

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

INTERFAITH HUMAN SERVICES OF PUTNAM

VOLUNTEERING at IHSP

In 2015 Interfaith Human Services of Putnam was blessed to have so many new volunteers join our cause and we were also blessed to have so many existing volunteers assume new and greater responsibilities that allow us to remain a beacon of light and hope for so many in our community.

Over 125 volunteers make the wheels of IHSP operate. With the selfless and generous spirit of our friends and neighbors in NECT, we are able to sponsor, fund and facilitate programs and projects that serve people in need and in transition in NECT. It is truly amazing the services we are able to provide and the programs we are able to offer on a yearly basis with an All Volunteer Staff.

Three days a week, fifty two weeks a year our volunteers show up, open the doors to our food pantry "Daily Bread" and provide food, friendship and a caring shoulder to individuals and families in need. They sort food donations, restock shelves, emboss coupons, assist clients with food selections, clean refrigerators/freezers and many other tasks that need to be done.

At the same time that Daily Bread is open and distributing food, we have wonderful volunteers who open and operate our "NU2U" Clothing

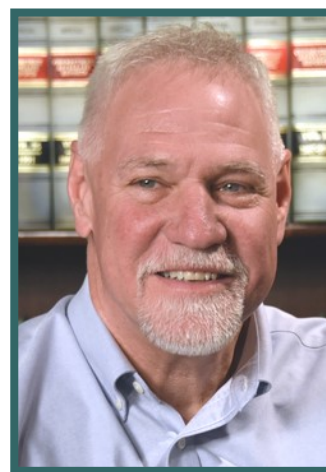
Closet to help provide much needed, gently used clothing. The Clothing Closet is also open on Tuesday to serve Community Kitchen clients. Volunteers sort, clean and restock clothing on a weekly basis as well as assist people with clothing selections.

Once a month, volunteers from St. Mary's Church and others staff the Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry.

We operate the only Diaper Bank in Northeastern Connecticut. Volunteers staff almost all of our four Mobile Diaper Banks that serve the Towns of Putnam, Pomfret, Woodstock, Thompson & North Grosvenordale, Killingly-Brooklyn area, Plainfield area, Ashford, Eastford, Chaplin, Hampton and Scotland. Besides the Mobile Diaper Banks, volunteers repackage diapers, transport diapers from our warehousing facility at Windham Container, maintain inventory and client records.

Clients never have enough diapers. Through resources like Jet.com we are able to keep more than 300 children clean and dry on a yearly basis. We have also been able to offer a Potty Training Program which has been funded by Jewett City Savings Bank.

In addition, our Community Resource Coordinator ad-



Shawn Johnston
President

ministers a Fuel Fund and a Homeless Prevention Program. Simply put, we are really just an old-fashioned neighborhood helping to wrap their arms around our friends and neighbors in need and volunteering to help provide them a hand up during tough times.

To each and every individual and organization that donated, supported us, or that volunteered, please know that we strive every day to ensure your donations are used wisely and that you have our heartfelt appreciation. You are our rock of support and help to make Northeastern Connecticut the special and supporting community that it is. THANK YOU!



In 2015 Good Bug Gardens donated 800 lbs. of fresh produce and fruit.

GOOD BUG GARDENS

For Good Bug Gardens, dropping off veggies at Daily Bread is something we're both happy and proud to be doing. When we started our small produce, herb and fruit farm a couple of years ago, we wanted to get our food into the hands of families that care about eating healthy. At Daily Bread, we know that the food we've worked so hard to grow is going to exactly those people. It's a wonderful feeling to be able to

provide something that we love, and that nourishes and sustains the community around us. In our minds, that's what farming is all about!

Good Bug Gardens is a Community Supported Agriculture Farm located in Sterling, CT. On their two acres they are growing produce and herbs chemical-free, with a system centered on promoting biodiversity. Everything in the CSA is grown right at Good Bug Gar-

dens. They choose the best tasting varieties of familiar favorites, and spice things up with exotic and exciting new fruits and veggies. They believe that a good farm succeeds by growing a healthy ecosystem. That's why they never use anything ending in -cide.

Andy Meeks at Good Bug Gardens has been providing fruits and vegetables to Daily Bread since 2012.

QVCC STRIDE Program Uses IHSP-NU2U CLOTHING CLOSET



When the Quinebaug Valley Community College needed clothing for their STRIDE Program, they turned to the IHSP-NU2U Clothing Closet. The STRIDE Program helps incarcerated individuals transition back to their families and their respective communities.

One aspect of the program is the need for clothing to help inmates that have no means to

purchase the necessary clothing for work release and other assignments. The NU2U Program Coordinator, Bernice Mazzarella, jumped in to action to help meet this need.

According to Julie Scrapchansky, CPCC, at QVCC, "STRIDE is thankful for the generous donations you have given. The men who have received the clothing are especially

thankful to IHSP. We appreciate the hard work you do for our communities."

WHY DO YOU VOLUNTEER?

"I just want to be the nice man at the Food Bank who treats people with respect and dignity."

I am embarrassed to say that it took me to age 54 to finally find my way to Daily Bread. Karen has volunteered for over 17 years, so I am certainly familiar with the mission.

After wrapping up 20 years on the NECT Chamber of Commerce board, I decided to al-

locate that time to Daily Bread. I started in January and find myself looking forward to my monthly shift. This is hands down, the most meaningful work I have ever done in my life.

My goal each month is simple: I just want to be the nice man at the food bank who treats

people with respect and dignity. It is truly God's work as prescribed in Matthew 25.

Gary Osbrey

RECTORY STUDENTS VOLUNTEER AT DAILY BREAD

Dawn Chmura, Director of Communications, The Rectory School

Every year, members of The Rectory School community gather together on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in support of the national day of service. Rectory's Headmaster, Fred Williams, is often heard to say, "MLK Jr. Day of Service is perhaps one of the most important days of the academic year." Mr. Williams believes that positive character development includes helping others, and the national day of service is a great opportunity to reinforce this important message.

For the past several years, a small group of Rectory's middle school students, led by teachers Miriana Zerpa and Wayne Richardson, volunteer at Daily Bread.

"This is a very eye-opening experience for the group," Mrs. Zerpa comments. "The students helped organize the shelves, sort food bags, and clean the facilities. Students spoke about how good they felt knowing they were helping the community and how this

experience revealed to them the importance of service to others."

Mr. Richardson adds, "Our students were surprised to learn that so many local people require food assistance; they came away appreciating their own blessings a little more."



THANKSGIVING MIRACLES AT DAILY

Miracles don't only happen on 34th Street. Thanksgiving season in the early 1990's was bitter cold. Daily Bread was housed in St. Mary's Rectory basement. My children, Jared and Jocelyn, husband, Tim, and I were busy serving clients. I went to get cranberry sauce in the backroom which also housed a clothing closet. I turned to go out. Before me was a young mother, crying,

with her daughter. It was 20 degrees outside. They had no warm clothes or shoes, only summer dresses and sandals. Mom stated her husband was ill. If we should see our way to give her peanut butter, jelly, bread and milk, they would be on their way. I took them in to the clothes closet offering them all they could want. Meanwhile, I packed up three months' worth of food, a turkey

dinner, and contacted a Social Worker. When they opened the door, my heart leaped. Their smiles told the story. The look in the little girls eyes when she exclaimed, "We can have a box of crackers, Mama!"

This is just one of the miracles that happens at Daily Bread.

Holly Ann Gilbert
IHSP Board Member & Volunteer

"We can have a box of crackers, Mama"

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

I enjoy spending my time at the NU2U Clothing Closet. It makes me happy to know that I am making a difference in someone's life.

Seeing the faces of clients, when they find something they like, something that makes them feel good and look good, is wonderful.

Helping someone find an outfit, for a job interview, and having them come back to thank you for your help, is extremely satisfying.

That's what it's all about. Making a difference in someone's life. Helping people to get through tough times. We all have been there. Getting them to smile or laugh or some-

times just offering a hug.

No amount of money could make you feel as good as offering a helping hand to other people. That's why I love volunteering.

-Jean Varner, NU2U Clothing Closet Volunteer





NOURISHING NEIGHBORS COUPON PROGRAM

In an effort to provide more nutritious food choices to our IHSP-Daily Bread families, we created the Nourishing Neighbors Coupon Program. The program started with our desire to provide our families with fresh milk. We knew storage would be a problem, so the coupon program was born. Due to its favorable reception, we decided to expand this program and now provide

our families with not only coupons for milk, but also butter, cheese, eggs and fresh or frozen produce. These coupons are redeemable at our partner stores, Putnam Supermarket and Putnam Walmart. Our fresh produce coupons are also redeemable at the Putnam Farmers' Market, for those who prefer fresh, local, farm to table produce. Besides allowing IHSP to provide

nutritious, perishable foods without the need for refrigeration and stock rotation, the coupon program also allows our families the opportunity to make their own choices for their own families, based on their own preferences and needs. In the near future, IHSP plans to add juice to the Nourishing Neighbors Coupon Program.

"We all only have so much time to leave our mark on the world."

WHY WE DONATE TO IHSP?

My wife and I were at a meeting and the leader asked a woman who was present, her view on the current economic policies being pursued in our society. She responded that 'everything she needed to know about economics' was summed up by a quote she had memorized: Tell the rich of the midnight sighing of the poor.....

We were struck blind by the humility and simplicity of this answer, and realized that from that moment, hence, we, too, would see no other economic policy as being better suited to our world's needs—a world sadly burdened by too much self-righteous ideology, where knee jerk jingoism perpetuates the

right and goodness of the greed of a few over the needs of the unfortunate.

We all only have so much time to leave our mark on the world. To be of those who heard the midnight sighing of the poor is one that we humbly hope to leave behind.

John Etheridge & Lyn Tolar

DIAPER BANK MEETS NEEDS OF ADULTS



In the beginning of the year I lost my job of 20 years. As you can imagine this was and is still currently the most devastating time of my life. Since that time, we have been relying on my husband's social security and help from SNAP [food stamps] as our primary source of income. With his health issues of MS and a nerve damaged bladder, I've been trying to find help with his need for under garments/ adult diapers.

While searching online I came across the IHSP-Diaper Bank of NECT. Finding this organization has truly been a blessing for my husband and me. The help that we have been receiving has released so much of my stress. A huge weight has been lifted from my shoulders, knowing that we can turn to this organization in our time of need.

We are continuously thankful for the help we receive as my husband and I work towards getting back on our feet.

-Robert & Tammy Jones-

VOLUNTEERING AT DAILY BREAD

After retiring in 2013, I started volunteering at Daily Bread as a substitute for someone on vacation in 2014 and have been there ever since. My husband, Bill, joined me that summer helping unload the Connecticut Food Bank Truck.

Our reasons for volunteering are many, but the main reason is because of the need we saw. The Bible says that if you see someone in need and say go home, be well fed and do nothing to help them, that your faith is useless.

For us, volunteering is exercising our faith. My dad used to say that actions speak louder than words and we have taken his words to heart.

Since starting in 2014 we have witnessed the need grow substantially for our community. We get to know our clients and hear their stories.

When an older woman living on a fixed income shared with me that she has taken in 3 non-related young boys as her own

children and see how thankful she is every time she is there, we just know that we are in the right place.

Thank you IHSP for offering this valuable service to our community.

Terri & Bill Pearsall



DIAPERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

I started to volunteer on Tuesday nights because Kathi Peterson asked me to help Helen—to have a second person there. Why do I continue years later? That's very personal. Forty-four years ago when my first son was born, I could have used it. However, back then there were only food stamps and you had to buy them. We lived in Amston in a house with clay soil and a high water table. Drainage was terrible! Although I had a washer, I recycled every load of wash and rinse water for darker loads and for outdoors. I had the most beautiful dahlias

In winter, we had enough ice out there to skate on. I had a dryer, but put every piece of clothing on the line to save money. My diapers were so threadbare after the third son that I needed 3 at a time and frequent changes. Could I have used diapers?!?

I see myself and my children in the families I meet at the Diaper Bank and I feel blessed that with hard work and perseverance I was able to get a good job, raise my family and now give back to people to make their lives easier. I see parents who

put the needs of their children first and who are so grateful for that one package of diapers they receive each month; parents who bring toys, books, clothes, and food they can't use so that someone else can be helped; people who are working or looking for jobs and doing all they can to keep afloat; people who, despite seemingly unmanageable situations, are not defeated! I give thanks to Helen and to our families every Tuesday night. They are a joy to be with.

-Rev. Barbara Schreier-

"I see myself and my children in the families I meet at the Diaper Bank and feel blessed. I'm now able to give back to others to make their lives easier."



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

My husband and I prefer to keep our charitable giving on the local level.

The people served by IHSP are our neighbors. Jesus said "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

I keep that in mind as I consider that, at any time, we could need IHSP help as well.

As an occasional volunteer at Daily Bread, I have seen how difficult it is for people when they have to reach out, and having local people

to lend a hand seems to make it easier.

-Audrey Hussey-



INTERFAITH HUMAN SERVICES OF PUTNAM

51-53 Grove Street
P O Box 281
Putnam, CT 06260
Located: Off Bradley Street

Phone: 860-928-0169
Fax: 860-963-7602
E-mail: : ihspputnam2005@gmail.com

OUR MISSION

The Mission of Interfaith Human Services of Putnam is to sponsor, fund and facilitate programs and projects that will serve people in need or in transition in Northeastern Connecticut.

Check Out Our Website at

www.ihspputnam.org

Our Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/putnamdailybread

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