“Unless someone like YOU cares a whole, awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

Dr. Seuss

- because of YOU things are getting better:

Golf Outing

Fashion Show

Valentine Dinner

RV Links Cocktail Party

BOXTOWN at Molloy

Christmas Appeal

but . . .
Seven-year-old Sebastin loves to visit Bethany House with his grandmother, Pat Watson, a caring woman and faithful volunteer who has been a familiar face at Bethany for many years. When Sebastin comes to Bethany with her, he plays with Shadrach, and the children and spends time talking with the ladies who like to speak with this “grown-up” young man. He feels very much at home there.

Sebastin listens to everyone talking about Bethany. His grandmother explains that to enjoy a good supper, talk about special and children who come to Bethany House. He wants to tell her something. When he finds puts some coins in it. Sister Aimee looks hand and asks him what this is for. He looks emptied my piggy bank. I want the children

I can say, and I am sure you will all agree, that we are the ones to do the “thanking!” Thank you, Sebastin, for sharing the treasures of your piggy bank with us and for helping us with the children. All of us at Bethany really appreciate you and your wonderful and loving RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS!
Stepping Stones Helps Our Families

Over the past four years, Bethany House has seen a sixty percent increase in the number of women between 50 and 65 who have become homeless because of domestic violence against the elderly, divorce or death of a spouse, loss of income, foreclosure, unemployment and/or disability. The race and ethnicity of these women spans the full spectrum, and the common denominator for all is that they are low-income older single women who cannot financially afford to live alone here on Long Island. Homelessness uniquely challenges elderly persons. Not only does their vulnerability make meeting basic human needs for food, shelter, and safety more problematic, but it interferes with resolving the later developmental tasks of the lifecycle: the opportunity to reflect on one’s life, consolidate personal integrity, and experience completeness rather than despair. Most recently, the economic recession has dramatically increased these numbers even beyond the sixty percent noted above. In part, the transformation of homelessness by women reflects the feminization of poverty.

Bethany House has tried to address the needs of these older women by initiating a pilot program which could easily be replicated, providing longer term transitional housing for a small group of older single women in a safe, supportive environment that would assist them through the crisis of homelessness as they work toward their educational, employment and future housing goals. Bethany purchased a lovely home in Baldwin specifically to help our senior population. However, Nassau County’s commitment to provide these tenants with Section 8 Housing Vouchers [to secure their future] has been withdrawn, and the Department of Social Services has refused to work with us in referring to Bethany those women who might be appropriate for this program. We had also requested assistance from the Town of Hempstead on three occasions, but no funds are available for this vulnerable population.

A pressing question kept surfacing for our staff: What happens to our families when they have to leave Bethany but do not believe the housing they have found will provide them with security and safety? To respond to this concern, Bethany has begun a new transitional program, Stepping Stones. In this new program, homeless families and single women who need a little more time to stabilize will live at our fifth residence for a lower than market rent and save the funds needed to secure an appropriate apartment within one year. We presently have one single woman and two moms each with one child enrolled in Stepping Stones: Andrea’s story [box below] will tell you what this program means to her family.

Andrea’s Stepping Stones

After a long, hard road, my search for permanent housing was over – or so I thought. My daughter and I had been homeless for a few months and school was soon to start, so I was even more anxious to get settled. I had found a situation in which I would rent a room and share a house with an older woman. It seemed like a good “start” back to self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, in speaking to my future landlord, I realized that foreclosure was looming in her near future and I was to be the temporary solution to her problem.

I went into panic mode: if I go through with this rental arrangement, I could become homeless again. I was set to sign the paperwork the next day and my worker at the Department of Social Services had told me that she would “find me a room somewhere” if I did not follow through. I had confided my fears to the staff at Bethany House and Sister Aimee approached me and said, “I may have a solution for you, Andrea. I want to take you to see a special house.”

And so, we did. As we walked into Bethany West, I felt like I had won the lottery. To think that my child and I could live in such a beautiful, clean and welcoming home - I melted and felt the tears well up in my eyes. My five-year-old was equally excited, “Mommy, I love this house!” she said. “Please can we live here?” My decision was made for this was a golden opportunity - I had just returned to work full time but did not have enough money yet for an apartment. This lovely home, under the supervision of Teresa, from Bethany’s staff was an answer to my many prayers!

My daughter is thriving in her new school and I’m doing well in my new job. When I come home from work I can cook all her favorite foods and she plays in a lovely back yard [after her homework is done, of course]. It is our part of the American dream and I am so grateful to Bethany House for making so many dreams come true for homeless families like ours! Please know that everything you do for Bethany House trickles right down to us and helps us on our path back to full financial stability. Thanks to everyone who has made Stepping Stones a reality!

Andrea and Katelyn
16th Annual Golf Outing - Another 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 Chris Heckman, and their dedicated Committee, we raised more than $100,000. Of course, much of this success was also the result of the tremendous efforts of our Honoree, Steve DiMare who brought us new friends and donors, and the outstanding generosity of Sceptre Tours who provided the five-star trip to Tuscany for our special raffle.

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 17th Annual Golf Outing will take place on Monday, July 29, 2013.
“Unless someone like YOU cares a whole, awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.” Dr. Seuss

One of the most loved, appreciated, and familiar faces at Bethany is Sister Claire Pfundstein, OP. Since 1989 she has been a valuable advisor who has participated in the continual growth and expansion of Bethany House. In 1990 she joined the Board of Directors and helped organize the framework for the Corporation. One of her major projects was to oversee the creation of the Bylaws. In addition to this, as the years progressed, she evolved as the person who keeps track of our assets, liabilities and projections and gives the Annual Financial Report to the Board of Directors. Over the years, she has chaired several of our Committees and is one of our most enthusiastic volunteers. If you attend any meetings or activities, you will see that we rely on her for her wise judgment and a variety of skills. She is a proofreader extraordinaire and can find any error. After listening carefully, she can see all sides of an issue and summarize the best points. She also has a “sharp wit” that appears quite frequently and keeps us all chuckling as we see the irony is a situation. It was our lucky day when Sister Claire joined our Bethany Family. How did she find us? When you read about her background, you will realize the sources of her expertise and why she and Bethany are so “good together.”

Sister Claire began her career teaching Mathematics and taught in various schools including several years in Puerto Rico. While she was there, she was aware that Sister Aimee was teaching on the other side of the island, but they really weren’t well acquainted at that time. Sister Claire returned to the States and became an Assistant Principal at St. Michael’s School in East New York. After several years, St. Michael’s closed its doors and Sister Claire began a new career in Parish Work. In 1989 she became one of the Regional Directors for the Sisters of St. Dominic and soon discovered that Bethany House was in her region. She came to visit and was quite amazed to find the extent of the work of Bethany and that Sister Aimee [one of the sisters under her care] was deeply immersed in a different ministry which provided shelter and care for homeless women and children. She wanted to know more. Sister Claire said she was “very impressed with Sister Aimee’s enthusiasm for her mission.” This was the beginning of her involvement in Bethany House that has continued for more than twenty years.

As of now, Sister Claire has retired from a full-time ministry, but she is still busy keeping a written commentary of the activities of her local convent for the annals of the History of the Congregation [the Amityville Dominicans], volunteers to translate documents for Spanish-speaking clients in Farmingdale, and still serves Bethany House as a valuable and dedicated member of the Finance/Business Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Board of Directors. Sister Claire says that she misses not being at Bethany as much as in earlier days, but she is still “imbued with its spirit.”

I asked her: what do you expect to happen to Bethany in the next thirty years? She said that “Bethany will continue and will prosper because it is built on a rock. It will continue to expand to meet the needs as it always has.”

Sister Claire helped to build this rock. We are very thankful for all her vital service to Bethany and her care and concern for our moms and little ones. At our Annual Fashion Show and Awards Dinner last year, we honored S. Claire as our Outstanding Woman of Compassion. Surely, there is no one more deserving of this honor! Sister Claire will always be our dear friend and advisor, and we thank her for her gift of her time and talent that has directly influenced Bethany’s growth over these many years. We wish her a long and happy retirement, and are glad that she continues to stay close to all of us at Bethany!

Jessie Fentnor
Visiting Author Builds Confidence

The women at Bethany were fortunate to have the opportunity to host an inspirational lecture given by Lindamichellebaron, an Assistant Professor of Education at York College, CUNY. Dr. Baron is a program developer and motivational speaker known for her poetry and her lively presentations which empower women to realize their potential and find deeper meaning in their lives. An author of several books, Dr. Baron spoke in detail of her newest book of poems, FOR THE LOVE OF LIFE. She highlighted the various stages of personal development emphasizing “we have to constantly talk ourselves into self-love.” Dr. Baron shared her definitions of life and joy, truth, trials and tribulations and eventually led her audience to a Celebration of Life. The women from Bethany responded enthusiastically and used the opportunity to discuss their feelings with the professor. They were inspired to express some of these feelings in poetry. Here are just a few excerpts from their writings:

Beauty Within
Beauty: what is it really?
Who do you see when you see me?
What is the reflection in the mirror.
Closer . . . so you can hear me clear
Why am I less – for you to be more?
- Nicole

My Experience
Because of my experience
I won’t hide who I am
Because who I am holds weight that will bring change.
So don’t pick or choose my destiny
My experience has made it for me.
- Jacinta

We at Bethany House appreciate and thank Dr. Lindamichellebaron for coming to share her poetry and her enthusiasm for life with our women. We hope she will be able to visit us again.

Bethany
I live in a house not black or white,
A lot of great people who are dynamite
Strong, weak, meek and shy
Loud, soft, even some who cry
We could be better or life could be worse...
Structured housing - not a shelter
It’s a home, you know what,
It’s even better:
Nuns, sisters, staff and 2 men
Make it able for us to rebuild again.
- Roberta

Bethpage High School Students once again arrived at Bethany House with Teddy Bears for everyone and a generous supply of pizza and beverages to share with the women and children residing there. A very creative arts and crafts session followed during which BHS Civic students, under the direction of Jacqueline Jill-Rito, helped the children to make beautiful angels for the Christmas season. Finally a vanilla-mousse sheet cake with milk topped off the evening! Before the students left, the children gave out lots of their special hugs to the students and a big “THANK YOU.” Amid plenty of smiles, BHS students returned home knowing that twenty content children had a happy ending to a perfect day!

Upcoming Events

- Bethany House’s Annual Fashion Show and Awards Dinner
  Date: February 2013
  Time: 5:30 PM
  Location: TBA

- BOXTOWN XIV at Molloy
  Date: Thursday April 11, 2013
  Time: 9:00 PM
  Location: Molloy College

- Bethany House 17th Annual Golf Outing
  Date: Monday, July 29, 2013
  Time: 9:30 AM
  Location: Pine Hollow Country Club
EAF – Crisis Intervention for Our Families

The Bethany House Emergency Assistance for Families Fund assists with the unexpected financial needs of homeless women and children.

Since its beginnings in 2004, Bethany’s EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE for FAMILIES FUND [EAF] has gone far in helping us to respond to the overwhelming needs of our homeless families. Some of the needs are quite basic: clothing, shoes, baby items, transportation monies and medications; others often mean the difference between a woman keeping or losing her employment: a small amount of money for a car repair or for emergency daycare costs. Yet other needs demand a gentle response even though most agencies do not provide such assistance: fee for a child’s class trip; partial cost of a child’s team uniform; transportation for a week at a summer day camp; funeral or burial costs.

In addition, many of our working families have found good, decent apartments but cannot afford the monthly rents on their limited incomes - we have been able to make the difference through our EAF Subsidy Program! Some of our older single women who live on a fixed social security income are able to make ends meet through this program in which they receive a monthly stipend toward their rent or basic needs and, in turn, come back to Bethany and lend a hand filling some of our needs. And, as a family moves from Bethany to their own apartment, blankets, pillows, towels, dishes utensils, as well as cleaning are supplied by our EMERGENCY

Bethany exhausts all other avenues of possible funding fund. The Emergency Assistance one of Bethany’s Case Managers of Residential Services. The final approval.

This project is on-going in order to provide help for a time while the family stabilizes.

Bethany House has received support for this Fund from: The BJ’s Charitable Foundation, The Nassau County Bar Association WE CARE Fund, The Hassler Family Foundation, an annual grant from Newsday Charities, a McCormick Foundation Fund, and revenue collected at BOXTOWN [a consciousness-raising event held annually at Molloy College wherein the students sleep out in cardboard boxes in solidarity with the homeless].

The crisis of homelessness in Nassau County has soared higher than ever before. Bethany House alone feeds, houses, and provides comprehensive services for up to 75 mothers and children nightly. Bethany House has been working with homeless families since 1978 and has recently developed the Emergency Assistance Fund to support homeless families and individuals on a slightly longer-term basis so that their homelessness is ended, not merely interrupted. Since its inception, the EAF Fund has provided $209, 425 to families in need, and almost all of this money has come from special grants.

For more information or to make a donation to the EAF Fund, please call [516] 546-7970. Thank you for your interest and concern.

BJ’s Funding Info

These funds are designated in the following way:
“To purchase children’s clothing and supplies ($1800), food ($2300), metro cards ($1000), medication ($300), furniture ($200), emergency rent ($800) and more in assistance ($900), monthly subsidies ($3100), and basic needs subsidies ($1700) for the Emergency Assistance for Families Program.”
The Children's Corner at Bethany.

Hi again, everybody. Shadrach is back! Here we are celebrating another fall season. This is very special for me because it is my 4th year at Bethany! I can remember the day I arrived here so weary and feeling no one wanted me. How soon that changed! The warm shelter, the great food and so many new friends made me feel so welcome that soon my spirits were lifted and I began to look forward to each day and many more years with you at Bethany. I thank all of you for your love and attention.

As always, much of my attention and affection is centered on my activities with the children. Right now we have thirty-seven children at Bethany. When we have snacks and snuggle together, I do my best to lift their spirits and give them the confident feeling that everything is going to be okay. There are many sunny days that we are able to go for walks in the neighborhood. We all enjoy this routine as we can look at all of the beautiful leaves and all the bright colors. Soon the leaves will be falling and we can have fun running through them. Soon it will begin to snow and you know how I love the snow! Come over and see me some time – you are always welcome at Bethany!

Love to all, Shadrach xxoo