There is a natural law, a Divine law, that obliges you and me to relieve the suffering, the distressed, and the destitute. . . Be ever watchful for the opportunity to shelter little children with the umbrella of your charity for, as they must bear the burdens of our mistakes, so are they, in their innocence, the repositories of our hope for the upward progress of humanity.

Conrad N. Hilton
Last Will and Testament
What is Bethany House?

Bethany House is a group of warm, loving shelters for women and children who are homeless. Established in 1978 by the Dominican Sisters of Amityville, Bethany House has grown over these past years to become a fully incorporated non-profit organization consisting of three homelike residences for homeless families, particularly families with special needs, and a spacious four-unit apartment building to provide longer-term housing for families moving back into the mainstream after having been homeless.

Bethany House was the very first emergency shelter to open on Long Island, and is often singled out as a model because Bethany not only provides safe, supportive emergency housing, but combines it with an extensive component of comprehensive services and needed resources. It is in such an atmosphere that homeless families are able to move through the crisis to stability, with the help of dedicated professionals and in the presence and support of a caring community.

Bethany House’s staff members have extensive experience in dealing with the unique problems faced by those who are caught in the crisis of homelessness, and they have been well trained to effectively respond to these needs. And, since we are also a community-based organization and an integral part of the human services arena, we are in an excellent position to provide well-coordinated services to those in our care in order to effect significant and lasting change in their young lives.

What does Bethany House do?

Bethany House defines its mission as a response to its belief that each person deserves and needs adequate food, clothing and shelter, provided in a nurturing and sustaining environment. Bethany House services those women and children from Long Island who are deprived of the basic human right to shelter and warmth, and who are therefore stifled in their growth and development. Bethany House seeks to provide a homelike atmosphere wherein shelter, care and comprehensive services all combine to encourage and enable the individual or family to attain their goal of self-sufficiency and to restore their dignity.

To achieve this end, Bethany House:

* employs a multi-service approach of supportive counseling, life skills training, education, and specific programs to effectively respond to those made vulnerable by crisis or lifestyle.
* advocates and networks with numerous other agencies to obtain needed services and benefits for those in its care.
creates opportunities for growth and change at the individual level and works to effect systemic change at the higher and broader level whenever recurring social problems are presented.

* seeks to educate and involve the surrounding community in a concerted effort to prevent homelessness whenever possible, and to respond effectively to it when preventive efforts fail.

In short, Bethany House walks with each family on the long, difficult journey from homelessness to full financial stability -

**will you walk with us also?**

**What does Bethany House need?**

In order to accomplish the work that is Bethany’s, we need the help and support of many, many individuals, businesses and large corporations. At present, our annual budget is more than $1.7 million, enabling us to house and service up to **ninety** persons nightly. Within these figures hide our many needs for your time, talent and treasure.

**Which needs are you able to fill?**

**Time:** Bethany needs volunteers to work with us in any of our three emergency residences as receptionists, donation coordinators, or as part of our hospitality staff; story tellers, tutors and life skill teachers; we also need pick-up and delivery persons, shoppers and shelf-stackers. And, we need occasional meal preparation, light sewing for the stitch-in-time-repairs, and laundry helpers.

We need Board members to help direct the corporation and committee members to help raise the funds to keep Bethany solvent; we need writers to work on newsletters and publications; and extroverts to solicit corporate, business, and church contributions plus other types of support.

**Talent:** If you have a particular ability or gift, we also need accounting expertise, investment counseling [short-term, of course], legal advice, and a host of other professional assistance - usually on an occasional basis. If you are gifted in music or art, we have wonderful children anxious to learn from you; if you take pictures, we have families who never had a picture taken together and wish they could do so.

**Treasure:** Of course, we always need financial help as well, and we appreciate any way that you can provide for the many needs of our young families who ask no more than to be sheltered and loved by all of us. Thank you!
Did You Know?

- Long Island is the fourth least affordable of all the metropolitan areas in the nation.
- The present fair market rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Nassau County is $1,348.
- 43% of all the renters on Long Island are not able to afford a one-bedroom apartment; 58% cannot afford a two-bedroom.
- A minimum wage earner can afford only $268 a month for rent. Social Services provides a single person with $288.
- Weekly rental on a furnished room for a single adult in Nassau County is $125 to $150, or $600 monthly.
- An SSI recipient can only afford $195 for rent from the monthly allotment of $690.
- A renter earning a minimum wage would have to work a total of 147 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment. (there are only 168 hours in a full week!)

[Source: The National Low-Income Housing Coalition]

Bethany House’s Statistics:

During the past year, Bethany House has provided 21,995 nights of shelter to 564 families including 617 children. Case management has averaged more than 110 hours per week.

During this same year, Bethany House cared for 226 young women who were experiencing high risk pregnancies and post partum women who required bed rest. Many of these women returned to Bethany directly from the hospital with their newborn child, also requiring extensive care and nurturing as well as training in child care and education in child development.

Recent years have challenged Bethany to expand its bed capacity three more times, resulting in our ability to provide for up to seventy-five persons nightly, and least 10% of these young mothers were expecting a child within a few months. In 2000, the average length of stay for a family at Bethany was 23 nights. In 2004, the average rose to almost 8 months [238 days]. Every year, the need continues to increase.

Most of our families are comprised of a mother and one or two young children, and the ages of the mothers vary from 17 to 46. We have also housed four sets of twins and one set of triplets this past year. As we near the move through this year, we now are able to house several larger families - families with 4 or 5 children. And, our ten-bed expansion is completed and usually full to capacity.

There are 25 to 35 children in our care nightly - that is 5 times the number usually housed at Hale House in New York City.

The average person spends 365 hours a month at home -

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

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