



HIP News

HOUSING INITIATIVES OF PRINCETON, LLC
A PROGRAM OF PRINCETON OUTREACH PROJECTS, INC., A 501 (C) (3) NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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Harvest for Home

Our third annual Harvest for Home benefit for HIP took place on Sunday, September 21st, 2008, at the Johnson Education Center in Princeton. The day began with A Cappella performances from three Princeton High School groups, followed by a rousing performance by Princeton's own Klezmer band, the Klez Dispensers. Finally, back by popular demand, Princeton University's improv comedy troupe, Quipfire!, entertained the crowd.

Our now traditional dinner of fried chicken and pulled pork was coordinated by Emilia Tosic-DiSanto and prepared by Whole Foods, with delectable ice cream scooped up by the Bent Spoon. Meanwhile, our silent auction featured an array of handmade quilts, vacations in Paris, bull sessions with Princeton Philosophy professor, Gideon Rosen, dinner and conversation with Dr. Cornel West, a tete-a-tete with Vogue editor Sally Singer, and a brunch with local cookbook author Pam Wakefield. The auction also featured theater tickets in New York and Princeton (including a backstage tour of McCarter's annual Christmas Carol) and services and goods donated by a wide array of Princeton merchants.

Thanks to everyone who donated, purchased and attended Harvest for Home!

Below left Princeton philosophy professor Gideon Rosen, with Jean Hanff Korelitz and Lisa Eckstrom Rosen. **Below right** Princeton High School A Cappella Group. **Bottom** Emilia Tosic-DiSanto with quilt she designed and donated for Harvest for Home.



Hip Salutes Its Volunteers

Jim Bartholomew may describe himself as a "sort of retired" contractor, but there has been nothing "sort of" about his service to HIP. Since 2003, Jim has been our go-to man for repairs at Prescott House.

A former engineer, Jim has been doing contracting work since 1982, and has always made an effort to prorate



HIP Board Member Kirk Garber with Jim Bartholomew at Prescott House.

his charges when the circumstances seemed to indicate the need. With Prescott house, says Jim, "Kirk Garber had said they were trying to give housing to people who were down on their luck or had other problems and needed someplace they could afford until they got back on their feet." Over the years, a relationship of mutual trust has developed, says Jim. "I would do what was necessary and not charge Kirk exorbitantly. Usually the work would entail a lot more than I knew, but I didn't feel morally justified in charging for all the little details. I always feel like I want to do a good job whether it costs me a little more or not."

In addition to his work for HIP, Jim and his wife give an annual Christmas party for the National Alliance on Mental Illness. HIP is honored to have such a generous and capable contractor looking after Prescott House.

Emilia Tosic-DiSanto, at left, first became involved with Housing Initiatives of Princeton back in 2004, when she and her daughter Lucy were part of a crew of volunteers who transformed the downstairs apartment at Prescott House. "I wanted Lucy to understand that there were people in Princeton who were not as lucky as her." The apartment, remembers diSanto, was a mess, and the group spent a long day painting and cleaning. "I remember

HIP Year in Review

2008

2008 was a year of transition for Housing Initiatives of Princeton, and one that has left our organization both stronger and more focused as we head into the future.

Accomplishments & Opportunities

- We began the year with a board retreat to consider how our mission of helping families transition to permanent housing might be refined to make better use of what we offer, and we began to explore possible ways in which we could liaise with other local organizations. After numerous exploratory meetings and much discussion, HIP embarked upon a collaboration with Crawford House, a 30-year old residential treatment program in Skillman, New Jersey that assists women in early recovery from drugs and/or alcohol addiction. Our new partnership has begun with several Crawford graduates moving into the ground floor apartment at Prescott House, as they continue to work in low-wage jobs in our community.
- Two families in residence at Prescott House graduated to affordable housing (after 26 and 18 month stays respectively). One family's transition was assisted by our partner HomeFront.

- New residents moved into Prescott House; a mother with three school-aged children occupy one apartment, Crawford House alumnae occupy the other.
- We provided a merit-based educational scholarship to assist an individual with preparatory courses for the NJ State Boards in an effort to help her achieve housing and employment security for herself and her children.
- We sought and received from the vestry of Trinity Church renewal of the leases for Prescott House through 2012.
- HIP welcomed Drew Laessig as treasurer in August; he replaced Anthony Scaturro, who resigned due to family commitments.

Finances

We ended the year with a cash balance of **\$108,617**. dollars down from **\$117,323**. at year-end 2007. We received income in the amount of **\$43,218**. from a variety of sources, including grants, "Harvest For Home" fundraiser, individual donations, board member congregations, Nassau Christian Center, and rent contributions. Our expenses were **\$51,924**, including **\$16,800** rent payments to Trinity Church, **\$8,800** for utilities, **\$10,415** for maintenance and refurbishing the 1st floor apartment at Prescott House; the remaining expenses were for an educational scholarship, fundraising/publicity, insurance, professional case manager and modest operating expenses.

HIP Salutes its Volunteers continued...

painting that little back room. The whole place looked fantastic afterwards."

Two years later, she answered another call when HIP began planning its first Harvest for Home benefit. "It was a way of reconnecting with what we had done earlier, and getting to know what HIP was all about. I wanted to help out and make it succeed."

A former fashion designer, caterer, house restorer and an active mom and volunteer, DiSanto put her considerable food and design skills to work for Harvest for Home, creating the event's signature autumn country look and sumptuous barbeque dinner. Last year, in addition, she designed and made a quilt for the benefit auction, which was featured on the Harvest

for Home invitation. The event, says DiSanto, truly reflects the community. "It's very professional, but it's laid back. It's so much fun. I like the fact that the benefit brings in musical groups from the university and the high school, and it's very much about Princeton."

HIP's mission to help individuals and families transition to permanent housing appeals to DiSanto. "I firmly believe that people should be given a second chance. Sometimes they don't have a good education or family supporting them. Sometimes they fall through the cracks. I think it's important to have a community that looks after everyone, and HIP feels very much to me like it's one person helping another."

Notable Donations (\$1,000 or greater)

- Mr. William H. Scheide - \$10,000
- The Curtis W. McGraw Foundation - \$2,500.
- Steven and Rita Harowitz Philanthropic Fund - \$2,500
- Lessons and Carols Attendees - \$1,312
- John D. Spears Charitable Trust - \$1,000
- Katherine Prescott & Andrew Hunter - \$1,000
- Issues Management, LLC - \$1,000

Board Member Profile

Sally Weisman



Sally Weisman, an Executive Recruiter at Nexis Business Solutions, has served as a member of HIP's board and as board representative from The Jewish Center of Princeton since 2004, when she took on the role as a service project for her own Bat Mitzvah. During her time at HIP, Weisman has worked directly with HIP clients, providing personal support and professional guidance with employment, and has co-chaired the annual Harvest for Home event since its inception in 2006.

For Weisman, the board itself is a big part of HIP's attraction. "I like the board members. I think they bring a lot of diversity to the table, and I like that we have different backgrounds and different strengths. I think we work very well together."

When it comes to volunteer work and community outreach, Weisman takes her cue from the Hebrew principle of Tikkun olam: the charge to repair and perfect the world. "Really, it's not a choice

for people who are Jewish; it's a moral responsibility, an obligation. And we have to do in such a way that people can have self sufficiency. One of our missions is to try to give people tools so that they can live in a productive way."

While she had hoped, initially, to address the larger issue of homelessness in our community, Weisman has learned that HIP's method of working with individual families, a few at a time, is a more realistically effective approach to the problem. In a recent conversation with the director of a local social services agency, for example, Weisman recounted some of the disappointments HIP has experienced with tenant families. The director said, "If you can keep a family intact and off the street, that's really a big accomplishment."

You Can Help...

Since accepting our first family in 2004, we are proud to have transitioned three families to stable housing and one to home ownership. The average length of stay at Prescott House has been nineteen months. Your generosity has helped offset expenses, such as rent, utilities, and operating costs for Prescott House, as well as professional case management services for our clients. You can support our ongoing efforts by making a tax deductible contribution to HIP.

Make check payable to:
Housing Initiatives of Princeton

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