

NEWS *from* HOME



Providing families a place to come home to.

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SPRING 2008

CELEBRATION AUCTION ATTRACTS A ROBUST TURNOUT

It may not be a great year for the economy with the rising costs of gasoline and food, but that didn't squelch the spirits of the hundreds of people who attended New Haven Home Recovery's 9th Annual Celebration Auction. The event on April 30 at Anthony's Ocean View brought in more than \$70,000 – breaking last year's record. The money will help provide services and shelter to New Haven area families confronting homelessness and HIV/AIDS.

"The robust turnout and generous support for this event are especially exciting," said Kellyann Day, executive director of NHHR. "I believe the success of this event is a sign that people are aware of the tremendous needs in the New Haven area, and they are eager to help."

The auction was made possible by generous supporters who donated a long list of items. Four nights at The Grand Lido Braco Resort & Spa in Jamaica went for \$1,800; seven nights at The Ridge on Sedona Golf Resort in Arizona went for \$2,500; and an autographed Joe Namath football brought in \$300. People also bid on tickets to the 2008 U.S. Open, a Dell Inspiron notebook computer, tickets to Yankees vs. Red Sox game at Yankee Stadium, and lunch for six on one of the Thimble Islands in Branford. There were amusement park passes, gift certificates to restaurants and shops, gift baskets, jewelry and original artwork.

This year's auction honored the Ralph L. and June M. Rossi Charitable

Foundation, which was established by Ralph and June Rossi in 1993. Ralph Rossi retired from a long and distinguished career in the corporate sector, where he embraced a personal ideology of giving back to the community and was involved in many philanthropic endeavors. After retiring, he remained committed to philanthropy and established the foundation together with June, his wife and partner for more than 50 years. The Foundation is committed to supporting organizations whose focus is education, health, and the arts.



Among those gathered at Celebration Auction were (l-r) Eric Hummel; Don Camerato, owner of D'Cam's Gentleman's Shop in Hamden and a donor; and Don's daughter Melanie Camerato, an intern at NHHR from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work.

Under the leadership of Lauren Rossi, their daughter, the foundation began to seek out and fund local organizations that focused on the needs of inner city children and their families. Since January, 2002, the Rossi Foundation has donated \$146,000 to NHHR for everything from shelter operations to new beds and mattresses for Martha's Place.

"NHHR is an important cause, because having a home is the threshold to going anywhere else in your life,"



Honoree Lauren Rossi attended the auction with her friend, Bob Stone.

"NHHR is an important cause, because having a home is the threshold to going anywhere else in your life," said Lauren Rossi, who is currently secretary of NHHR's board of directors. "Supportive housing is the best solution, because it is not a shelter – not a place that people are going to have to leave. It's a solution, and I am honored to

be a participant in making it available to those who need it."

Eric Hummel, director of sales and marketing for Hummel Bros. Inc. in New Haven, was auctioneer for the 4th year in a row.

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Looking for people who care – a whole lot

A Letter From Kellyann Day, Executive Director



If you have young children, or if you've read Dr. Seuss, you may remember the Lorax, a funny looking fellow with a plump belly and a beard. The Lorax gave us a pearl of wisdom about taking action to make things better. He says, "Unless someone like you cares a whole lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not."

That's absolutely true around here.

New Haven Home Recovery would never survive if it weren't for people who care – people who go out of their way and sometimes their comfort zone to volunteer time and resources without expecting anything in return.

A few weeks ago, 26 people from Anthem/Wellpoint spent their Saturday morning helping board member Allen Klein and NHHR staff at The Furniture Co-

"Unless someone like you cares a whole lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not."

Op, accepting and organizing donations in our warehouse so that clients who have moved into new housing units can take what they need to make the units into homes. People are always coming to the shelters to cook dinner, lifting

the spirits of residents who are facing the steepest uphill climb in their lives. People volunteer to paint, move furniture, conduct yoga classes, write grants, file paperwork, help us with our computers and play board games with our children.

Every one of these people will tell you that giving their time to NHHR is one of the most rewarding gestures they've ever made, especially when they get a glimpse of the impact they are making on a client. Last month, a woman who became the first resident of our newest supportive housing unit in New Haven walked into our office, and staff members couldn't help noticing that she looked totally different – in fact, she was glowing. Credit goes not only to her new home, but to the volunteers who cooked meals for her, provided activities for her children and helped give her surroundings a bright coat of paint while she was going through the most difficult transition of her life.

We need more volunteers. We are looking for men, women, teenagers, parents, business people, students and retired people. If you think you can help – even if you only have an hour to spare – please call us. I promise you'll be glad you did.

Sincerely,

Kellyann Day, MSW
Executive Director



Theater trip had kids 'glued'

When Cleo Peterson took six children from NHHR's shelters to see "The Ugly Duckling" at the Downtown Cabaret Theater in Bridgeport in April, she expected some rowdiness, at least a small tantrum – "the normal kid stuff."

She couldn't have been more wrong. "It was beautiful," she said. "There was not one problem. They were all glued to the play."

The trip was sponsored by SEARCH (Services, Education and Activities Reaching Children who are Homeless), a program that provides homeless children and their mothers with services, educational advocacy and activities to help decrease the negative effects of their situation. Milford Car Services, LLC donated the transportation for the group to and from the theater.

Peterson, who took over as coordinator of SEARCH last fall, is planning several other trips this year to such places as the Children's Museum in New Haven and Mystic Seaport to give homeless children a break. "SEARCH lets kids do what kids are supposed to do," Peterson said. "They should enjoy their lives, and just be kids."

New property provides a roof for three families

Families who have been homeless or living on the edge have described living situations where the ceilings are leaking, rodent droppings cover the floors, and where turning on the heat meant opening the oven door.

So it was gratifying when one of the first residents of NHHR's newest supportive housing property – a completely remodeled unit in New Haven – visited NHHR's offices with a smile on her face. "She was radiant, like a different person," said Angela Westwood, finance director.

The new property, which NHHR purchased in 2006, will house three



Attending the ribbon cutting for NHHR's newest unit were: Jim Marong, Citizen's Bank; Robert Keene, Home Improvements; Amanda Freund

from Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro's office; Kellyann Day, NHHR executive director; Andy Rizzo, Livable City Initiative; and Lewis Schaeneman, Lewis G. Schaeneman Jr. Foundation.

families. It includes such environmentally friendly touches such as a tankless water system. Purchase and renovation of the property was made possible with support from the City of New Haven, Livable City Initiative, The Melville Charitable Foundation, The Lewis Schaeneman, Jr. Foundation, Citizens Bank, C. Michael Tucker Architects, Abcon Environmental, and Robert Keene of Keene Home Improvements.

Mammography van visits Martha's Place



On hand for the mammography van visit were (l-r): Coretha Thomas, mammography technician; Kara Benedetto; and Philip Williams, mammogram van operator.

Medical appointments aren't usually on the top of the "to do list" for women who are homeless. Transportation might mean taking two buses with a toddler in tow, and most homeless mothers are busy enough trying to get the basics covered.

So Kara Benedetto, M.S.W., decided to

bypass the roadblocks and bring medical care to NHHR's front door. In January, she invited Yale-New Haven Hospital's digital mobile mammography van to spend a day parked outside of Martha's Place, the former Women in Crisis shelter that was recently renamed to honor Martha E. Gonzalez, one of NHHR's original employees.

Twenty clients, staff members and volunteers had mammograms. One was diagnosed with early stage breast cancer and successfully treated. "That shows that there is a need here," said Benedetto, wellness counselor for Martha's Place. Benedetto plans to invite the van back to Martha's Place every six months.

Many thanks to ...



Hamden High School's Leadership Council for donating toiletries.

Quinnipiac University students for donating toiletries. Junior League of Greater New Haven for hosting a Spa Night with dinner at Martha's Place. Tina Soderberg and the Junior Pilgrim Fellowship for preparing meals and providing care packages for both shelters. Emily Emerson for her generous donation in memory of her husband Gordon Emerson. Feed the Children for providing 800 backpacks filled with food and other items for

children in Connecticut shelters. United Illuminating Client Fulfillment Center for donating proceeds from their office raffle. Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield employees for their Day of Caring, which included painting, cleaning, fixing furniture and organizing donations at The Furniture Co-Op. The group also donated \$1,000 to NHHR. Casey Family Services and staff for donating the proceeds from their holiday fundraiser. Anna's Gourmet Catering for providing meals for both shelters at Martha's Place.



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CABT bike tour wants new riders!

You can help make this year the best turnout year ever for the annual Connecticut AIDS Bike Tour (CABT) just by signing up. Individual riders, families and groups are welcome regardless of ability level.

This year the tour will take off September 10th ending the 14th. Participants will cycle throughout the state to raise funds to provide services to people living with HIV/AIDS. Proceeds benefit 14 agencies in Connecticut, including New Haven Home Recovery.

Riders can join in every day, or just one day or more. Meals and rider support services including coaches and mechanics will be provided. For a taste of what last year's bike tour was like, visit www.ctaidsbiketour.org and read the blogs. You can also register online, call (860) 761-6699 or e-mail shawn@ctaidscalioalition.org.

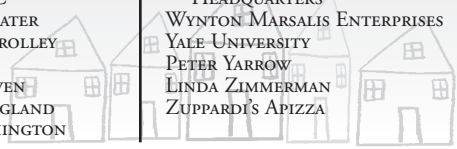
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