SPECIAL BLESSINGS
at this
BLESSED SEASON!

The Children of
Bethany House
Bethany House - a place to come when there's no place to go... 
- now more than ever!

For the past thirty years, Bethany House has been very busy growing and adapting to the changing needs of the homeless community here in Nassau County. However, the need for emergency and transitional housing and services for families has never been so great as at the present time. Since the tragedy of 9/11, Bethany has been called upon to open its doors wider and wider in response to the pressing needs of homeless families. In the past four years, we have grown 500%, from a bed capacity of seventeen to that of eighty-five nightly. Permit me to begin with a short profile of Bethany’s history and amazing growth, and to then tell you how we “do what we do” with your help and support.

Bethany House is a nonprofit agency that was founded in 1978 in response to a growing need for emergency shelter and services for women and their children who are caught in the crisis of homelessness. Bethany House of Nassau County was incorporated in 1987 and had developed a full, energetic Board of Directors by early in 1990.

Bethany House has defined its Mission as a call to provide a concrete response to the belief that every individual needs and deserves to have adequate food, clothing, shelter and safety. And, in addition, these essential resources should be provided in nurturing surroundings and within a sustaining environment.

In September of 1978, before homelessness had become a common term, three Amityville Dominican Sisters rented a small house in Roosevelt, Long Island, and opened their doors and hearts to the frightened families who came to them in need of shelter, guidance and comfort. As the crisis of homelessness grew in the mid 1980’s, Bethany House expanded into a larger facility which is known as Bethany One. Two other residences, “Bethany, Too!” and Bethany South, and the Bellmore Apartments have since been added, giving Bethany the present capability to house up to eighty-five women and children nightly.

With the additional bedroom space came the expansion of professional support services so that crisis of homelessness would not simply be alleviated; it would actually be ended. In fact, of the homeless women and children who have stayed with us for longer than two weeks, 94% have found safe and adequate permanent housing and have successfully stabilized their lives after their homeless crisis.

Each family’s case receives individual attention from Bethany’s seasoned case workers who have extensive experience in dealing with the unique problems faced by persons who have become homeless, particularly with families who have special needs. And, because Bethany is a community-based organization and an active part of the human services arena, we are in an excellent position to channel the resources from several other agencies to better serve our families and to effect positive, lasting change.

What is it that makes Bethany “the place to come when there’s no place to go?” If you have never been there, it is difficult to understand. But once you have experienced the love and concern of our unique staff and volunteers, you will know Bethany’s sense of peace and well-being that softens the most hardened heart and revitalizes the most exhausted spirit. As one of our guests put it, “There is a presence in this house that reaches out and encircles you with its energy and strength - most say it is irresistible; all say it is from God.”

Since our beginnings, the CROCUS has been the symbol of Bethany House because this brave little flower breaks through cold, hard ground as it dares to push all obstacles aside and clears new ground for growth. This has been Bethany’s history as well, and the crocus has come to stand for the determination, strength, and quiet resiliency of Bethany’s spirit.

As we celebrate Bethany’s 30 years of service, I thank you for all you do to help us to continue this special work. Your support is one of our most priceless blessings!  
Sister Aimee
Helping You to Help Bethany

We at Bethany are ever thankful for all that you, our supporters, have enabled us to do over the last 30 years in fulfilling our mission. If it weren't for the sacrifices that all of you have made through the years, we could not have served the thousands of families that have entered our doors in need of a home and a new start. Your generosity has enabled us to tangibly change people's lives and for that fact we, and the families we serve, are so thankful for all that you have done and hopeful that we will be as able to meet the ever-growing need in the future!

With the future of Bethany in mind, we would like to share with you some good news from our Board of Directors. In an effort to assist our donors, we have assembled a Planned Giving Committee to work specifically with our donors on a volunteer basis in assisting them with the many aspects of charitable gifting. Through this process, we have discovered that there are so many different ways for charitable gifts to be made that are of greater benefit to our donors than simply writing a check. We have also discovered that there are many donors that have been tremendously loyal to Bethany in life and want to ensure that Bethany continues our mission through their financial support long after they are gone. We hope to serve as a resource to our donors to ensure that they are able to support the causes that are important to them as effectively and efficiently as possible.

We look forward to providing more information on planned giving strategies in our newsletters to follow and would welcome any calls from our donors to discuss ways in which we can help you help Bethany House. As Andrew Carnegie so wisely said, let us resolve to stop accumulating and begin the infinitely more serious and difficult task of wise distribution.

Please feel free to contact either of the following committee members to discuss many of the planned giving strategies in greater detail:
Eileen D'Agostino: 516-431-6243 or Bill Peterson: 516-558-7308.

What is the secret to making a gift that will provide the greatest meaning to you and to Bethany House? Part of the answer lies in careful planning and good organization. The best plans are created by first, deciding what your goals are and second, determining how to accomplish these goals.

Gift plans create opportunities for both Bethany House and our donors. Determining what gift is right for you is just as important as making the gift. There are many options from which you can choose. The correct plan for you balances what you wish to accomplish for yourself, your family, and your charitable interests in your overall estate and financial plans.

You can learn about giving strategies that will allow you to make a meaningful charitable gift to Bethany while enhancing your [and your family’s] future financial well being.

It is every man's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it. Albert Einstein
Bethany’s 11th Annual Golf Outing and Dinner

The sun was shining! It was a warm, beautiful day to play golf and enjoy a splendid dinner together. It wasn’t easy to accomplish. For the first time in 11 years, our Annual Golf Outing and Dinner required a “rain date”. And so, we packed up and went home to await the second try. There were no more open dates available at our original location, The Tam O’Shanter Golf Club, but we were most fortunate that the Rockville Links could fit us in to their tight schedule on Monday, August 20. But – it rained again! However, they say that “three is a charm”, and so we gathered again on Monday, August 27th for our Annual Outing and . . . the sun was shining!

After a wonderful, clear afternoon of golf at its best, we all came together for cocktails and dinner and to pay tribute to our Honorees: Hugh McNamara was our individual honoree, and Garden City Printers and Mailers was our corporate honoree, represented, of course, by Joe Grzymalski. Their faithful commitment, frequent generosity and unsurpassed dedication to the work of Bethany House during these many years have made life better for countless women and children struggling with homelessness.

Throughout these years, Hugh McNamara has been a tireless fund-raiser and brilliant organizer for Bethany. Hugh worked side by side with Bill Kerwick on our early golf outings and stepped up to take over the leadership when Bill was taken from us so suddenly in 2002.

For five years Hugh faithfully served as Chairperson of the Golf Committee and worked diligently to make each year more successful than the last. In 2006, Hugh and the Committee not only reached the set goal of $100,000 but passed it!

Not only has the firm of Garden City Printers and Mailers given us exceptional professional service, but they have donated all of the printing for our Golf Outings for these past eleven years. Joe Grzymalski Sr. began this generous tradition in 1996 and it has been carried on by his family ever since. Who could imagine a Bethany Golf Outing without several members of the Grzymalski family out on the course? Young Joe Grzymalski accepted the tribute offered to his family by Bethany with the same graciousness of his dear father, saying that the Grzymalski family is happy to help Bethany House in any way they can.

As we know, much of Bethany’s success is due to the hard work and generosity people and firms like these Honorees. We thank all of you for all that you do to help and support us - we are indeed blessed.

We also thank all of the wonderful people who contributed so much time, money and effort to the success of this event. The Golf Committee and the Commemorative Journal Committee have worked tirelessly to make this 2007 Golf Outing and Dinner both memorable and profitable. We deeply appreciate their devotion to Bethany House and to its Mission as we work together in changing children’s lives.
2007 Fashion Show and Awards Luncheon

On September 15, 2007, we gathered again at the Rockville Links to enjoy a special lunch, honor special women and enjoy a fashion show featuring Bethany's special moms and children as models.

Every year at this time, Bethany House presents the SURUM CORDA awards to two outstanding women for their extraordinary ability to lift the hearts and spirits of others. Joan Giles was chosen as Bethany's Outstanding Woman of Compassion. Her devotion to Bethany springs from her deep commitment to care for others which spans more than thirty-eight years during which Joan raised her wonderful family, cared for older family members, and still found time to respond to many needs in her parish and community. Most recently, Joan is our receptionist two mornings a week at Bethany One. In accepting her award, Joan spoke of how life-giving her volunteer work has been and how it has enriched her in many ways. As she puts it best: Bethany always brings joy to my soul.

Penny Shea was named Bethany's Outstanding Woman of Accomplishment this year because of her ability to overcome difficulties and her success in working toward her personal goals and financial security for her and her young son Sean. A former resident of Bethany House during a difficult period, Penny has moved gracefully from homelessness to stability. She is presently a valued staff member at Bethany, and is known for her super ability to "multi-task", learn new skills quickly, and help in any way that is needed. Penny thanked Bethany for "enabling me to accept this award." We at Bethany thank you both for the inspiration and example you are to all of us.

Our 2007 Bethany Angels Award was presented to Liz Cronley and Carolyn Melillo for their outstanding dedication to Bethany, particularly for their leadership in co-chairing our Fashion Shows and Awards Dinners since their beginnings in 1999. Carolyn and Liz have worked tirelessly for Bethany, and have energized all of their friends, and their families to do so as well. We are so very grateful to them for being such a vibrant part of the Bethany community.

Once again, Bethany's moms and children stole the show [and our hearts] as the models for the Fashion Show. They smiled, "walked the runway" and enjoyed showing off the latest fashions from Estelle's Dressy Dresses. A special THANK YOU to Linda Wilkonoski, Jane Banfield, Janie Howard and all the committee members who worked to make our 2007 Fashion Show and Awards Luncheon such a success. We deeply appreciate their support and caring.

Three generations of caring for Bethany – Jessie Fentnor enjoys the event with her daughter Jamie and her granddaughters.
Bethany News Items: Celebrating Bethany's 30th Year

It is difficult to believe that thirty years have passed since Bethany first opened its doors! On August 21, 1978 three Dominican Sisters from Amityville began a new journey and a new ministry: a response to the needs of families made homeless by crisis, particularly within the Roosevelt community.

This was a time in the recent history of Roosevelt when slum lords would burn the houses at night because the area had been “red-lined” and they were about to lose their insurance. This, of course, resulted in displacing many poor families who were left with nothing - Bethany was destined to answer this need.

The three sisters [Sister Chris, Sister Fran, and Sister Aimee] rented a little house on Taylor Avenue in Roosevelt for $275.00 a month. The owner of the house left it completely furnished and well-protected by a rather large German shepherd named “Bullet” - the Sisters had not planned on a dog, but Bullet soon became part of the welcoming atmosphere of the very first “Bethany,” and was of great comfort to the guests as he would lie down and place his head on their feet in his unique gesture of welcome!

This little house could provide for three guests. And so it began . . .

In the following months, we will provide more of Bethany’s history and offer all of you, our faithful readers, a better “glimpse” into who and what we are.

We will also be celebrating this special anniversary and hope you will join us as we honor those who have helped us to grow!

Coming Events at Bethany:

Bethany House Valentine’s Party
On: Friday, February 8, 2008
At: The Rockville Links Club
7:30 PM – 10:30 PM
For an invitation, please call Linda at 868-6866

Boxtown at Molloy College
On: Thursday, April 3, 2008
- More information coming soon!

May 4, 2008: Bethany’s Celebration of its 30th Year
At Molloy College
- More information coming soon!
In July 2006, Daphne signed a one-year lease for an apartment in a two-family house in Roosevelt. The resident-owner of the house had worked for a software company for several years, and his financial security seemed intact. Daphne, raising her daughter and working as a receptionist, believed that she and her child, Victoria, were finally beginning to live out their dream: a safe and secure home in suburbia.

In March 2007, the homeowner called Daphne to say that his house was in foreclosure and he was moving out. Daphne had been given no notice, no indication that the house was in jeopardy. The homeowner moved, leaving his tenants to fend for themselves. The lights stayed on for a few more days and Daphne tried desperately to come up with a plan.

A few mornings later, when she returned from taking Victoria to Centennial Avenue School before getting ready for work, a sheriff was waiting. He instructed her to go to the District Court in Hempstead. Daphne had to lose a day’s pay to do so, but went to the Court in the hopes of saving her apartment. When she returned home later that same day, her furniture and belongings had been removed to a storage unit.

But the groceries she had bought the day before were still in the fridge. For one more night Daphne and Victoria camped out on the floor of the place they had called home. The next morning, a bank representative arrived and asked Daphne to vacate the premises immediately - and he refused to let her take her food as the house and all contents now belonged to the bank.

Daphne’s landlord had not returned to her the security money or any portion of her unused rent. Since her rent had been more than half of her monthly income, Daphne had not been able to save enough to provide the three month’s rent required to secure a new place. And so, Daphne ended up at the Department of Social Services for the first time in her life - she had never needed help before.

Fortunately, Daphne and seven-year-old Victoria were sent to Bethany House where they were placed in the Bethany residence that was closest to Victoria’s school, minimizing the disruption in her life. Daphne was able to continue to work while in emergency placement, and has recently relocated to one of Bethany's apartments where she again can live out her dreams!

In accordance with a stated goal of Nassau County Administration, Bethany House continues to meet the challenges of serving families within their own communities by providing a safe and comfortable environment complete with nutritious meals, comprehensive case management and access to extensive resources and referrals. In this way, Daphne and Victoria’s homelessness will not merely be interrupted, but ended and Life will again be right-side-up!

Foreclosures are on the rise throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties due in part to the proliferation of subprime loans that were unscrupulously offered to home buyers. As interest rates on those loans began to rise, many homeowners were unable to keep up with payments and a significant number face the loss of their property. By some estimates, as many as 19,000 homeowners in Nassau and Suffolk counties could face foreclosure within the next two years.

Nassau County homeowners may call [516] 571- HOME [4663] to arrange an appointment with a counselor who will help to assess a homeowner’s financial situation, determine what options are available, and help negotiate with lenders. Counselors are familiar with the various workout arrangements that lenders will consider and know what course of action makes the most sense for homeowners. In addition, the counselor can call the lender on behalf of a homeowner to discuss a workout plan. By meeting with a counselor before mortgage payments are too far behind, homeowners can protect themselves from future credit problems.
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Bethany House

Sister Amee, the Board and the Staff of Bethany House

and all those dear to you,

May the New Year be one of peace, joy and love for you.

May you be especially blessed at this time of wonder, and

helping us out financially, you lift our spirits with your kindness.

and we want you to know that your help is so very important - besides moms, and are expecting three more babies any day. Our needs are many,

As I write this note to thank you, we have 35 little ones and their

and we could not accomplish it without you.

support of this gentle work of caring for God's homeless women and children

bath, and a spacious playground for our children. We deeply appreciate your

has added a beautiful extension to provide five family bedrooms, an extra

As we begin our thirtieth year, Bethany House has grown again and

Christmas 2007

Dear Friends,