates & bowls
- Bleach
- 33 gallon trash bags
- Cleaning sponges
- Warm hats, gloves & socks
- Underwear (all sizes, men & women)
- Shoes & boots
- Blue jeans (all sizes, men & women)
- Spray deodorant
- Toilet paper
- Disposable razors
- Feminine products
- Toothbrushes & toothpaste
- Sandwich baggies
- Vinyl gloves
- Pinesol

## BFS Advisory Council

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

## Former Donor Welcomed As Guest

Susan Brewer did what most loving daughters would do ..... she took care of her mother during her mother's final months of life. Susan quit her job at a doctor's office because her mother could no longer care for herself. Susan said her mother was a "proud Irish woman who worked for the State of Alaska for 31 years and raised two kids by herself. She was very independent and did not want to go into a nursing home." Unfortunately, shortly after her mother passed away, Susan got sick and was unable to search for work or pay for her visits to the doctor. Since Susan was unemployed while serving as her mother's primary care giver, she didn't have health insurance when she became ill.

In desperation, Susan sold everything of value (including the truck she used for transportation) to maintain her housing. Eventually, Susan was evicted from her apartment, and spent her first six months of homelessness camping.



*Susan Brewer*

Susan came to Brother Francis Shelter (BFS) in early September when the weather was starting to get cold with only a plastic grocery bag filled with all her possessions. Susan was a bit ambivalent about staying at the shelter when she first arrived. She had donated food and clothing to the shelter throughout the years but never anticipated having to need their services herself.

Susan believes that BFS is a "haven of resources." In her past life she had

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***From all of us at Brother Francis Shelter, we wish you and your family a safe and joyous Holiday Season! Please join us for Christmas Eve Mass at 6:00 p.m. celebrated by Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz, OMI***



Dewayne Harris, Program Director ▪ Jim Stout, Shelter Manager ▪ Ronnie Arnett, Case Management Supervisor ▪ David Agrell, Shift Supervisor ▪ Henry McCray, Administrative Assistant ▪ Marcia Cramer, Shift Supervisor ▪ Heather Lubinski, Shift Supervisor ▪ Tim Huit, Case Manager ▪ Chrys Logue, Case Manager ▪ Annette Senger, Case Manager ▪ Eric Talbert, Case Manager ▪ Cheri McGee, Shift Supervisor



## Christmas Wishes

During this Christmas season your help can make our wish of providing a gift to each shelter guest a reality! We need men's and women's shirts, shoes, boots and coats to be able to provide over 200 gifts. These items bring a bit of joy to our brothers & sisters at the shelter during a very difficult time in their lives.



**T**hank you for making Spirit of Denali a success! We had wonderful food and tremendous performances by the Miracle Drummers, Kicaput Dancers (pictured), Tlingit & Haida Dancers and King Island Singers & Drummers.

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taken things like transportation, showers, laundry soap and regular meals for granted. Now even a bus pass from her case manager brings gratification. She is also very impressed at how BFS & Bean's Café share a campus and serve the needs of the homeless in a very comprehensive way – something she didn't give a thought to when she was dropping off donations to these programs.

"BFS really helps people put the brakes on the downward spiral that has become their lives," said Susan gratefully. Not only are her basic needs being met but she is very glad to have something as simple as a routine again. Her routine gives her comfort and that was one of the hardest things to maintain while she was camping. Susan visits the Department of Labor Job Center five days a week and goes on interviews. Susan is eager to find employment and is very grateful that her illness is behind her. "BFS provides stability – a place where people can get back on their feet again. I honestly don't know where I would be without the shelter," she says.



As you may know, Catholic Social Service (CSS) operates Brother Francis Shelter. When you apply on-line for your Permanent Fund Dividend you have an opportunity to give all or a portion of your PFD to CSS to support the work of the shelter. For more information visit [PickClickGive.org](http://PickClickGive.org). **Thank you!**

## Tools For Success

**N**ovember has been a blessings-filled month for us at Brother Francis Shelter! Our guests enjoyed a bountiful Thanksgiving meal and we received new computers for the library. The computers will provide our guests with internet access seven days a week to seek current employment and housing information. We also expanded our software to offer learning opportunities to assist those not as familiar with computers. Our library has now become a true Education and Employment Center (EEC) for our shelter guests.

The computers were made possible by a generous grant from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. The Alaska Humanities Forum provided a grant which allowed for the purchase of specialized learning software titled Rosetta Stone to help our Spanish speaking guests become more proficient with English. A typing tutor, resume writing program

and Microsoft Office are available for all to use and learn.

Twice a month the Home Sweet Home & Money Smarts workshops are presented by case managers to assist guests as they transition from the shelter back into the community. The goal of these workshops is to help teach and sharpen needed skills to promote success once a guest moves into housing and begins to address the challenges of budgeting and daily independent living.

I wish you and your family the merriest of holidays. Please feel free to come by and visit the shelter anytime and we will be happy to give you a guided tour.

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



*During November BFS served 789 individuals by providing 6,193 nights of emergency shelter.*

*On Thanksgiving night we had 218 guests staying at BFS and served 248 for dinner.*

***Thank you for helping us provide the basic necessities of life -- food, clothing & shelter.***