
Fall 2010 Newsletter

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A message from our President Father Pat Bell

I am delighted that we have had a successful and busy summer period at Fresh Start. In fact, we once again find our services in greater demand than in the previous year. While it is true that the current local and national financial situation continues to lead more people into a position of looking for the kind of help we provide (especially an older population that what we have not seen before) it is also most true that our stable, consistent and respectful service to our Clients has generated a confidence and trust which encourages their presence with us. For that, I think all of you deserve to be acknowledged and thanked.

We cannot do what we accomplish without your support, in the many ways you provide it. For all you do, we offer our deep felt gratitude.

We do find, though, with the increased demand and an equally increased need. For the upcoming fall and winter we need additional volunteers, folks who would be willing to come in for a few hours a week on a regular basis. We have the need on a couple of days a week for openers at 7:30am, for support persons during the morning, and for food preparation. If you could help, please step forward, if even for just one or two days a month.

Please call Teresa at the office at 667-9798 on Monday mornings to volunteer—we would love to have your help.

Numbers at Fresh Start...

- ✓ 7,915 — Number of Fresh Start Client visits thru July 2010.
An increase of 56% over 2009
- ✓ Services Provided thru July 2010:
13,760 Meals/Coffee
2,971 Showers/Laundry
- ✓ 1,066 — Estimated number of homeless population in Kootenai County in 2010. An increase of 36% over 2009, according to the recent Region I Point in Time Count.
- ✓ Homeless population breakdown: 55% male, 45% female, 12% veterans, 22% chronically homeless
- ✓ 6/week — Number of Fresh Start Volunteers in 2010
- ✓ 21/week — Number of Fresh Start Volunteers in 2009



Fresh Start
1524 E Sherman Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
208-667-9798
www.freshstart.org, freshstartcda@gmail.com

KYLE ROTH—EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Kudos to Kyle Roth! Kyle came in to Fresh Start proposing his Eagle Scout project. His focus was to beautify the outside of our building. In late June, Kyle and his crew spent the day removing weeds and rocking the east side of the building for easy upkeep. Kyle built a bench to place out back for added seating, and built and planted a raised garden plot, that our Clients are taking care of with great pride. Thanks Kyle!



Kyle Roth and crew with new raised garden bed

2ND ANNUAL GARAGE SALE

On July 16th & 17th, Friends of Fresh Start organized a Garage Sale and Car Wash in Runge's parking lot. The success exceeded our expectations. Planning for next year has already started. Please keep us in mind when you are cleaning and sorting items, Fresh Start will gladly take your gently used items for next year's Garage Sale.

Thank you, Friends of Fresh Start for your hard work, and to all who came to the sale.

Food at Fresh Start

By Lynn Tarbox

Among the many important services provided by Fresh Start, our Clients would probably tell you that one really stands out—FOOD. Through the end of July this year our Clients have come in and had something to eat on over 9,000 occasions. This more than doubles last year's total at this time. The food varies from day to day depending on what we have available. Some days we may only have coffee, donuts and a bowl of soup, and on others we may be able to offer a full breakfast of sausage, eggs, potatoes and toast, or such items as homemade soups, casseroles or sandwiches.

Much of the food is donated by our individual supporters. We have several wonderful families who bring in, cook and serve complete meals on Saturday mornings, and others who stop by and bring a hot meal that will serve 40 to 50 people. We have been blessed by church groups who bring in large containers of soups, casseroles, salads and sandwiches. The Food Bank donates many of our baked goods as well as other items.

We also purchase much of our food items such as Cup of Noodles, Top Ramen, hot dogs and buns, milk and coffee. We spend a great deal of money on staples such as sugar, creamer and paper goods. For example, we use up to 150 Styrofoam cups and 50-70 paper bowls PER DAY, as well as paper plates, plastic knives, forks and spoons. We also buy paper napkins and towels.

The sheer volume of the above items that are consumed on a daily basis is staggering. Remember, we are feeding about 50 people per day. With all of the generous donations from our supporters we still find it necessary to spend over \$1,000 per month on food and related supplies each month. These numbers are substantial, higher than last year as we are feeding many more people this year.

It is important to remember that many of our Clients go without food from the time they leave Fresh Start (by 12 noon) until the next day when we open at 7:30am. There are, however, a few soup kitchens in town that open one night a week.

We are currently spending about \$300 per week on groceries and food supplies. This greatly exceeds our budget, because we did not expect the volume of people we are seeing this year. We do not have ovens or a stove, but rely on crock pots, portable grills, and electric fry pans for hot meals. Anything that you can donate in the way of good that fits our environment is always needed and appreciated. Of course, cash is always needed and will help to close our budget gaps. Please help in any way you can and of course, we do appreciate your past assistance. Why not put a check in the mail today?

Dates to remember...

October 1: **Bunco at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 6pm**

October 9 & 10: **Variety Show at St. Luke's. 7:30pm on October 9, and 2:30pm on October 10. (Need to purchase tickets in advance. Please call Teresa Martinson, 691-0473 for ticket info.)**

November 25: Thanksgiving dinner at Fresh Start, 11am

Friends of Fresh Start:

This has been a busy summer at Fresh Start. As of July 31, year to date, we've had 7,915 visits to the Fresh Start Center, up 56% from last year. We've provided 21,827 services (such as food, coffee, laundry, etc.) this year, up 90.3% from a year ago. Simply stated, the need to provide services to our homeless, near homeless and mentally ill clients is going through the roof. We've seen a significant increase in the 'senior' homeless population, particularly those passing through town. It's common for us to have 50-75 visitors each day seeking food, laundry, clothing, showers, mail and the other services we provide. As I write, this morning (August 21) we served hot breakfast to 70 people.

As the homeless population increases, our income is not keeping pace. Our contributions have declined from a year ago. Please consider dropping a check in the mail today. With cold weather on the way, we'll need more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities at Fresh Start, please call Teresa at 691-0473 or me at 661-1524.

Thanks for your support.

Howard Martinson
Executive Director

We Can Do This

That's what I thought one morning last year as I watched a group of students from Lakeland make breakfast at Fresh Start. We've got the people, with a family of seven. We've got the money (I figure it costs about \$25 a month to put on a breakfast of eggs, hashbrowns, pancakes, orange juice and milk for up to 30-40 people). And we've got the time. The only question: Do we have the willingness?

We do, turns out.

Since we began serving breakfast the first Saturday of each month, all five of our kids have chipped in with time and money. They have whipped pancake batter, flipped hashbrowns and cracked eggs. We do this simply because we know there are others who could use a little help, a little encouragement, and we know even though we aren't wealthy, we are blessed with jobs, home and health. So, as the Bible tells us, let's do something for others. Let's show we care, as Jesus Christ calls on us to do.

If we don't, who will?

Bill Buley, Coeur d'Alene Press City Editor



Saturday morning eggs, pancakes 'n hashbrowns. Many thanks to Bill Buley and his family

New Computers! By Michael Schwegel

As you may know, Fresh Start provides Internet access to our Clients through a number of computers in the lab at the front of the building. Up until June, however, getting anything done on those computers required extreme patience.. The software was as modern as possible, but the hardware was what could be cobbled together from different donations. One machine, donated by this writer, was first purchased in 1997. Even the newest computer around, the one in the staff office, was about six years old and running slowly. **There's just only so much such old hardware can do.**

Thankfully, Lee Sorenson, who works in the IT department at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, approached us with an offer of systems that were being decommissioned from use in their offices. While the computers may be on the old side for Sacred Heart, they're far newer than anything we had before. In May, Lee delivered four complete systems, including flat screen LCD monitors. The hard drives were wiped of all programs and data, of course, since the systems had been used in the medical profession (everyone should do this for any donated computer no matter its previous use; <http://www.dban.org/> is recommended). After installing operating systems and software (two with MS Windows XP and two with the latest version of Ubuntu Linux), the new computers replaced the oldest at Fresh Start. They work great, and complaints overheard about the slowness of the computers have markedly decreased.

Thank you to Lee Sorenson and Sacred Heart for the generous donation!

An organization of St. Luke's Episcopal Church sponsored the first Mica Peak Century Plus bike ride on Sunday, August 22 in memory of one of their beloved members who died unexpectedly last year. Helen Lewerenz had helped to start the outreach effort from the church into the community, especially in the area of helping the homeless. She had also been an avid runner and cyclist. So in keeping with her efforts, the Gears for Change group (which she named) organized and oversaw the first annual ride which offered participants four lengths of rides: 15, 30, 60 and 100 mile courses. Some fifty riders took the challenge, supported by a bevy of volunteers, including many from our own Fresh Start family. It was a wonderful success for a first year, and plans are already underway to make it a larger event next August.



Women's Gift Alliance Grant Award Announcement

Great news! The Women's Gift Alliance recently selected Fresh Start as one of two grant recipients for 2010. This terrific grant will cover plumbing and electrical upgrades for Fresh Start, which will enable us to improve our operations and services provided to our clients. In addition, the grant will fund an industrial washer/dryer set, the sort of large set a hotel or school might use. Our old washer and dryer set was donated to a needy family with six children.

We couldn't be happier, and thank the Women's Gift Alliance for their generous support of Fresh Start to serve the homeless population.



New commercial washer. Thanks Women's Gift Alliance!