For fifteen years, *Turning Point* has followed a basic, attractive format which we had all gotten accustomed to seeing. However, even newsletter styles become outdated. And so, we present our new layout design with this issue. Thanks to the invaluable, professional assistance of Neil Masih, our newsletter has been modernized and adapted to its digital future. In fact, you can now read the newsletter [online](http://www.bethanyhouseny.com) at our web site www.bethanyhouseny.com. We hope you like our new look!

*Jessie Fentnor, Editor*
Sister Says . . .

Bethany House’s newest motivation comes from some very startling facts: over the past four years, Bethany has seen a sixty percent increase in the number of single women between 50 and 65 who have become homeless. The race and ethnicity of these women spans the spectrum, but the common thread for all is that they are low-income older women who cannot financially afford to live alone here on Long Island.

Homelessness uniquely challenges the elderly. Not only does their vulnerability make meeting basic human needs for food, shelter, and safety more problematic, but it interferes with resolving the later tasks of the lifecycle: the opportunity to reflect on one’s life, to achieve personal integrity, and to experience a sense of completeness and inner peace.

These are sad realities, but they have motivated Bethany to initiate a pilot program which can easily be replicated: providing long-term housing for a group of five older women in a safe, supportive environment that will assist them in their personal growth as they work toward their educational, employment and future housing goals. A commitment from Nassau County to provide these tenants with Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers when they are ready to move on will greatly enrich this program, as a woman who has lived with us could then leave and rent an apartment for only 30% of her income. This would provide the long-term financial stability that our older residents need in order to truly enjoy their later years.

See additional details below and watch for more information on this innovative program in our next issue.

What’s in a Word: Motivation

Imagine waking up in the morning and having no food for your children. They are crying as the Sherriff oversees the packing of your few belongings to complete the eviction. The “man in your life” has left you and the children with nothing. You have no family to help you because you insisted on staying with this man even though he abused you physically and emotionally. Because you have little self-esteem, confidence or tools to rise above this struggle, you feel defeated and depressed. You have been conditioned to feel this way and to live without hope of a better life. Your feelings of failure have broken your spirit. Why try?

Now imagine a place called Bethany House where women and children find refuge, safe shelter and gentle care. The peace that comes with being safe brings stability. You realize there are loving, knowledgeable people there to help you; there are other women who understand and welcome you. You begin to feel a “positive spirit.” Dare you try?

“But I don’t know where to begin,” you say. “How can I get a job with no skills? I’ll take the Computer Courses offered at Bethany and, if I do well, I will be able to continue attending additional classes at the Computer Center. On Saturdays at Bethany U, professionals give courses on a variety of topics such as Parenting, Coping Skills, and Job Readiness. I can gain a great deal of insight about myself from the Empowerment for Women Course, too.”

Wait a minute! What’s happening? You have come to a Turning Point in your life! You are beginning to feel a true sense of hope. You are ready to try and you shall make a better life for you and your children. You think to yourself: I know I can - I am really motivated! The peace that comes with being safe brings stability and stability engenders motivation. Thank you, Bethany House, for helping me, showing me the way to stability and the motivation to change!  

Sister Jessie Fontenot

Bethany’s Newest Venture:

Long-Term Housing for Mature Single Women

Since early in 2007, BETHANY HOUSE has used one of its emergency residences to house and provide support services for older/single women who live on fixed, minimal incomes. Concern for these women has motivated us to recognize and respond to their needs:

- Rents for single rooms are now more than double the shelter allowance provided by the Department of Social Services. (DSS pays $288/month for rent, while average rooms in Nassau County rent for $600-$650/month.)
- Many of these women have been living alone due to the loss of a spouse through death or divorce.
- Most of these women do not want to live alone, and seek out support and companionship of women in similar circumstances.

Therefore, BETHANY HOUSE has purchased a house in Baldwin where a small group of these women can live together in a community setting, share house chores, and participate in the many programs Bethany House offers to help them obtain greater self-sufficiency.

This venture is another of Bethany’s pilot programs: easily replicated and a workable solution for housing mature, low-income, single women in the safe, secure environment they deserve.

PLEASE NOTE: Bethany House has used its Housing Fund monies to purchase this new house and has sought help from federal funds to repay the investment. We still need financial assistance to furnish the house, to provide insurance, utilities, food, and minimal staffing.
The average person spends 365 hours a month at home -

... Imagine what it’s like not to have one.

Today, homelessness is a harsh reality for tens of thousands of Long Islanders - and more than half of them are children.

Join us at Bethany House in our efforts to change this reality - provide a gift for a homeless child or family as you help decorate Bethany’s Christmas Tree!

Along with a special ornament for one of Bethany’s Four Christmas Trees,

A $10 donation will provide warm slippers for a little child.

A $15 donation will provide mittens and a hat for a homeless child.

A $20 donation will provide a cozy blanket and sleeper for a homeless baby.

A $25 donation will provide a new warm sweater for Mom.

A $50 donation will provide snow boots for three homeless children or blankets for a needy family of four.

A $100 donation will provide Christmas dinner for all our guests at one of our houses and Christmas decorations for Bethany’s Apartments!

[Another Suggestion for Gifts for Our Guests: GIFT CARDS from some of the LESS EXPENSIVE Stores.]

Yes! I want to help Bethany House to provide for the needs of homeless children and their Moms at Christmas. Enclosed is my Donation for: $ ____________________

First Name: ___________________________ Last Name: ___________________________

Phone: _______________________________ Email: _________________________________

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to BETHANY HOUSE and mail it in the enclosed envelope. Thank You so much!

“Unless someone like YOU cares a whole, awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.” ~Dr. Seuss
14th Annual Golf Outing - Huge Success!

Once again Bethany’s Golf Outing outdid itself in raising funds for our moms and children! Through the tireless work of our Co-chairs, Tom Sedita and Nick Salerno, and their dedicated Committee, we raised more than $100,000. Of course, much of this success was also the result of the energetic efforts of our Honoree, Chris Heckman, who began raising funds for Bethany at his 50th Birthday Party and continued right up to the event by attracting new golfers and donors to the Outing.

We sincerely appreciate all the support and friendship that comes to Bethany through our Golf Outings – we could never do this gentle work without your help and we treasure your friendship!

Mark the Date: Our 15th Annual Golf Outing will take place on Monday, July 18, 2011.
“Unless someone like YOU cares a whole, awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.” Dr. Seuss

Jessie Fentnor came to Bethany House almost six years ago and has been actively involved with us since the first day - Connie Kerwick asked her to lunch with the intention of seeing if Jessie could work on our newsletter, Turning Point. Well, not only did Jesse agree to help us with her journalism skills, she also has become a valued Board member, serving as Secretary of the Corporation for two terms and presently as our Board’s Vice President for Program Development. In her role as Secretary, Jessie was responsible for Minutes for Board Meetings and Executive Committee Meetings and has maintained Bethany’s records in a high standard. “I took Minutes other times too . . . it seemed that all eyes were on me whenever someone was needed to take notes, and I soon became known as The Minutes Lady.”

Jessie loves to travel and to explore new places; she also enjoys meeting new people and engaging them in a variety of ways, particularly when it can better help Bethany. She explains our mission and insists they look at our new website. Often, when S. Aimee needs someone to accompany her to a meeting or event, she calls Jessie. “We have looked at many houses; we have gone to the County to ask about grant funding, to Nassau Community College to set up a liaison program for our young women and to many fund raisers, including the ones for the Rockville Centre St. Patrick’s Day Parade,” Jessie recalls. “You might say I’m available to help as often as I can and -the two of us really get around!”

A career educator, Jessie also devotes her time to Bethany’s children. She initiated a wonderful program in which they created little books as gifts for their moms, complete with photos and their original art work. Jessie teaches creative writing to our older children, showing them techniques that will stand by them in future endeavors. Jessie is a dynamic educator but also a loving mother, a proud grandmother, and the most faithful of friends. As she puts it, “I most always show up.”

But of all the amazing things that Jessie does for so many of us, the most outstanding is her work as Editor of Turning Point, Bethany’s Newsletter. Each issue finds her with new approaches and fresh ideas, and this issue is no exception – once again, Jessie Fentnor is on the cutting edge as we re-design our newsletter to better meet the challenges of our digital age. Thank you, Jessie, for taking us so far ahead! Sister Aimee

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Homeless LI Women Educate College Students

- **BOXTOWN Comes to Bethany** –

Each October since 1995, Molloy College has welcomed Bethany House to build a BOXTOWN on campus wherein students and faculty “sleep out” in solidarity with the homeless community. In a newer program begun in 2007, Bethany has invited Molloy College to come to our “campus” and to build relationships. This fall’s events were held at Bethany House on Thursday, November 4 and 11, 2010.

During this five-hour experience, Molloy College students are each given the identity of a homeless woman with children, based on an actual case history - a character they must assume for the full time of the event. In their new identity, the students spend time learning from the Bethany House residents what they will encounter when they go to DSS (Department of Social Services) seeking help and how to cope with the new and challenging experience of actually being homeless.

In turn, the homeless women residing at Bethany also take on different identities and act as case managers for Bethany’s newest guests, teaching real life lessons to the students who are most eager to learn. As the evening draws to an end, it is clear that the warm relationships that have developed between the college students and the sheltered women and their children are truly “what it’s all about.”

Bethany House Receives Education Grant from Allstate

Thanks to an introduction from NY State Senator Dean Skelos, Allstate Insurance Company recently gave Bethany House $2,500 to be used to help fund its 2011 Fashion Show and Awards Dinner. Proceeds from the event will benefit Bethany’s educational and computer programs which are provided for our homeless residents. Allstate dedicates significant corporate funding to organizations that offer educational programs to women, particularly survivors of domestic violence.

In photo (left to right): House Director Theresa Sparrow-Gill, Senator Dean Skelos, Bethany Board Member Jessie Fentnor, Director of Housing Services Linda Wilkonski, and Allstate Regional Counsel Waqas Durrani.

**Upcoming Events**

- **Bethany House’s Annual Fashion Show and Awards Dinner**
  Date: Wednesday, February 9, 2011
  Time: 5:30PM
  Location: Rockville Links

- **American Ensemble Theatre Presents: ~Open End~**
  Date: Friday February 25, 2011
  Time: 7:00PM
  Location: Hayes Theatre at Molloy College
  (Proceeds will go to Bethany House)

- **BOXTOWN XIII at Molloy**
  Date: Thursday April 14, 2011
  Time: 9:00PM
  Location: Molloy College

- **Bethany House 15th Annual Golf Outing**
  Date: Monday, July 18, 2011
  Time: 9:30AM
  Location: Tam O’Shanter Club
August 14, 2010

It is with great sadness that I write to tell you that our dear friend Barbara Sparrow-Pope passed away early this morning after a valiant struggle against spiking fevers and subsequent pneumonia. Barbara had been hospitalized twice since late June and had gone through some difficult days, but her resilient spirit always brought her back on the road to recovery. Around 3 AM on August 14, 2010, Barbara went home to the God she loved so dearly and had served so faithfully.

Barbara has been an integral part of Bethany’s life and spirit from her first visit to us as a young mother yearning to turn her life around and begin a serious recovery from a drug addiction. Barbara entered Topic House directly from Bethany [In fact, I drove her there!] and started a new journey back to health. After her rehab was completed, Barbara went on to study about addiction and eventually became a Drug and Alcohol Counselor, working as a staff member at Topic House.

When we were looking for new, dedicated Board members, Herman Tibbs suggested Barbara and she joined our Board in 1995, bringing to us the richness of her professional training and the deep understanding of the single parent who had struggled with homelessness. When Bethany initiated the HEADING HOME PROGRAM in 1996, Barbara asked to be considered for a staff position in this innovative program and, once hired, she resigned from active Board membership. Barbara worked with us at Bethany for several years and, as her health grew more fragile, she “retired” from Bethany to pursue further professional studies and to begin ministerial study to better serve her Church and her beloved pastor, Bishop White. It was there that Barbara, a lead singer in the choir, joined hands and hearts with Brad Pope and they were married several years ago. We used to tease her saying that, even though she was not Catholic, she found a “Pope” for herself!

Barbara returned to our Board in September 2008 and has been actively involved with us since then. Barbara developed the curriculum for our Parenting Training Classes and engaged our young mothers in the numerous learning experiences of becoming a mother and raising a child. These workshops were always special favorites of our residents, and Barbara was a loving mentor to hundreds of our young mothers over the past three years!

Earlier this year, Barbara began Bethany’s Gospel Choir, fulfilling a dream that we have had for many years. Once again, Barbara gave of herself unstintingly, creating a small community of our women who praised God through their gift of song, learning from the very best indeed!

Our memories of our Barbara are long and happy and we miss her greatly. She was always an example to us of a joyful presence, even in the midst of adversity, personal limitation, and physical pain. Our Board will especially remember her from our June meeting as she led our Choir in singing Amazing Grace and she was wonderfully amazed at them!

In Barbara’s memory our Board is dedicating a park bench to be placed at our new residence in Baldwin. We have chosen this location because Barbara was the Board member who introduced the Motion to purchase this property at the June 2010 Board Meeting and was thoroughly supportive of this new venture. The bench will bear an appropriate dedication but also add one of Barbara’s favorite expressions: “You can’t plant peas and get corn!”

Memorial and Tribute Gift Cards:
A wonderful way to remember a loved one, whether living or deceased, is to give a memorial or tribute gift in his/her name. Bethany House provides beautiful personalized cards to properly acknowledge your generosity, either to the person honored or to the family of the deceased in whose name the memorial gift is given. We will also send a thank you note to you, mentioning that we have acknowledged your gift to the person who is honored or to the family of the loved one memorialized.
Just send your donation to Bethany in the attached envelope and, if you have any questions, please call Linda or Theresa at (516) 868-6866. Naming and Tribute opportunities are available for several of our Programs. Please note your preference if you have a specific one. In addition, we also have Planned Giving Opportunities that will sustain these sorely-needed programs far into the future.
Hi again, everybody – Shadrach is back! My summer was very busy because the children were around more often, enjoying their vacation. We went for many walks together – I really need the exercise and I always appreciate the special attention. Sometimes we would meet friendly neighbors and we would stop for a minute (which was always good because they would talk to and show an interest in the children while they gave me a few warm and welcome pats). There is nothing like feeling wanted! After the walk, we would have a snack, stay outside and play ball, or just sit for a while and read a story – they always wanted me to stay close to them.

Soon it was time for the children to return to school. I love learning new things too, so I thought I would take advantage of a new course that is being offered at Bethany. When I got to the class I felt strange as I did not understand what anyone was saying. Then I realized the class was learning to speak Spanish! I paid close attention and soon I understood a few words. You see, at Bethany, we are always learning new lessons and trying to understand each other better, regardless of the language we speak. Oh, it’s time for the children to come home so I’ll tell you more next time – Adios, mis amigos y Feliz Navidad a todos. Love, Shadrach xxx