



Winter 2011 Newsletter

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Consulting Attorney

Thomas M. Vasseur

A Vital Community Asset

By Howard Martinson, Executive Director
howard.martinson@gmail.com, 208-661-1524

Homelessness is a growing national problem that has certainly not escaped Coeur d'Alene. The severe economic climate that we are currently experiencing has exacerbated the need for our services. In addition to the folks that we normally serve, we are seeing more and more individuals and families who have lost their jobs and homes. The number of clients served has increased by 25% this year over last year.

We provide critically needed first response services to the community. Every morning we see forty to sixty people who require hot food, clothing and many other basic necessities for survival. They also have access to hot showers, laundry facilities, telephone, computers and mail services.

At Fresh Start we are making every effort to be a good neighbor and an asset to the community. We hold neighborhood meetings which include business and home owners, police, fire and city officials as well as our own staff and volunteers. We have instituted neighborhood cleanups, patrols and will soon be offering overnight warming facilities on very cold and freezing nights. We have developed and implemented a behavioral code for our clients with the objective of reducing objectionable actions within the vicinity of Fresh Start.

We are satisfied that we have been able to alleviate some of the consequences of our homeless citizens. We are even more thankful and proud that what success Fresh Start has achieved has been through the overwhelming generosity of the residents of this great community.

As always, we invite your questions, concerns, or suggestions for us, so that we may continue to maintain an open and positive community dialogue as Fresh Start continues to evolve as the community center that is so desperately needed, and of which our citizens are proud to support.

Finances at Fresh Start

By Lynn Tarbox

Fresh Start has experienced tremendous growth over the past three years, more than tripling the number of clients we serve. This growth has necessitated that we raise- and spend- a considerable amount of money.

Thanks to the caring and generosity of the folks of Kootenai County, we have been able to continue to meet the critical needs of the homeless and near-homeless people that we serve. We receive no money from any federal, state or local agency. Our income is derived from individual donors

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Fresh Start

1524 E Sherman Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
208-667-9798

www.freshstart.org, freshstartcda@gmail.com

Fresh Start is a first responder to the basic human needs of homeless people through supportive services and community partnerships

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along with a few grants.

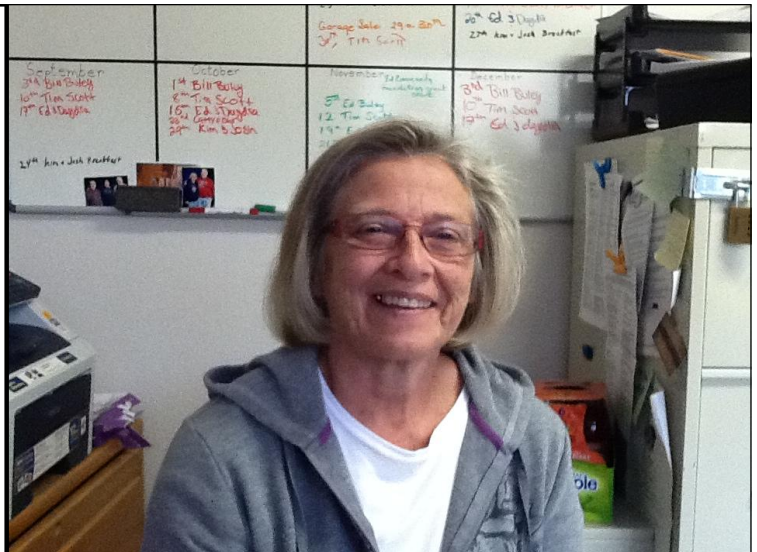
We make every effort to keep our expenses to a bare minimum. For example, we have two employees, one Executive Director that we pay to work 10 hours per week (although he puts in considerable more time), and one Operations Manager who is paid to work 30 hours per week. That's it! Our great group of volunteers provides all other effort, 110 hours a week, required to operate Fresh Start.

Thanks to the substantial donations of individual and businesses in the area, most of the clothing, sleeping bags, tents, etc we provide for those in need are without cost to Fresh Start.

We feed about 50 people six days a week. Much of the actual food is donated but we spend a surprising amount on supplies, such as condiments, cups, plates, bowls, etc. The other major category of expenses is that of rent and utilities.

During the past twelve months, ending September 30, 2011, our income was \$104,000, which included two significant grants. Our expenses were \$82,000 of which \$26,000 was for personnel costs and \$24,000 for rent, utilities and insurance. Without the two non-reoccurring grants we would have operated at a loss over the past year. With the increasing number of homeless folks that we serve, our expenses will increase next year. It becomes critically important that we continue to be successful in our fundraising efforts.

As a 501(3)c non-profit corporation, our finances are of public record. Please visit our website at www.freshstartinc.org, or call me at 208-699-6977 if you have any questions. It is our intention to operate a transparent operation that provides maximum benefit for the contributions received. Homelessness is truly a community and national problem that seems to be growing worse. Fresh Start intends to continue to be a first response site to care for those in need. Thanks for your past support and I hope we can count on your continuing help this winter.



Teresa Martinson

Teresa Martinson is our Volunteer Coordinator and Development Director. Teresa volunteers 35 hours a week at Fresh Start, helping run the center, working with clients, writing grants, recruiting and training volunteers, and just about everything else. Teresa is the glue that holds the place together, touching every aspect of Fresh Start.

Teresa graduated from Gonzaga University and spent many years teaching elementary school. After taking a medical retirement, her work has been as a volunteer, with a focus on the homeless population.

Teresa and her husband, Executive Director Howard Martinson, have four adult children and five grandchildren.

Food at Fresh Start

When we open Fresh Start at 7:30 every morning except Sunday, there are usually a substantive number of people waiting to get inside. Many are cold or tired but they all are hungry. We offer hot food and coffee every day. Some have not eaten since they were here yesterday morning.

This year we are serving about 1,100 meals a month. As the weather becomes colder, the number increases. We obtain our food from several sources. We buy some of the food and all of the paper goods that we use to serve our clients.

We also have volunteers bringing in fully cooked breakfasts or lunches. Many individuals and organizations bring soups, casseroles, fruits, vegetables and bread.

Doma Coffee has been donating 15-25 pounds of coffee each week. Kootenai Medical Center gives us leftovers from their cafeteria each day, and the Food Bank drops off groceries on a regular basis.

Saturday is a big day here. We have four or five regular groups coming in on alternate Saturdays to prepare breakfast for up to 80-90 folks. They purchase the food, set up grills, prepare and serve our clients, many of whom say this is the best meal they have all week.

Our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to KMC, the Food Bank, Doma Coffee, and to all of you, our generous and gracious donors.



House to House Ministries Saturday Breakfast Crew

Medical Services at Fresh Start

By Ryan Smith, PA-C

Since May, 2010 Dirne Community Health Center has been providing medical services to the homeless population that comes to Fresh Start. I am the Homeless Program Director for Dirne CHC, and along with my team provide care for approximately 10 patients per day while at Fresh Start. Services typically provided for the patients range from treating acute illnesses to the management of chronic illnesses like Diabetes, COPD, Hypertension and complex mental illnesses. According to *Greendoors.org*, nearly 1/3 of all ER visits are made by people struggling with homelessness. They state that nationally on average a chronically homeless patient makes 5 visits to the Emergency Room per year, while some frequent users can even visit weekly. Each visit costing nearly \$3,700 or \$18,500/year per patient. It is stated that nearly 80% of all homeless patient ER visits are for an illness that may have been prevented with preventative care and access to care.

Homeless patients face many challenges for medical care, including access to care, the cost of an office visit, the cost of laboratory and radiography testing and finally the cost of the prescriptions or treatment plan. As the weather changes here in Coeur d'Alene towards winter these challenges all increase. This is where Dirne is stepping in, making a difference in each patient's life by providing them care, and at no cost to the patient. This results in saving tremendous costs to KMC and community members.

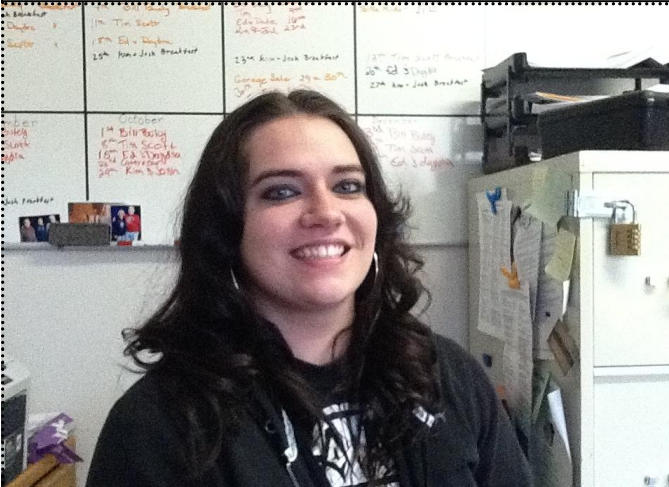
Currently our team has been utilizing a clothes closet inside of Fresh Start to see the patients. This is not adequate for privacy and creates limitations while practicing like this. Thanks to the generous donations from the community, Dirne CHC now has a Mobile Medical Clinic. The mobile medical clinic is a 34 foot motorhome that will be converted to have an exam room and the ability to more fully examine a patient in a much more private and reassuring way.

Dirne is in need of an enclosed, heated, secured and CD'A located storage facility, as well as more donations to help pay for maintenance and traveling expenses locally. The cost to run this Mobile Medical Clinic will be minimal compared to the cost of seeing these patients at the ER. If we see an average of 10 patients per day at Fresh Start, 4 days per month, and using the data from earlier regarding costs the ER is incurring to see a non-insured homeless patient, the savings are astounding and are estimated at \$2,664,000 per year.

Dirne CHC would like to thank Fresh Start for providing the services they do for the homeless population. We would also like to thank the contributors to the Mobile Medical Clinic including the Coeur d'Alene Rotary Club, Avista Utilities, Kootenai Electric, Kiwanis Club and the community for its support.

Any questions please contact Alan Brockway, Development Director, Dirne Health Clinic, at 208-415-0292

Success Story...One of our most meaningful donations was the \$1.86 check we recently received from one of our former clients, Don. Don is an older gentleman who was a client a few years ago. Don has since been able to get his life back in order, been placed into housing and is doing well on his own. And when he has a little extra in his checking account at the end of the month, he sends it to us, as his way of thanking us for helping him during a difficult time. Thank you Don. We know how much the relationships built Fresh Start meant to you, and are happy to know that you are well, and living a peaceful and healthy life.



Justine Graybeal

Meet Justine Graybeal. Justine is our Operations Manager, in charge of our day-to-day activities. She is a native of Coeur d'Alene and has lived here all her life. Justine was graduated from Lake City High School and is currently enrolled at NIC in the Medical Assisting Program. She intends to go on and become a Registered Nurse.

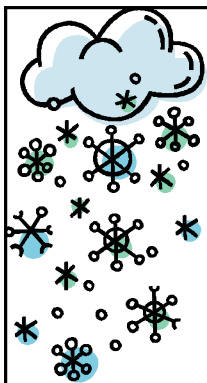
Justine heard about Fresh Start through her grandmother, who had attended a fundraiser for Fresh Start this past summer. Justine started as a volunteer, and made an immediate and positive impact on our facility and clients. She was a dedicated volunteer, coming in everyday, bringing a common sense, firm but fair attitude, and offering a great sense of humor and beautiful smile.

When the opportunity arose, we were very fortunate that Justine agreed to become our Operations Manager. Justine continues to be a valuable asset at Fresh Start, well liked and respected by our Clients, Volunteer staff and Board.

More New Computers!

By Michael Schwegel

As he did in 2010, Lee Sorenson, on behalf of Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, donated four newer computers to Fresh Start earlier this year. We received two ThinkPad laptops and two more Lenovo desktops, complete with monitors and other peripherals. Though the computer lab was already full with the machines donated last year, having the extras is still very helpful. Before the donation in 2010, the computers we had required constant vigilance to keep them up and running. The newer hardware and freshly installed software last year definitely helped and the machines have worked reasonably well for the better part of a year. But even with that, computers can get slower and slower and have their interfaces bogged down, especially lab computers with myriad different users. The new computers allow us to have "hot spares" on hand that can be easily and quickly swapped for a less functional machine, which can in turn have its software reinstalled off site and become a new hot spare. Thank you again to Lee Sorenson and Sacred Heart for the generous donation!



Winter is Coming

Fresh Start will again this year operate a Warming Center for the homeless. We will open our doors at 7:30pm every night when the temperature reaches 20° or lower. We will remain open all night and of course, stay open through our regular hours of 7:30am to 12:00pm.

Last winter we opened 30 nights and had 825 over-night guests. Our clients normally sleep in tents or sleeping bags in the outdoors. Some sleep in their vehicles. We hope to accomplish this again this winter, but we may have to hire staff. If you have any

interest in being on the Volunteer List, please call Teresa Martinson at 208-691-0473. Winter always brings a staggering demand for warm clothing, sleeping bags, tarps and tents. Last year we gave out over 400 sleeping bags! We also particularly need warm socks, boots, and warm coats. Please help if you can.

Calling All Volunteers— We Need YOU!

Have you ever thought of how you might be able to help or contribute to those less fortunate? To make a difference in our community right here, right now? We would like to invite you to consider a volunteer position at Fresh Start. It could be as little as 1, and up to 5 hours once a day or once a week, that's completely up to you. We always need weekday hosts, help in our office, food pickups, clothes organizing, and food prep. We're open Monday-Friday, 7:30am-12pm.

Every gesture of goodwill makes a difference. You may not always know when or how or why, but it does make a difference. If you'd like to learn more about how you may be able to contribute to Fresh Start, please call Teresa Martinson at 208-691-0473.

Thank you to our generous donors and volunteer workers at our 2nd annual Summer Garage Sale and Car Wash. We were able to raise \$2,400. These funds will be used to buy our essential supplies, paper goods, laundry soap, and personal hygiene supplies.

Also **Thanks** to Runge's Furniture for the use of their parking lot again.

Dates to Remember...

Thanksgiving Dinner, November 24, 10:30am to 1:00pm

Christmas Dinner, December 25, 10:30am to 1:00pm

Send us your email address...In our efforts to go paperless, we would like to send our future Newsletters via email. If you would like to support this, please forward us your email address, and we will make sure you receive our upcoming Newsletters via email.

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