



News from SOJOURNERTRUTHHOUSE

A ministry sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ

Volume 4 No. 4

Reflections, Ripples and Realities



Sojourner Truth House is thirteen years old! In human terms, that's adolescence! That, in many ways, describes where we are as a Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (PHJC) sponsored ministry. For example, we are experiencing a burgeoning growth spurt. Last year we served over 1100 people per month, whereas this year we're helping over 1200 per month!

We have a staff of 20, a cadre of 10 group facilitators, 40 plus on-site volunteers, several interns per semester and a growing list of community partners. New groups and classes fill our clients' schedule as well as innovative activities such as an overnight client retreat at the Lindenwood Retreat Center, a car wash to raise money for a client trip, and a Women's Summit one Saturday in June. Having our own board for a year and a half, we sent in our first IRS Form 990! We've improved our technological capacity, our freezer capacity and our fundraising capacity for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Our adolescence shows itself as we watch crisis after crisis unravel our local, state and national safety nets upon which those whom we serve depend. We rebel against such injustice and therefore, advocate for changes in a system that no longer works, we initiate stopgap measures to stave off huge numbers of homeless. Thus, we are working with a small group of pastors, churches and organizations to start a P.A.D.S. (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) program here in Gary. We make known to our legislators, the housing catastrophe our clients face with thousands on waiting lists for subsidized and public housing or Section 8 vouchers.

Our adolescent mood swings from being overwhelmed by the state of things to moving ahead on making a difference in our small corner of the world. This is no small task in the face of all the above. Thus, we are engaging our board, our community partners, our volunteers and clients in a process of strategic planning for the future. Our consultant, Mr. Mark Clarke of CommunityWorks, Inc. from Indianapolis, is in the stage of information gathering. We rely on your prayers as we move into this discernment.

So, life feels huge at STH in this moment. I wonder if the teenage Jesus felt as we do. No doubt he saw whatever shred of a safety net for his own people fall apart at the hands of the Roman Empire. Perhaps, he stayed behind in the Temple of Jerusalem to begin discerning how to respond. Put all that together with his growing knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, I can only surmise that he developed a finely tuned sense of prophetic justice. I think we can take great comfort in this picture of Jesus. After all, Jesus moved into his future with confidence, and we now walk in his way.

Join us in our continuing efforts—as a volunteer, as a generous financial or in-kind donor, as one who prays the Wisdom of God in our direction. We can then look forward to growing into our adulthood as a ministry in good company.

Blessings to you all!

Sister Peg Spindler, CSA
Executive Director

Volunteer Views

Charlene Van Sickle



Volunteer Charlene Van Sickle

Retires after a decade of service to Sojourner Truth House. We will miss her!

Admiration for those who worked with the poor had me wondering if I could ever do what they do. Then one day a friend told me, "They need someone to answer the phone at Sojourner Truth House." Thus began ten of the most rewarding years of my life, with my volunteer duties changing greatly over the years.

God's grace was abundantly showered upon me. The Sisters and other staff were inspiring examples. The camaraderie of fellow volunteers was amazing. But my greatest blessing and surprise: the friendliness and generosity of spirit of the good people we serve have made me develop a true affection for them. I shall miss them terribly. This experience has not been a sacrifice—it has been sheer joy!

Janice Spencer & Joanne Turner



Pictured from left to right: Volunteers Janice Spencer and Joanne Turner

We welcome new volunteers to the Sojourner Truth House family!

As retired postal employees who dealt with the public daily, volunteering at Sojourner Truth House allows us the opportunity to continue interacting with people and also the ability to give back to the community.

Volunteering gives us the chance to mentor young women, sharing our life experiences in the hope that they will be able to utilize our wisdom in their own growth.

Our strong faith and belief in God led us to be the example Jesus set before us through volunteering.

– Janice Spencer & Joanne Turner

Building Capacity

A 12' x 16' walk-in freezer now operates at Sojourner Truth House, assembled on a concrete pad and surrounded by steel sheets and roof. It was attached to the existing pole barn in a seamless manner. This \$25,000 project was completed in September at a cost of \$3000 to Sojourner Truth House. Our generous and hardworking donors/builders include Belstra Milling Company of DeMotte, Midwest Refrigeration in Merrillville and the DeMotte Christian Reformed Church.

We thank all of these angels for increasing our ability to accept frozen food for our premier food pantry. Our thanks also go to Angie Williams and her crew at The Food Bank of NWI for connecting us. What blessings we can be for each

BEFORE



AFTER



Coffee and Conversation

Mary Nemeth

Recently, I had the privilege of seeing Sojourner Truth House in action at one of the Coffee and Conversation events at Sojourner Truth House. The event consisted of viewing the food pantry, clothes closet, the interview area for walk-in clients coming for food and clothes, the kitchen/eating area that serves meals for shelter clients and their children, and the meeting/classroom area for shelter clients. It is wonderful to see the pride that the staff and volunteers take in each area and the kindness and respect they give to each client.

I was very impressed with the class that was going on in the meeting area. The facilitator was knowledgeable and was trying to impress a feeling of self-worth in the women who were there.

We were able to hear a client's story and learn how STH had helped a woman who became homeless after losing her longtime job. It was very moving to hear her story and see the hope she had for the future. She had moved from the shelter and had her own apartment, and was looking for a new job. STH gave her the tools she needed to begin again. That client is now working a good job in Hammond.

I am amazed at the dedication the staff shows for each and every client. Women who are homeless are given the tools they need to become independent. These tools may include medical care, dental care, addiction/alcohol classes, mental health care, housing, job counseling, exercise classes, or help with GED classes. STH is interested in the whole woman, and has a program that continues to offer help after the women have found housing.

On a personal note, I realize how fortunate I am. I see that an education, supportive family and friends, a good job and luck have given me opportunities that many of these women have never had. Yet they have a resiliency that I'm not sure I would have if I had to overcome all the obstacles that they have encountered. I hope these women realize how strong they truly are and I believe that STH works to help them understand their strengths.

Lastly, I hope the city of Gary realizes what a jewel they have with the staff and volunteers at Sojourner Truth House. They are making a difference in the lives of many women and children in Gary who have nowhere else to turn. Most importantly, they are giving hope to many in Gary.

Walkathon Net:

\$33,507

30 teams, 5 individual walkers and 20 corporate sponsors participated—
We thank you all!



Re'Nesha Weston waiting at the finish line

OUR MISSION

Sojourner Truth House is a ministry of hope for homeless and at-risk women and their children. Through advocacy, the hospitality of the day center and integrative services, participants can improve their quality of life and that of the community. Sojourner Truth House is sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

OUR CORE VALUES

We believe that our four core values flow from joyful service to all, especially the needy and underserved. These values are Openness to the Spirit, Community, Simplicity, and Dignity and Respect for all.

REST IN PEACE

Bob Wehner, beloved volunteer and donor, passed away May 29, 2010.



Holiday Help

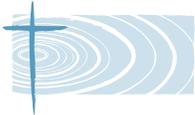
Holidays are particularly stressful for both our clients and us. In this economy, stretching our resources to meet the need for food and personal items until the end of the year is all the more difficult. Please join in the tradition of our beloved Bob Wehner and give to our 52Weeks program. He brought in-kind donations and he wrote checks because he did not want mothers and their children to go without the necessities. We estimate it takes \$600/week to keep our pantry shelves stocked. Please use the enclosed envelope or donate at SojournerTruthHouse.org. Thank you in advance.



1419 South Lake Park Ave.
Hobart, IN 46342



Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ



Partners in the work of the Spirit

Katherine Amick; Layout & Design

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STH is going GREEN!

E-mail
jsantaquilani@ancilla.org
to join our eNewsletter
mailing list!

SOJOURNER**TRUTH**HOUSE

**Average total of clients
served:
1,200+ per month**



*In the month of August, almost
50% of those served were children!*

\$5,000: United Way for food and diapers

\$4,000: ACTS (Agnesian Caring Through Sharing) for Nonviolent Communication Training

\$25,000: John W. Anderson Foundation: child care and case management costs

\$1,000: Legacy Foundation's 'Make it Happen' grant for our Coffee and Conversations

\$10,500: Drug Free Alliance for recovery groups and drug screens

Grants Received:

\$45,500