



Communities across the nation are facing shortages to meet the increased need for affordable housing.

Number of Homeless Exceeds Available Resources

By Alex Kartheiser

On any given night, there are 643,067 people experiencing homelessness in the United States. In Massachusetts, 17,501 people are homeless – an increase from 2011’s total of 16,664. Sadly, homelessness is not going away anytime soon. Communities are struggling with a shortage of resources to meet the increased need for emergency shelter and housing. Abby’s House works not just to provide a solution to home-

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“We are now, as we were before, still landladies, service providers, fundraisers, dreamers, creators and believers in the power of each woman to get past the roadblocks along the way to a better life.”

— ANNETTE RAFFERTY

RECENT EVENT

“Still Wearing Smooth the Path” – Thanks to all of You!

Thank you to everyone who attended one of Annette Rafferty’s book signings of her second book “Still Wearing Smooth the Path: 10 More Years at Abby’s House,” which were held in November and December 2012 at various locations in Central MA. It was wonderful to see many familiar faces and become reacquainted with former volunteers and supporters over the years!

“Still Wearing Smooth the Path: 10 More Years at Abby’s House” is available at the book store at the Worcester Public Library and online at www.abbyshouse.org.*



Above: Annette signs copies of her 2nd book at Abby’s House in November 2012. Left: A quote from Annette’s new book.

WOMEN’S STORIES

Sharing Words of Gratitude

In this edition of the newsletter, we are sharing a special letter we received from a guest in our shelter.

“Dear Abby’s,

I am a 32 year old woman with struggles of my own and have felt lost and out of place pretty much my whole life until I was introduced to Abby’s House by a woman at Catholic Charities. At first I was petrified; me? in a shelter? It’s probably a cot I’m going to be sleeping on and its going to be dirty. Everyone is going to be mean and not understand me. Well, was I wrong. The women in the shelter are all very informative and they all have special individual qualities that I accept and love. The staff here at Abby’s House is the most helpful group of women and have such caring hearts and souls. All they want to do is help any woman who is in need of their help. I am one of those women.

I can’t express how much gratitude I have for each and every staff member and the women at the shelter. My life before here was a terrible mess and I was in horrible turmoil. I had absolutely nothing

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Upcoming Events

AbbyGala!

Read all the details on page 3!

Financial & Life Planning Seminars

Abby's House will be holding a series of seminars designed to provide participants with valuable information on important topics.

Saturday, June 15, 2013

Financing Residential &

Healthcare Needs As We Age

Greeting & Refreshments: 9:30 a.m.

Time: 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

Location: Abby's House

Cost: Free

Guest Speakers:

Attorney Kathleen O'Connor of O'Connor & Rivard Attorneys PC and

William Dreyer & Marie Sparks, Highland Financial Group

Come and learn what you need to know and consider when planning for yourself or a loved one.

For more information, please call Sarah Lange: 508.756.5486 x18

HipHipHerRace 2013!

Our Annual 5K Run/Walk benefitting Abby's House will be held in October. Date coming soon!

BUDGET REPORT FY13

Current Progress

Between Jan. 1, 2013–Mar. 12, 2013 we have raised \$131,894 towards our total operating budget of \$1,249,350.



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lessness, but to end the cycle of homelessness in the lives of women and children who walk through our doors.

People become homeless for various and unique reasons. Factors that contribute to homelessness include abusive relationships, loss of employment, loss of stable living arrangements, lack of education, and lack of resources within their community. One of the major factors contributing to homelessness across the United States, especially in the last few years, is the lack of affordable housing. With an increase of Americans experiencing economic problems — including foreclosures and unemployment across the nation — the gap between the need and availability of affordable housing is at an all-time high. In Worcester alone, we need an additional 12,000 units of affordable housing to accommodate all eligible residents. At the Worcester Housing Authority, the waiting list is eight years long.

Many of the women who arrive at Abby's House have fallen through the cracks and are dealing with serious issues that contribute to them

The reality is that homelessness is not going away.

becoming homeless. The story of a young woman who recently entered our shelter is one example of the struggles our women face. Denise is currently unable to work

due to medical issues and can no longer pay her rent. As a guest at Abby's House, she has found stability, a place to regroup, to take care of her medical problems, and when she is feeling better, find a job.

Robin, who is in her late 30s has recently fled a domestic violence situation. She has 2 school aged children. Because her husband was the source of financial support within the household, she finds herself in a position that many women find themselves in after leaving an abusive relationship; she has no employment, no health insurance and limited resources. With the encouragement of her advocate she applies for work daily, has her name on the list for housing, and has applied for health insurance. She has been able to find comfort in the safety net that Abby's provides.

The reality is homelessness is not going away. The experiences of the women who come through Abby's doors are more complex and the needs are greater than ever. Although resources are available in our community, they are limited and the barriers can be overwhelming. Abby's House strives to offer each woman not only practical support but just as importantly encourages their individual spirits. If you are interested in making a difference in the lives of the women and children of Abby's House, there are many ways to help. It is YOU – the supporters, volunteers, donors, and friends – who continuously encourage our women by reminding them that the community stands by them and invests in their success. To learn more about volunteering or donating to Abby's House, please visit our website at www.abbyshouse.org. *

Remembering a Friend

On February 6, 2013 Abby's House lost our dear friend, Ron Dusoe. Ron and his wife Barbara have been part of the Abby's House community for over 15 years. As a talented carpenter, Ron put his skills to work for Abby's House as part of the maintenance team. He was a kind and gentle soul with a great sense of humor and wit. In her eulogy, Sister Hilda wrote so eloquently, "We know Ron touched many lives during his years of service at Abby's House. He was a true gentleman, a dedicated person and a very peaceful presence." Ron will be missed by all, especially on Wednesday mornings when he and many volunteers would gather for coffee around the table in the Women's Center. Thank you, Ron, for your commitment to Abby's House. You will be missed. *



Ron and Barbara Dusoe: dedicated volunteers for over 15 years.

We Raised the Roof!

by Sarah Lange

As many of you know, the 8,500 square foot roof at 52 High Street was in dire need of replacement. The estimated cost of replacement was \$300,000. We are delighted to report that the roof has been replaced and the necessary repairs to the drains and underlying structure made. Of equal importance, in just 14 short months, we were able to raise enough money to pay off the credit line that funded the project.

We couldn't have done it without the \$103,454 donated by individuals and grants from the following foundations:

- Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund - \$35,000
- Fletcher Foundation - \$28,000
- George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation - \$25,000
- Hermann Foundation - \$25,000
- Stoddard Charitable Trust - \$25,000
- Alfred J. Gifford Charitable Trust - \$10,000
- Grainger Company Foundation - \$10,000
- Saint Gobain - \$10,000
- Wyman Gordon Foundation - \$10,000
- Thomas Anthony Pappas Charitable Foundation - \$5,000
- Agnes M. Lindsay Trust - \$2,500

The new roof at 52 High Street has already resulted in significant savings on our energy bills, allowing us to direct additional funds to service. More importantly, replacing the roof preserved 55 units of safe, decent, affordable housing for low-income women. Thank you for making this project a reality! *



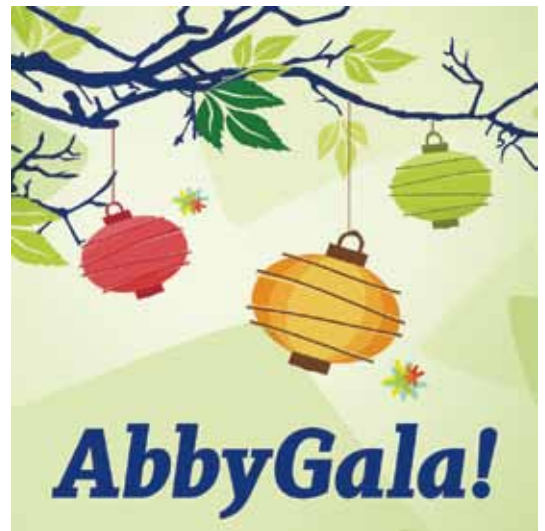
Live bluegrass music by SloGrass



Laughs with comedian Jon Ljungberg



Dance music from DJ Mark Veau



Celebrate the Resiliency of Women at a Very Special Evening Benefitting Abby's House!

Saturday, June 22, 2013, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Please join the Abby's House Board of Directors for an evening of live music, comedy and dancing to raise funds for the women and children of Abby's House. The night will feature live music performed by SloGrass, laughter provided by comedian Jon Ljungberg, and dance inspiration delivered by DJ Mark Veau of 98.9FM WORC! The evening will also include a Live and Silent Auction and an elaborate Tapas menu.

AbbyGala will take place at WPI's Alden Memorial, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA. Tickets are \$60.00 per person and are available by visiting www.abbyshouse.org/abbygala or calling Abby's House at (508) 756-5486 x21. Contact Abby's House today at the above number, or email AHBoard@abbyshouse.org, to become a Sponsor of this very special event. *

Buy-A-Bed!

by Sarah Lange



Each night it costs Abby's House \$35/bed to provide a homeless woman or child with someplace to sleep. That may not sound like a lot of money, but when you to multiply that cost by 94 beds, then by 365 nights, it adds up quickly. In fact, it is more than \$1.2 million dollars!

You can help provide a warm, safe place for someone tonight by donating \$35 or more to the Buy-A-Bed Campaign via our website: www.abbyshouse.org/buyabed, or by filling one or more Buy-A-Bed containers with donations from your family, friends, neighbors, local businesses, congregation, and/or co-workers. We are happy to deliver containers and do

presentations if your group would like to join in! If you would like to participate, please contact Alexandra Kartheiser at 508.756.5486 or by email at alex@abbyshouse.org, or Sarah Lange by email at sarah@abbyshouse.org.

Thank you for your support!



52 High Street, Worcester, MA 01609

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Recent Grants

All Grants were received between 11.12.12-2.19.13

- Albert J. Gifford Charitable Trust
- Bank of America Charitable Foundation
- BJ's Foundation
- Boston Foundation
- Dale Foundation
- E. Rhodes & Leona B. Carpenter Foundation
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
- Fletcher Foundation
- George Alden Trust
- George F. & Sybil H. Fuller Foundation
- Grainger Foundation
- Greater Worcester Community Foundation
- Hopeline New England
- People's United Community Foundation
- Saint Gobain Foundation
- Smalley Fund
- St. Francis Community Health Care
- The 200 Foundation, Inc.
- Melvin S. Cutler Charitable Foundation
- Thomas Anthony Pappas Charitable Foundation
- Webster Five Foundation
- Wyman Gordan Foundation

GO GREEN

Are you receiving the E-Newsletter version of "Bright Spot?" Sign up to receive the latest information about Abby's House, please contact Alexandra Kartheiser, Communications Coordinator at alex@abbyshouse.org or call 508.756.5486 ext. 35. YOU CAN ALSO SIGN UP ONLINE AT WWW.ABBYSHOUSE.ORG!

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to show for my 32 years on this earth. These women make me feel worth something and worth living and fighting for my rights as an independent woman who deserves nothing more than the best out of life. Now, my attitude has totally changed. I am very positive and feel very much accomplished which I have never felt before. This program has completely changed my life for the best. So, in closing, I would just like to say thank to the you and all the staff

here at Abby's House, especially Annette for opening this organization many years ago to help struggling women in their journey to right themselves and be better, happier people."

After a few weeks in the shelter, Sharon received her hair dressing license and found a job at a salon. Sharon will be receiving a grant from the Annette Rafferty Survive to Thrive Fund to assist with the first, last and security deposit required to rent her first apartment. *

Shopping on Amazon.com Can Help Abby's House!

Purchase your items through the Abby's House Amazon search & shop feature and Abby's House can receive as much as 6% of your purchase! Amazon has all of your needs including electronics, clothing, household items, toys and more! It's an easy way to support Abby's House while purchasing everyday items!

Start your next shopping trip at our website: www.abbyshouse.org/shopping

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