Sursum Corda - Lift up Your Heart!

In the early Spring of 1998, Bethany House was struggling through a severe financial crisis brought about because a federal grant of $120,000 was delayed by more than eight months. In addition, the Department of Social Services, also dependent on federal funds, was late in paying Bethany over $65,000. Together these “accounts receivable” comprised close to 40% of our budget. Our very survival as an agency was at stake. Ironically, “the place to come when there’s no place to go” seemed to have no place to go.

During this dark time, I received a call from a woman I had known for many years - we had both worked in parish outreach programs and shared a special love for God’s poor. Virginia asked if I would meet her for lunch as she had something she wanted to tell me. I knew I wouldn’t be very good company, but we agreed to meet the next day.

That afternoon will forever remain in my memory. When we least expect an answer to our prayers and when are hearts and spirits are the heaviest, God sends a messenger, an angel - and Virginia was my angel that day! She told me that she wanted to help Bethany House. I did not know the details; I only knew that she would help us. And I knew that she was sent to me by God.

As I walked up the path to Virginia’s home after lunch, I noticed a small plaque that hung above the door. Painted on the plaque were two brief words: SURSUM CORDA. The meaning of these words drifted back from the days when we used to pray in Latin: LIFT UP YOUR HEART!

I pointed to the sign, saying to my friend, “Lift up your heart.” With surprise she answered, “Oh, you know what it means... my husband placed that plaque above our door many years ago and said we should always try to “lift up the hearts” of all who enter our home and lives.

Surely my friend, Virginia Hassler, and her late husband Robert renewed my faith that day without ever knowing that God would use them to do so. God spoke to me through the little plaque that had hung above this door for so many years. Perhaps the reason for its being there all that time was just for this very moment - and I knew with certainty that all would be well for Bethany House and for me. And so, I lifted up a joyful heart!

Sister Aimee

Two outstanding women receive Bethany’s Sursum Corda Award

On the evening of October 21st, Bethany honored two unique women for their extraordinary ability to lift up the hearts and spirits of others.

Virginia Hassler was honored by Bethany as an Outstanding Woman of Compassion because she has distinguished herself for her spirit of compassion and her unique gift of caring for so many. Virginia married Robert Hassler, a widower with six young children, and together they raised a very special family. She also ministered in her local Parish Outreach Center for fifteen years, and cared for a sick neighbor on a daily basis throughout a difficult illness. Virginia is always willing to lend a hand, and she has supported Bethany House’s work for many years. Recently, through the Robert and Virginia Hassler Family Foundation, she has directly assisted us in providing a unique parenting program for our women in recovery in our HEADING HOME Program.

Mable Aikens Clark was honored by Bethany as an Outstanding Woman of Accomplishment. Mable has distinguished herself for her ability to overcome insurmountable odds in working toward her personal growth and that of her two daughters. As a single parent, Mable works to support her young family, sacrificing her own needs to provide for those of her children. And, even though her time is consumed with her job and her family, Mable always has time to help those who struggle or are in crisis - everyone knows that “you can always count on Mable.”

These two women have faced many challenges in their lives and have done so with grace, patience, and a warm sense of humor. We congratulate you, Virginia and Mable, and we thank you for the inspiration that you are to all of us!
Welfare Reform Update

The Building Opportunities Bonus (BOB), was introduced in both the House and the Senate as part of the Battered Women's Economic Security and Safety Act. This bill provides a total of $1 billion in bonuses over five years as a reward to the states that develop the most effective programs to address the root causes of poverty.

By acknowledging that hard work alone does not lift a family out of poverty, BOB encourages states to provide families with the support systems necessary to help them obtain and retain the level of employment that pays a living wage.

Since Congress has decided to adhere to the budget caps this year, the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) must be reduced by $8-11 billion from last year's levels. These SSBG funds assist vulnerable children, families, elderly, and those with disabilities. Funding for these vital programs have been cut from $2.8 billion in FY95 to just over $1.9 billion in FY99.

Did you know...

HUD has released a report to Congress entitled The Widening Gap: New Findings on Housing Affordability. This report points out that, despite a period of robust economic expansion, housing affordable to struggling families continues to shrink and rents have increased at twice the rate of general inflation.

New York is still one of the least affordable places to live - in Nassau County, one must earn $17.42 per hour to comfortably afford the rent for a one-bedroom apartment.

Inspired Philanthropy:

A Charitable Remainder Trust may be the right answer for your Investment Plan.

If you would like to learn more about this powerful way to give to Charity (perhaps to Bethany House), keep income flowing to yourself, and help protect your estate from taxes, a Charitable Remainder Trust may be best for you.

Merrill Lynch and American Express have both supported Bethany House with sizeable donations in the recent past, and both have offered assistance to our benefactors in the area of financial planning and setting up tax-exempt charitable trusts.

If you would like to know more about this topic, please contact:
- Robert Pollifrone, a Financial Advisor for American Express at [516] 582-9770
- Ellen Meyerson, a Financial Consultant for Merrill Lynch at [516] 498-3374. Good luck!

Volunteer Lawyers Complete 5 Years of Service to Bethany

Since 1994, The Special Committee on Volunteer Lawyers of the New York State Bar Association has worked tirelessly to solve the legal problems of Bethany's homeless families and has provided them an outstanding level of professional service. Cases have varied from problems with deadbeat dads to those surfacing in the foster care system to reclaiming an accident settlement to challenging a school where a teenager had been assaulted by another student.

All of the time and expertise offered by these generous lawyers is given pro bono. Bethany House is most grateful to the members of this Committee, and especially to Louis J. Castellano, Jr. who serves as its Chairperson and whose energy and commitment to pro bono work to assist low-income and marginalized persons is an example to all members of the New York State Bar.

We also offer a special thank you to Emmet J. Agoglia, E. Kevin Agoglia, Robert Gallo, Mary Lavelle Grein, Richard T. Lau, Thomas Maligno, Ronald J. Morelli, George P. Ricci, Elaine Sammon, and Jeanne Schieck.

Can you help?

Our "newly settled" families will be celebrating their first Christmas in their own homes and are in need of artificial trees and decorations. Please call Linda at 888-6616 or drop off your donations at Bethany House. Thank you.
Dear Friends of Bethany House,

Thank you for your generous support of our first annual Fall Fashion Show and Awards Dinner. We sincerely appreciate all you do and all that you are for the women and children of Bethany House.

The Latin phrase, *Surus Corda*, means “Lift up your heart” - by your generosity and concern you are lifting the hearts of so many women and children who count on Bethany for help.

All of the monies raised at this event will be used to provide for the needs of Bethany’s families. These needs are many: school shoes, a warm coat, a book bag, a lunch box, diapers and formula for a baby, medication for a young child, metro cards for women seeking employment. Sometimes we need a birthday present for a mother to give to her little girl; sometimes we are called upon to provide uniforms for a young woman to begin work and school supplies for youngster to begin the new school year.

In addition, we are beginning a BUILDING FUND so that Bethany can purchase houses as they become available and then seek out the federal dollars to cover these “up front” costs. Hopefully, this fund will replenish itself in this way, but we must raise the initial investment monies in order to respond to the pressing need for permanent housing. These houses will become *homes* for our families, and we hope to eventually transfer ownership directly to them. What a wonderful, lasting way to “lift up hearts!”

Yes, the needs are many . . . and we know that we could not do this work without your help. We deeply appreciate your generosity. In the name of all the staff and guests of Bethany House, I thank you for your goodness. May God bestow rich blessings on you, your home, and on all your loved ones!

*Surus corda!*
Sister Aimee

---

Thank you to all who supported our 
Harvest Moon Raffle.
Proceeds from the raffle totaled $5,640!
Winners of the cash prizes were:
- 3rd prize [$200] Elissa Metz
- 2nd prize [$300] Margaret Koslo
- 1st prize [$500] April Garschina

---

Fashion Show Committee
Chairpersons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Chairperson</th>
<th>Liz Cronley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>Linda Wilkonski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservations</td>
<td>Kathy York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashions</td>
<td>Carolyn Melillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Artist</td>
<td>Brian Koonmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweepstakes</td>
<td>Liz Cronley, Diana McNamara, Connie Kerwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centerpieces</td>
<td>Carolyn Melillo, Diana McNamara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favors</td>
<td>Cathy Regan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucky Buck</td>
<td>Katie Corwin, Cathy Isello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Jeanne Minoutis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Adriana Golfo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Special thanks to:
FOX’S Designer Clothes at Off-Prices
Neal Currie, Photographer
Chief Corporate Sponsor
Merrill Lynch - Long Island District

---

Thanks for a job well done!
Liz Cronley, Chairperson for the event, welcomes almost four hundred guests to Bethany House's First Annual Fashion show and Awards Dinner.

Connie Kerwick addresses the audience after she was honored by Sr. Aimee as "a most remarkable woman and a committed benefactor of Bethany House."

Bethany House presents the Harvest Moon Fall Fashion Show and Awards Dinner
Thursday Evening October 21, 1999

Mable A. Clark
Recipient of the Sursum Corda Award: An Outstanding Woman of Accomplishment.

Virginia Hassler
Recipient of the Sursum corda Award: An Outstanding Woman of Compassion.
Breakfast with Santa

at

B. K. Sweeney's Restaurant

636 Franklin Avenue, Garden City, NY

Santa will be our special guest

from 9 AM to 11 AM

on Saturday, December 11th

Bring your gift or donation* for the children of Bethany House and enjoy a delicious complimentary breakfast buffet, kindness of the Sweeney Family!

GIFTS FOR THE CHILDREN
FACE PAINTING
CANDY CANES
FUN FUN FUN !!!

*SUGGESTED DONATION: $15.00 PER PERSON

Bethany House provides shelter and supportive services to women and children who are homeless, regardless of cause, and has served the Long Island community since 1978.
Bethany House is a warm, loving shelter for women and children who are homeless. Established in 1978 by the Sisters of St. Dominic of Amityville, Bethany House has grown to include three residences for homeless families, particularly families with special needs.

Bethany House was the first emergency shelter to open on Long Island, and has been singled out as a model program because Bethany has always provided safe, supportive emergency housing combined with a component of services and resources. It is in such an atmosphere that those who are homeless are able to move through the crisis to stability, with the help and support of dedicated professionals and in the presence of a caring community.

Recently, in order to better serve homeless families, Bethany House merged with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, bringing together two agencies whose service of those in need is unparalleled on Long Island.

At this special time of Thanksgiving, we thank you for your generous support of our work in changing children’s lives and in reunifying homeless families as they work together toward financial and emotional stability.

God bless you!

Bethany House
BACK TO US:
YOUR ADDRESS LABEL
COPIES PLEASE MAIL TO RECEIVE FUTURE IF YOU DO NOT WANT THIS NEWSLETTER OR DUPLICATE COPIES OF IF YOU ARE RECEIVING

516 868-6866
ROOSEVELT NY 11575
102 WHITEHOUSE AVENUE