



Congregations for the Homeless

Assisting homeless men make the transition to permanent housing

FALL 2008 NEWSLETTER

Progress in 2008

We've made many changes to the program this past year as we move to become a more independent organization. While remaining under the umbrella of the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council, Congregations for the Homeless now has its own office and staff, both paid and volunteer, serving the men directly rather than contracting for services as before.

Going beyond food and shelter

This new arrangement has allowed us to expand our services to include more than food and shelter. Now CFH provides an address with mailboxes for the men along with other improved services. The evening program continues to be supported by our host churches with other congregations providing all the food for three meals each day. Some volunteers visit with the men during the dinner hour when neither classes nor counseling sessions are held while others provide haircuts or simple healthcare advice.

"I thank God for every bit of help I get."

- CFH client

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continues to be supported by our host churches with other congregations providing all the food for three meals each day. Some volunteers visit with the men during the dinner hour when neither classes nor counseling sessions are held while others provide haircuts or simple healthcare advice. Often the men meet with their case managers or gather for classes such as "Characteristics of a Man," addiction support, or bible study if they're interested. Some attend AA off-site. David Johns Bowling, our newly promoted, full-time Shelter Director, oversees all aspects of the shelter operation. Our longtime site managers continue to stay with the shelter each night and oversee the nightly operations.



Case managers Bruce Borremans and Christina White

Life coaching is vital to success

The life coaching program that began 2 years ago has proven vital to making our new housing program a success. The moral support and advice provided by these volunteers, who meet with their chosen man 2-3 hours a week, is not only a valuable asset to the men but is also now a requirement for moving into subsidized housing. All of our life coaches receive training from Bruce Borremans, one of our case managers. The course is presented over 4-6 weeks on one night a week for 3 hours.

A life coach works with each man as he goes through the

program and for as long as a year after he moves into housing. Many more coaches are needed. If you're interested in serving as a life coach, contact Bruce at 425-985-7233.

"Great program to help me stay off drugs and alcohol. The program gives me everything needed to succeed, great counselors!"

- Client in program 1 1/2 month

30 men now in housing

Our housing program started in September 2006 and since then, 30 men have moved into permanent housing with rent subsidies primarily from King County and the congregations. So far all the men have been successful, with one man moving on to even better housing. Thanks to our volunteer Director of Housing Sterling Benson, CFH has been able to locate a wide variety of housing. Men have been placed in single rooms, apartment units, and a house in the Kirkland neighborhood of Rose Hill, where six men share the facility.

Landlords demand that case managers or life coaching be included in the arrangements for subsidized, guaranteed rent supplements. The men are required to pay about one-third of their income toward rent. We continue to seek landlords willing to rent to men moving out of our program into more secure futures. Landlords interested in our high-occupancy, low-risk, full-rent program should call Sterling Bensen at 206-604-5999.



Rose Hill House

Many financial supporters

The financial support for CFH comes from many sources, all critical to the evolution of our program. The cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Sammamish, Woodinville, and Issaquah all provide yearly grants to assist with housing; King County and the United Way also supply funds. We are

blessed with a list of loyal denominations, congregations, and individuals who continue to support this mission effort.

A new trailer



New trailer for men's supplies

After 15 years of hard use, the old trailer where men keep personal items and sleeping mats during the day has been temporarily retired. The very generous financial support of several organizations and individuals has allowed us to purchase and outfit a new, more substantial trailer that will serve us for many more years. We hope to install showers and a washer and dryer in the old trailer, if we can obtain the necessary funds. With it, all our host churches would be able to offer these important and useful facilities to the men.

We depend on our partners

One of the benefits of having case managers is that they can provide references that enable the men we serve to get the specific assistance they need to move forward in life. This level of assistance could not be accomplished without the cooperation of a number of groups that provide resources to us. For example, Home2Home Ministries of Bellevue First Presbyterian Church provides most of the furniture the men need when they obtain housing. Auto Angels assists the men with auto repairs.

"I like churches where the people come to visit with us, not to spy on us."

We refer men to Sound Mental Health, Sea-Mar, and Therapeutics Health Services for addiction treatment and mental health issues. DSHS provides funds and assistance concerning disability aid, food stamps, and addiction support. Other community resources like WorkSource are also used for referrals.

Another benefit is that the case managers are available to visit the men at their places of employment, where they live, or in the community to provide ongoing encouragement for life change.

Liaison relations

To smooth the shelter’s transition from one church to the next, we invite liaisons from host congregations to our monthly CFH meetings at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church. Liaisons typically come two months ahead of their scheduled month so they can learn from those who have just finished hosting. This sharing of information creates continuity and provides answers to possible questions or concerns of the next host church. Often the liaisons continue to serve as volunteers in the program.

Our Shelter Director



After almost 3 years with CFH, David Johns Bowling was promoted to be Shelter Director in August. He comes to CFH with a strong background: His degree from the University of Washington in psychology, work with emotionally disturbed children for over 2 ½ years, family support work in Australia, and recently completed master’s degree in counseling psychology all add to his skills in identify-

ing men who can be helped by our program. He is the main contact person for the liaisons and congregations as well as the men in the shelter. David says that he feels called and gifted by God for this work and is blessed to have co-workers who are devoted to serving this population of men. David is married and has a 15-month-old son.

Plans for the future

This year we’ve piloted a program to build relationships between our agency and landlords with the goal of having more units available when we have funds. We have been very successful so far and seek to expand our permanent housing program as funds become available. The shower trailer will be a big addition to our shelter program. We are urgently looking for new office space and hope to arrange for offices at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church. This will accommodate our need for counseling space and for the additional case manager we hope to hire. We will continue to recruit individuals and couples to be life coaches so that the men will have the support they need when housing is found for them.

“Program is a blessing, a clean, safe environment. It works if you work at it.”
 – Program graduate, now in housing

CFH staff	
Executive Director	Steve Roberts, 206-295-7803
Shelter Director	David Johns Bowling, 425-749-8369
Chief Financial Officer	Pat Mc Dermott
Case Manager	Bruce Borremans, 425-985-7233
Case Manager	Christine White, 452-894-7722
Director of Housing	Sterling Benson, 206-604-5999
Director of Life Coaching	Paul Tomlinson, 206-295-1820
Human Resources Manager	Annette Lawson
Asst. Treasurer and grant writer	Louise Wong