



Summer 2012 Newsletter

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Fresh Start Emergency Overnight Warming Center completes another successful winter

By Howard Martinson, Executive Director
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The Fresh Start Emergency Overnight Warming Center has completed another successful winter. We were open a total of 31 nights from 7:00 pm until 12 Noon the following day and provided 725 bed-nights to our homeless population. 725 times that a person had a warm, safe place to sleep, take a shower, do some laundry and get something hot to eat. That's 725 nights where a person was not sleeping outside in the sub 20 degree weather, wandering the streets, sleeping in a dumpster or unheated vehicle. According to Glen Lauper, City of Coeur d'Alene Deputy Fire Chief, the homeless often start small fires in their camps, possibly attempting to heat their tent with a candle. These fires are a public safety hazard.

One night after we closed for the season, Chief Lauper requested that we open for one night to shelter homeless veterans from the freezing temperatures. It was our honor and privilege to open and provide shelter for the homeless vets.

Our warming center has been open for five winters now, so we've developed a great deal of expertise at serving this population. We're typically open around 30 nights and provide 700-1,000 bed-nights. Fresh Start is the only warming center in Coeur d'Alene.

Operation of the warming center is made possible by community donations, and especially by grants from The Avista Foundation and Kootenai Electric Trust. For this, we are grateful.

President's Message by Bill Smith

This last year Fresh Start made another step toward stable community service In Coeur d'Alene. When concerned citizens pointed out behavior problems with some of our clients, the Board of Directors established a code of conduct and client expectations to guide our clients and staff. The resulting "cleaning up our act" has had a positive effect on attitudes and behavior inside the building and outside in the neighborhoods around us.

Thanks to You, our generous supporters our operating budget has been stable for 2 years and we can continue providing a place to literally "clean up" with showers and laundry available every day.

Our Board of Directors needs your help setting our goals and our Staff and Volunteers need your help meeting the needs of our community. Your support is what makes this work!



Fresh Start

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A Sign of the Times

By Jeff Brooks

A number of months ago we at Fresh Start initiated a neighborhood clean-up patrol. Several times a month Fresh Start clients scour our immediate neighborhood to pick up trash. At a recent Board meeting we decided to ask the city if we might help out elsewhere. In April we entered into the city's "Adopt a Street" program, and we adopted Sherman Avenue from 15th Street to 23rd Street. We pledged that at least twice a year we will pickup trash on 'our' street. This will be accomplished by clients and volunteers under my supervision.

Our inaugural 'Adopt a Street' clean up will be Saturday, June 30th at 11:30am. We will start at Fresh Start and after about an hour or so of fun filled trash pickup (with a prize for the most unique piece of trash) we will then meet back at Fresh Start for some sodas and snacks. Everyone is invited to this 'trashy' event and will get to wear a very colorful vest.

Less than a year ago we had a need to meet with neighbors and city officials about our very existence on Sherman Avenue. Since then we have worked hard to become a better neighbor. We are pleased to partner with the city to help keep our neighborhood neat and tidy. This is typical of the dozen or so collaborative partnerships we participate in on a daily basis to serve our homeless neighbors. Come join us.



Meet *Lindsey Combs*. Lindsey is 24 and has lived in Coeur d' Alene most of her life. She graduated from Lake City High School and is now attending North Idaho College to become an accountant. Lindsey was introduced to Fresh Start through Justine Graybeal, our Operations Manager. Lindsey started out donating unwanted items but then realized that her hair cutting skills were needed. Lindsey started cutting hair at Fresh Start in the fall of 2011, and comes in about once a week to provide hair cuts for about 10 to 15 clients. Lindsey has a fun-loving attitude and the clients love this service. Thank You Lindsey!



Fresh Start Adopt A Street, Sherman Avenue, 15th-23rd

THE HOMELESS NEED YOUR HELP

Unfortunately, there is no recession at Fresh Start. Business is better than ever! We still see 50 to 80 people a day.

We are fortunate in that we receive a great many donations of food, paper goods, clothing and cash during the December Holiday season. Donations are substantially reduced during the rest of the year, yet our expenses continue unabated. We make every effort to control expenses; however, we continue to spend about \$7,000 per month, to cover rent, insurance, utilities, supplies and staff.

As we have repeatedly stated, we receive no help from any government agency -- our income is totally derived from donations from people within the community and a few charitable grants.

We currently have great need for paper goods and supplies, coffee, sugar, creamer and related condiments. Tents, tarps, sleeping bags, blankets and men's and women's clothing are always in short supply and put to good use. And, of course your cash gifts are always welcomed and greatly appreciated.

With the weather getting warmer, we also need bottled water, sunscreen and insect repellent. And some needs remain the same no matter what the season, such as disposable razors, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner.

We are so grateful for the many generous gifts that we have received over the past few years, however the need is ongoing and we must continue to rely on the support of our donors. We have enclosed an envelope in this newsletter and your check will be used to offset some of our expenses.

Thank you for your support.

Why I Volunteer

By Lynn Tarbox

When I retired several years ago, my wife and I moved from Southern California to Idaho (sound familiar?), and beautiful Hayden Lake. We have had an incredible experience here in the Great Northwest. We have made many wonderful friends and our life was occupied playing golf, tennis, hiking and traveling. My wife, Suzanne, became very active in the community, volunteering with the Probation Department, the Library Foundation, 3 C's and serving as a tutor within the Public School system, and whatever else came her way.

I kept very busy with my friends and activities, but did very little else.

Four years ago, a good friend of mine asked me to help cook breakfast one morning at the local homeless shelter. I did so and that was my introduction to Fresh Start. I met with the Executive Director, Howard Martinson. Howard told me all about the work that was being done at the shelter and the surprisingly large number of people "in the street," in this wonderful resort city, as well as the daily needs of these people just to survive. Within three or four hours I was hooked and asked about how I could help on a continuing basis.

The educational experience for me has been overwhelming. I have learned that most of the folks who visit Fresh Start are basically decent people who require a helping hand. Many are mentally disabled and many have substance abuse problems. There are very few places where they can find the basic necessities to get them through another day.

The satisfaction that I have experienced by being able to help these folks has really amazed me and made my life more complete and has certainly made me realize just how fortunate my family and I are. We have met wonderful, caring citizens who generously give of their time and money to make life a little more tolerable for the homeless.

Fresh Start always needs volunteers in many areas. We only have one and a half paid staff and couldn't operate without the help of folks like you. You would find the volunteering experience very rewarding and satisfying.

Please call our Volunteer Coordinator, Teresa Martinson, at 691-0473 to learn of the opportunities to help the homeless of Kootenai County.

Fresh Start has a garden! A few years ago a young scout working on one of his merit badges built a small garden area at Fresh Start. I as the volunteer coordinator really wondered whether it would ever get much use. In the last few years I have bought a few tomato plants and put them in the garden. Amazingly enough I have found that I have a number of clients that have taken on the garden as their own. They water it every morning, they keep it weeded, and most of all they feel a great amount of pride when we use the vegetables that are grown. This year we planted tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers and a variety of herbs. I have already noticed that they are excited about how well the garden is doing and are looking forward to eating the fresh vegetables. By Teresa Martinson



Thank you Josh and Kim!

We are grateful to the generous volunteers and groups who provide and serve a hearty, homemade breakfast to our clients each Saturday. Saturday breakfasts are served to 75-100 clients, and it is usually their best meal of the week.

Two of these volunteers are husband and wife Josh and Kim Slack, who read about Fresh Start in the CdA Press. Josh and Kim visited one Saturday, and to our great fortune have been coming back with a yummy breakfast once a month for the past year.

After each working a full week, Kim starts the meal prep on Friday, and Josh starts cooking. Saturday morning they're up early to finish cooking and cart the delicious breakfast to Fresh Start, which could be eggs and potatoes, breakfast burritos, pancakes and sausage or biscuits and gravy. Each meal is fresh, delicious, hearty and filling, and served with a smile and kind word. Thank you very much for your generosity and kind and caring spirit.

If you would like to volunteer to bring a Saturday breakfast, please sign up on the website www.bringthameal.com. User Name is Start and Password is Sherman. Or please call the Fresh Start Office at 667-9798.

We are appreciative, grateful, humbled and reenergized by the generous support from our community. Many thanks go out to...

☺ The Avista Foundation and the Kootenai Electric Cooperative Foundation. We received grants from these Foundations which are used exclusively to fund our Warming Center. Please read Howard's article about the Warming Center on page 1.

☺ Kootenai Medical Center for donations of fresh food. We've been able to provide a hot, delicious and nutritious meal every day for our clients. Thanks also to the KMC food staff who have been extremely helpful and friendly.

☺ Bubba, ringleader of the infamous Bubba's Backpack Brigade. Bubba is a young man who, along with his supportive family, regularly donates backpacks and necessities. We'll feature more about Bubba in our next newsletter.

☺ Lakeland High School for donating the proceeds of the Prairie Pig fundraiser. Congratulations Lakeland, it was a great game!

☺ Cheryl Metcalf, family and friends, for providing a bountiful and beautiful Thanksgiving lunch. Cheryl's volunteers also provided a very needed new microwave for us.

☺ Justine Graybeal, FS Operations Manager, and Teresa Martinson, Volunteer Coordinator, for providing a delicious Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day. These ladies are two of a kind, caring, generous, hard-working, and we would be lost without them.

☺ Breakfast Providers: Tim Scott family and friends, Pastor Ed and Daydra Peery and congregation, Target Community Foundation Volunteers, Josh and Kim Slack family and friends, Makaia Foster family and friends. You are generous and gracious to offer not only your time, but we know the expense is considerable. And along with providing a great meal, you set a good example for living a life outside of ourselves.

☺ Fresh Start volunteers for volunteering your time, talents and skills, and especially for offering a smile, kind word and sometimes just lending an ear.

☺ You, our local community and neighbors. Your continued support is truly remarkable. Without you we would not be able to provide all the support and services to those in our community who need a helping hand. Every donation, big or small, helps in some way and is always put to good use.

Thank You, One and All

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.

Like us on Facebook, at Fresh Start Inc.

We have another great success story. Larry who we first met this winter. He came to us because he had lost his job and was homeless. Larry is a North Idaho native, very likable, and was just down on his luck. We helped Larry with his job applications, and he used Fresh Start as an address to receive a number of important papers he needed for his job search. Through his hard work and our services Larry was able to get a full time job. He is now back to being a productive tax paying member of our community. Nice Job Larry!



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