AGENCY HISTORY:
Bethany House, a nonprofit agency, was founded in 1978 in response to a demonstrated need for shelter for homeless women and their children. As the demand for shelter grew throughout Nassau County in the 1980’s, Bethany House expanded into a larger facility, known as Bethany One, with a 12-bed capacity. Two other facilities were added, giving Bethany House the capability to house up to thirty-five families or individuals, and to provide services for those housed at Bethany as well as for numerous persons and families in the surrounding communities. Again, in 2003 and in 2004, Bethany expanded its services to homeless women and children, providing for more than fifty persons nightly, and in 2005 we again increased our capacity to seventy-five. As we began 2007, we added an additional six bedrooms to one of our residences in order to provide for an even larger number of homeless families.

Throughout its years of service, Bethany has provided safe, supportive emergency housing for homeless women and their dependent children, combined with a comprehensive component of services and resources. Of those women who remain with us for more than two weeks, 94% have successfully found appropriate housing. Each case receives individual attention from seasoned case workers who have extensive experience with the problems faced by persons who are caught in the crisis of homelessness. Since we are a community-based organization and an integral part of the human services arena, we are in an excellent position to provide well-coordinated direct services and to effect significant and lasting change.

CURRENT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, and ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
With the assistance of federal funding under the HOME Program, Bethany House purchased a two-family residence facility in 1994 in order to provide additional housing for its Transitional and Permanent Housing Program “OPEN DOOR”. Since the inception of this program, Bethany has been effective in providing both housing and the needed support services to single-parent families for an extended period of time so that the crisis of homelessness is ended, not simply temporarily relieved.

In partnership with various community-based mental health centers, Bethany has developed an ENHANCED EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAM to serve women, and when appropriate, their dependent children, who are homeless and psychiatrically challenged.

“24/7” (so named because of its unique concept of care 24 hours a day/7 days a week) has been designed by Bethany House to serve the special needs of individuals for whom the crisis of homelessness adds an unbearable burden to an already painfully difficult existence. Individuals and families struggling with psychiatric impairments, substance addiction, or AIDS-related illnesses as well as numerous frail elderly women are among those whom Bethany feels need extra nurturing and support on a “24/7” basis.

The Kids Who Care Program was created by Bethany House’s staff to provide school-aged children who are not homeless a variety of opportunities to better understand the struggles of homeless children who live right here on Long Island. The program includes consciousness-raising activities and planned action steps, and has been used by an average of fifteen schools each year for eight years.

Bethany’s Employment Program, WORKOUT provides job placement and career counseling to women who are seeking entry into the job market. Bethany House also has an agency commitment to hire whenever possible, the homeless women who have at one time been guests of Bethany.

ADOPT A FAMILY for CHRISTMAS: Each year, in collaboration with North Shore University Hospital as well as various other church and civic groups, Bethany coordinates a Christmas Program wherein children are provided gifts, clothing, food and other surprises for the holidays.
HAVEN is the Molloy College/Bethany House Coalition for the Homeless. Founded in 1994, HAVEN sponsored an all day college-wide series of workshops on homelessness entitled “LIVING ON THE EDGE: Hungry and Homeless on Long Island.” Since 1996, HAVEN has orchestrated a highly successful event called BOXTOWN at which Molloy students “spend a night out” in a cardboard box in solidarity with the homeless. This event is not only a consciousness-raising effort, but also a fund-raising activity, and raises monies to assist with Bethany House’s expenses. In 2005 we held BOXTOWN VIII, raising over $10,000 to assist both Bethany and the Katrina Relief Fund. In April of 2011, we will have BOXTOWN XII, and the enthusiasm to undertake this unique experience grows stronger with each year.

In 2007, Bethany House initiated a new phase of the BOXTOWN experience: BOXTOWN comes to BETHANY. This experiential program affords the Molloy students an opportunity to “come and see” the Bethany mothers and children firsthand as well as to participate in an evening of immersion into the actual experiences of our homeless families. To date, we have held eighteen successful sessions.

HEADING HOME is another innovative program of Bethany House, created to serve women who have achieved at least six months of sobriety within a structured rehab environment and who now need a limited extension of structured living in order to be ready for independent living and job success. This program, begun in October 1996, has met with great success and has already completed its first expansion. Like all of Bethany House’s programs, HEADING HOME is designed to be as cost-effective as possible and requires a minimal amount of funding to operate it effectively.

REST STOP: Begun in 1997, REST STOP provides crisis housing for families and single women who are not eligible for assistance under the new, stringent guidelines of federal funding under the Welfare Reform Act. This program is housed in “Bethany, too!” and can serve up to twelve families or individuals who are homeless and unable to obtain any financial assistance. This program relies extensively on volunteer assistance, and any funds needed for its operation come from Bethany’s fund-raising efforts.

BELLMORE HOUSE, the newest of the residences that are operated by Bethany House, is also the most recent addition to Bethany’s network of homes for families and individuals who have been disenfranchised and temporarily need a helping hand to re-stabilize their lives and careers. These newly-renovated apartments provide clean, safe and secure housing to women and children who have addressed the problems which led them into the crisis of homelessness and now, because of the generosity of so many good people, have an address of their own!

The HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY CHILDREN Project was added to Bethany House’s programmatic component in 2002 as a response to the unique needs of women who are either pregnant or have just given birth and whose lives are further challenged by the crisis of homelessness. This Project provides case management, interactive learning and skill development, a variety of workshops and training sessions and group opportunities for these young women as they take on the awesome responsibility of raising a child. The HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY CHILDREN Project has met with unprecedented success, assisting more than 530 families in this past year.

Through its various innovative programs, Bethany House responds to the needs of homeless women and their dependent children in Nassau County, New York. Nassau County is located in the central part of Long Island, one of the most affluent areas in the United States, composed of three towns and two cities. Within this affluent area, however, there are several pockets of intense poverty in which the homeless struggle for their very survival.

Bethany House stands within this struggle, at the side of the homeless family, with a strong commitment to end homelessness on Long Island within our lifetime.

We invite you and encourage you to stand with us!

For more information, please call (516) 546-7970
Thank you for your interest and concern.
bethanyhouseny.com