

House of Hope
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House of Hope Newsletter

812 Merrimack St, Lowell MA 01854

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www.houseofhopelowell.org

December 2017

Dear Friends,

Thirty-two Christmases ago, House of Hope was opened with the intent of providing shelter to homeless families in Lowell. In those days the number of homeless families was small and our efforts provided shelter for eight families. Three decades later, the number of homeless and very poor families has burgeoned and far too many homeless families will not enjoy a festive

Christmas Day. The 58 families at House of Hope shelters, however, will be overwhelmed with food, gifts and love from our ever-growing corps of friends and supporters. For this day, mothers will not be worried about providing for their children, and children will not feel the sharp pains of poverty because Christmas at House of Hope is a celebration of abundance!

Each day, House of Hope shelters 58 families, up to 180 people, resulting in over 65,000 bed-nights in the course of a year. All of these people are served by House of Hope and by very real extension our community of supporters. Without your love and support we would be reduced to buildings and food and clothing but because of your help and assistance we are so much more, we are a community.

Merry Christmas! On behalf of our families, board of directors and staff, I say a sincere thank you and wish you and your families a New Year of Health and Prosperity.

Sincerely, *Deb Chausse*, Executive Director



LEARN 2 WORK INTERNS WERE A HIT AT THE HARVEST!

This year's Harvest of Hope was a very special occasion for a brand new reason! Our Learn2Work culinary interns catered and served all of the food for the event. They served elegant appetizers, catered the dinner buffet, and made a beautiful presentation of bite-sized desserts for our guests. With over 125 guests at this year's Harvest—it was no small task! Eleven interns made the team and

they gave a festive flair to their work.

They wore chef jackets, hats and white aprons for the evening.

House of Hope launched the Learn2Work Culinary Internship Program early 2017. The program is teaching homeless parents the basics of institutional kitchens, commissary food preparations, and preparing them to serve as cooks or as prep cooks in the growing food industry. The program offers a supportive learning environment with paid, on-the-job training. Each intern who completes the program earns a ServSafe Certificate to qualify them for culinary work. Acquiring job skills is not the only aspect of the Learn2Work Program, it also provides

essential soft skills training including Job Readiness Training, Communications Skills, Decision-Making Skills, Life Management Skills, Customer Service Skills and Career Planning Skills. Program Manager Luz Vasudevan notes that "The interns were very excited and they showed great pride in their work and their ability to give back at the Harvest of Hope." On a daily basis, the interns prepare meals for as many as 200 people per day. Learn2Work is delivered with the goal of empowering homeless parents with essential employment skills, a positive employment experience, and an increased sense of self-worth to serve as the foundation for long-term employment stability.



Congratulations to our Budget Buddies

House of Hope is proud to announce that our 13th class of graduates completed the Budget Buddies program! Each participant starts the program while living in shelter. The class is a 6-month program that includes 12 workshops and at least 12 one-on-one mentoring meetings with an assigned "Budget Buddy." During mentoring meetings, each woman receives help in pursuing her personal goals that may include opening a checking account, clearing up debt, addressing student loans, paying utility bills and/or financing driving lessons. For the first time ever, HOH is now running two Budget Buddies programs concurrently to accommodate the increased numbers of families we now serve. Congrats to the Buddies and the graduates!



HOH WINTER NEEDS LIST

WOW—our needs list has grown!



Bath Towels
Bed Pillows
Silverware
Toilet Tissues
Paper towels
Tissues
Deodorant

Twin/Full Quilts
Twin/Full Sheets
Hair Brushes
Napkins & Tissues
Granola bars
Napkins
Full-size shampoo

Large Plastic Food Containers
Plastic forks, spoons, knives
Diapers 4, 5, & 6 & wipes
Feminine products
Fruit cups and fruit snacks
Plastic baggies—all sizes
Full-size conditioner

18 Gallon Plastic Totes
Coffee & hot chocolate
AA, AAA & D Batteries
Cookies & crackers
Soap, razors, & lotion
7-12oz plastic cups
Cold medicine for adults, children & infants

Dish Detergent
Sugar, Splenda
Non-dairy Creamer
Juice boxes
Shaving cream
Brown lunch bags

Gift Cards for teens and parents to Walmart/Target/Market Basket/CVS/RiteAid/ Barnes & Noble/Dollar Tree/ Five Below/ToysRus/ Dunkin Donuts/ McDonald's/ Gas Stations



For on-line shoppers, please go to House of Hope's easy Amazon Wish List at <http://a.co/45hWslF>. This list has toys and gifts for babies, children and teens. These gifts can be shipped directly to the shelter!

For more information please email Edna at edna.gustafson@houseofhopelowell.org or call 978-458-2870.




HOMECOMING

May the Hope of the Season find a Home in You

This Newsletter is being sent to you, our community of supporters, with the very Best Blessings for a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season. We continue to hope for the day when our services are not needed and our national discussion becomes about reducing poverty for millions of families. Until that day, we commit to doing as much for homeless families as we possibly can. We thank you and sincerely ask that you continue to be active in sustaining our mission!

DID YOU KNOW THAT



Since opening our Fletcher shelter, in April of this year, we have sheltered 56 families at that one shelter. Of almost 200 individuals, 108 were children and 58 of those children were under 5 years old.



Thank you to the TJX Foundation—WOW!

The local Bedford TJ Maxx Team selected House of Hope to receive \$10,000 this year! The team went to bat for HOH and everyone wins thanks to their generosity!



Welcome to Jennifer Grant!

The volunteer department has expanded! Edna Gustafson has hired our new full-time Volunteer Coordinator, Jennifer Grant, who has recently moved to the U.S. from England. We are excited to have her to work with our volunteers. Jennifer brings years of experience in working with children in the UK, Russia and China as well as experience working with people facing homelessness.

Her goals as Volunteer Coordinator are to maintain and build relationships between House of Hope and existing volunteers as well as establish new links within the wider community in order to continue to enrich the services House of Hope provides to our families.

Jennifer has been with us for two months and she would love to hear from potential volunteers. With more families to serve, we need your help! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact her at 978-458-2870 or email her at jennifer.grant@houseofhopelowell.org.



Rachel Young Retires

We have bid a fond farewell to Rachel Young who has served our organization for the past 5 years. Rachel's first role at House of Hope was to be a midnight shift Resident Support Staff where she was able to have many late night, supportive conversations with our heads of households. Later Rachel moved to our House Management Department where we all learned of her passion and skill in the kitchen. And since April, Rachel has been assisting our Chef John Rork in our beautiful Fletcher Street kitchen as they operate the Learn2Work job training program. We thank Rachel for her service to House of Hope and we wish her all good things in her future endeavors.



Deb Chausse, Rachel Young, Carmen Pirela, Grimilda Romero and Dora Buote celebrate at Rachel's Send-Off