During this Holiday Season,

**MANY** things will catch your **eye** — — —

**BUT** —

Only **A FEW** will catch your **heart**.

Please make **Bethany House** one of them.

We **really** need your help this year.

Please see page 7 for ways that **YOU** can help!
“Sister Says . . .”

Maya Angelou instructs us: “I can be changed by what happens to me. But, I refuse to be reduced by it.” Homelessness can and does change us, but it need never reduce or diminish us. Over the years, we at Bethany have been deeply disturbed by the traumatic effects caused by the loss of one’s home, particularly upon our little ones.

Many of our young families have experienced multiple traumas even before actually becoming homeless: these include physical and emotional abuse or neglect, separations from family, violent relationships, and the loss of income and status. Because our families have significant histories of trauma that impact their current needs and ability to function, they have had to learn to adapt in order to keep themselves safe. These adaptive responses to trauma may range from withdrawal to aggression, from passivity to obstinacy. One child hoards all the toys while a second looks at them with a stoic disinterest. One child strikes out at another while a second child injures himself.

It is necessary to respond to these adaptive behaviors with specific skills and knowledge so that these behaviors can be understood and then replaced with more effective ones. This is why Bethany is initiating an innovative program for our children based upon trauma-informed practices so that they can, at last, begin to heal. Watch for more information in our next issue. Sister Aimee

What’s in a Word: Child

The word child evokes in all of us images of innocence, smiles and giggles, and outstretched arms. The common language for all children is laughter and wonder. It is a very young person who looks at the adult world with complete trust, obedience and love. How does the world appear to a child when these bonds of love and trust are broken?

A child’s early years are his most formative and, as he goes through the many stages of growing and learning, these years create the bedrock upon which his life is built. How can a child thrive when his patterns of growth and learning are disrupted?

A child living in a neglectful situation may never learn to love life or himself as he would if he had a good beginning. But when this child comes to Bethany House, he finds love, understanding, encouragement, and a “family” where he can feel that he truly belongs. The dinner table is not only a place of sustenance, but also a place for learning and communicating. A playroom full of toys and new friends soon becomes this child’s own wonderful place to be. He quickly learns that he does not have to be afraid: it’s okay to be a child. Bethany intersects a child’s life at the most fragile of moments—the moment of loss. Loss cuts deep, but Bethany’s love for this child goes yet deeper so that he soon understands that he is a cherished gift to be loved for who he is.

Healing a child’s brokenness . . . loving him back to life . . . helping him to once again trust and flourish . . . Isn’t this our Mission? — Jessie Fenino

Random Acts of Kindness

Sherri Weinstein was browsing in a craft store when she happened to meet and strike up a conversation with a complete stranger who was buying supplies for a place called Bethany House. She left the store with the idea that she also wanted to help.

Her son Joshua, in preparation for his Bar Mitzvah, decided that helping Bethany would be a great service project for him. With Sherri’s help, Joshua composed a letter asking for donations of money, clothing, food, or toys and they gave it to everyone in their neighborhood. They started collecting; Joshua wrote “Thank You.” Then Sherri enlisted her friends and began creating “theme baskets” such as one containing infant clothing or school supplies or toiletries. Not to be left out, her husband Alan sent memos about Bethany to his business associates and collected $800!! Finally, he went to restaurants where he collected large pans of delicious ziti to bring to Bethany House for supper.

The Weinstein family made a commitment to help Bethany House and we are so happy and thankful that they continue to do so whenever and however they can.

What started as random has become regular for the Weinstein family, and all of the moms and children at Bethany sincerely appreciate All of these wonderful and loving Random Acts of Kindness!
Bethany Declares 2009 "The Year of the Child"

Among all the industrialized nations, the United States ranks #1 in numbers of homeless women and children. Homeless families comprise roughly 34% of the total homeless population in the United States. Approximately 1.35 million of our children will experience homelessness over the course of this coming year. On any given day, more than 200,000 American children have no place to live in the wealthiest and most generous country in the world.

And on any given night, up to fifty homeless children find welcome, warmth, and rest at Bethany House. Because Bethany works so closely with families who struggle with homelessness, our staff has become keenly aware that the children are the ones who suffer the most from the crisis of homelessness and experience far more long-term effects of its deprivations than do their parents.

Did you know that:

• **Homeless children** are sick four times as often as most other children and have high rates of acute and chronic illnesses. In particular, **homeless children** have
  4 times the rate of asthma and respiratory infections;
  5 times as many stomach and intestinal infections;
  Twice as many emergency hospitalizations;
  6 times as many speech and stammering problems.

• **Homeless children** suffer from emotional and/or behavioral problems that affect learning at almost three times the rate of other children.

More than one-fifth of homeless children between 3 and 6 years have serious emotional problems requiring professional care, but less than one-third of these children are receiving the treatment they need.

In addition:

• **Homeless children** between the ages of 6 and 17 also struggle with high rates of mental health problems. 47% have problems such as anxiety, depression, or withdrawal, compared to only 18% of other school-age children.

• **62% of homeless children** have been personally exposed to violence. For children over 12 years, the rate climbs to 83% who have heard gunshots, have seen someone get shot or stabbed, or have seen a dead body lying on the street.

• And, as a result of this pervasive violence, **34% of homeless children** must live apart from their families.

And so, Bethany will work in the coming year to better assist our children on the difficult journey back from disruption and chaos to stabilization and consistency. Bethany has designed a new program for this purpose and it will begin in January 2009. Even though this will mean additional costs, it is so essential to our children that we must move forward. [More details can be found on page 2 in the Executive Director’s Column, *Sister Says.*]

I like to be here because I can really sleep. I'm starting to feel better now.

When we lived with my dad I had to stay awake to watch out for my mom — he wouldn't hit her as much if he knew I could see him because he was afraid I would tell – and I would.

*Robby [a nine-year old child who stayed at Bethany]*
Bethany's Golf Outing marks close

The trophies were unique...

The prizes were wonderful!

Golf Outing Honors Bethany's Best

In a beautiful setting, we had the opportunity to honor many of those who have been with Bethany over the years!

The Dominican Sisters of Amityville

Molloy College

Fr. Daniel Mc Donald, SJ

Hassel Motors, among others

The Kerwick Family

The Grzymalski Family
With the energetic leadership of our Golf Committee Chair, Don DiBrita, our Volunteers and Staff saw to it that the day went smoothly for all our generous Golfers!

Of course, our Live Auctioneers outdid themselves again.

Generous Golfers

A great day was had by so many good friends!

THANK YOU for all your support of our Annual Golf Outing!
Bethany Hosts the 2008 Fashion Show and Awards Dinner

This year our Annual Fashion Show and Awards Dinner was held at the Rockville Links on the first of October 2008. As the autumn leaves made our days brighter with their brilliant colors, we at Bethany gathered together to brighten an evening by sharing a special meal, honoring some amazing women, and enjoying and applauding our fabulous Fashion Show, unique because it features Bethany’s own women and children as its models.

At this event, it is Bethany’s custom to present the Sursum Corda Awards to outstanding women for their gifted ability to lift the hearts and spirits of others. This year we honored Hempstead Town Councilwoman Dorothy Goosby as our 2008 Outstanding Woman of Compassion. Councilwoman Goosby has always been a dear friend, advocate, and supporter of Bethany House and its mission to provide for the needs of homeless families. Her efforts in helping us to obtain Community Development Grants and her gracious presence at so many of Bethany’s functions illustrate Councilwoman Goosby’s true concern for us and for those whom we serve.

Councilwoman Goosby particularly enjoys attending Santa’s Workshop and helping our mothers choose and wrap special presents for their children at Christmas. When we celebrated with our 30th Anniversary Party at Molloy College, she presented us with a special citation for our years of service to the homeless community. And now, it was our turn to present this award to Councilwoman Goosby and to say thank you for all that you have done for us over these many years!

Stephanie Montgomery was chosen as Bethany’s 2008 Outstanding Woman of Accomplishment because of her ability to overcome great difficulties while putting the needs of others before her own. When Stephanie came to Bethany South after a difficult hospital stay, she set aside her own concerns and reached out to the younger women and children who soon came to love her like a mother. In spite of having to face and overcome severe physical challenges, Stephanie has found the time and love to develop a special bond and rapport with Bethany’s other guests and staff alike, and she offers her help wherever and whenever it is needed. Presently Stephanie resides at Bethany, Too! where she is an invaluable asset in our Program for More Mature Women in Transition. Stephie is an inspiration for all of us and we are very thankful for her gentle presence, her great accomplishments, and her deep commitment to Bethany House.

Our Spectacular Birthday Angels

Our 2008 Bethany Angels Award was presented this year to a group of loving, caring women for their unique dedication to Bethany’s children. Maria Parada founded "Spectacular Birthdays" in 2007 and her colleague Michele Golub is helpers, Nancy Hopkins and Liz Wisey. Every child needs a birthday party! and cash donations, purchase birthday our dinner table and dining room with dinner and, of course, a birthday cake

The Spectacular Birthday Angels “laundry baskets” filled with many, families. And, to each party they also bring a special arts & crafts project that the children immensely enjoy! After spreading their contagious joy and love all around Bethany, these Angels slip away until the next Spectacular Birthday comes around on the calendar.

We at Bethany are so very grateful to our Angels for this wonderful program that makes so many children happy and for the generous spirit that inspires and sustains it. Thank you so much!
What Will Your Gift Do?

It will help Bethany to *make a real difference* in the lives of many young families –
As you know, these stressed economic times are *difficult* for all of us;
but for those who have the *least*, these times are *unbearable*.
If we have been blessed with *more* than we need,
perhaps it is so that we can help provide for those who have *less*.

Please consider a generous gift to Bethany at this Season of Giving.

We know that there are many organizations that rely on your financial assistance, but *none* is needier and *few* are as worthy:
Your charitable donations to Bethany House are used to provide *direct services and emergency assistance* for those who are homeless, hungry, and in need of a little extra help to make it through some rough days. Your support enables us to:

- Shelter, clothe, and feed up to 85 homeless women and children every day in clean, comfortable, safe surroundings.
- Provide a secure home environment with a wide range of supportive social, educational, and counseling services for up to 40 families each day who have fled domestic violence.
- Offer residential recovery services - education, counseling, and support - for young mothers caught in dysfunctional lifestyles who are struggling to create a better life for their children.
- Provide day, evening, and weekend supportive counseling and life direction for 10 to 15 young mothers each day who are working to fine-tune their parenting skills and learn better coping skills so that they may care for their children in a more holistic way.
- Provide nutritious, well balanced meals [breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks] for all of Bethany's guests every day, all year long.
- Celebrate Christmas for each child and each adult with gifts of warmth and protection from the winter cold.
- Provide quality and compassionate responses to the degrading and de-humanizing aspects of homelessness.

Because of your great generosity, all of these services are given *free of charge* in the spirit of caring, mutual respect, and love. THANK YOU for making all this possible, and please help us to continue! [An envelope is included for your gift to our children.]

We thank you...
The Children's Corner

Hi, everybody! My name is Shadrach and I am the new puppy at Bethany. Too! I was a "shelter dog" who had a really sad life until I came to Bethany in July. I grew up in Pennsylvania in a house with lots of cats and some very mean people who hurt me a lot! But now I have a whole new life with lots of friends who love me and take good care of me. When I came here, my name was Kashi, but it didn't fit me. I didn't like the name either because it reminded me of rough times past. So, now I'm Shadrach - I'm named after the youth in the Bible whom God saved from the fiery furnace and gave a new life. Everyone says my early life was like a "fiery furnace" and then God brought me HOME to Bethany. Soon I'll have my first Christmas at Bethany - I hear it's really special so I'll tell you all about it next time -

HAPPY HOLIDAYS to ALL my NEW FRIENDS!

Shadrach xxx