

I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden. ~Ruth Stout



THE WELL HOUSE NEWS

PAY IT FORWARD

by **Judy Jager**

I have spent hours writing many angry and disappointed letters to Congressman and other government officials trying to appeal to them on issues concerning the lack of needs being met for single, low-income women such as myself. There were always programs out there, but most of them failed to truly meet my needs without putting my daughter at some risk. Most of my letters received polite standard form letters encouraging me to go back to college, which too had its unrealistic set of needs, requirements, and a shift in other benefit cuts. Years later when I spent most of a three-year span of time homeless, I was still faced with struggling through a system; designed for the wealthy to begin with, and an entirely different set of disappointments. I know no system is or can be perfect, but for years the programs had too many restrictions for an unhealthy, homeless, middle-aged woman to meet to be eligible.

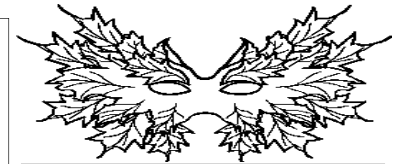
In my A.A. meetings we define the word *insanity* as “doing the same old thing over and over and expecting different results”. I take off my hat in respect for our 44th President having the open mind to voice that we have been doing too long the same old things and expecting different results. I pray his willingness will make for a more sane ideal for the country as a whole with more balance as the shift of wealth takes place.

Not all programs I tried to access were failing me, I have great gratitude for the MSHDA housing programs and the partnering of ICCF to facilitate such programs. After 4 to 5 years of a stumbling up-hill battle of health issues, little to no income, losing a home and an apartment in the process, I was given the voucher to get into and maintain the wonderful apartment I now reside. This is one program that has stabilized my life. This is the program that works and I thank The Wellhouse, MSHDA, ICCF, and the government agencies that fund this program. This program saved me from more years of battling homelessness and neglected healthcare.

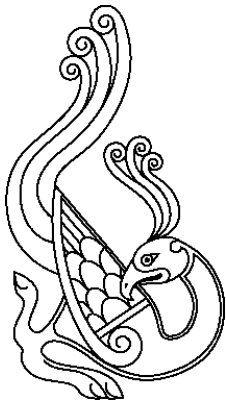
I also thank God for giving me the tenacity to sustain, and I thank President Barack Obama for having a new vision for our country to come through the insanity into the light of our shortcomings. One of my goals now is to pay it forward to the best of my ability, to help another struggling woman that feels the despair...God guide me and direct me.

Our Mission Statement

Well House seeks to provide
 temporary,
 emergency housing
 for homeless women and families,
 and to promote activities
 that foster new directions and goals



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Well House Wishes

FOR OUR HOUSE

Workbooks for kids
Markers, glue sticks, crafts,
children's scissors, etc for
family boxes

Wooden bookshelf for toys and books

Garden tools for kids and
adults especially trowels and
"diggers"

Spray bottles, ice cream buckets, shaker top bottles

Carbon Shower filters.

Umbrellas

Gently used stroller.

Back packs for babies and toddlers

Sand toys such as old kitchen
sifters, trucks, etc.



**Jaquelyn, an intern from Art Works,
working with a resident on an art
project.**

Craft & sewing items: Large eyed
needles with blunt ends and sewing
kits. Crochet hooks (Sizes F-H) and
Knitting Needles (Sizes 8-11) plus
willing hands for Thurs evening **Sew-
ing Circle, 1st and 3rd Thursdays
of the month. Come join us or
call Ruby for details.**

Wishes do come true!

Jaquelyn Curtis (UICA
Art Works program) and
Giovanni Jovanovic
(GVSU) were sent by the
volunteer fairy this past
winter to be part of the
Well House community!
They've helped out with
facility needs, weekday
activities, Saturday morn-
ing arts and both have
been regulars at the Sew-
ing Circle. Thanks for all
your help! The staff and
residents have really en-
joyed getting to know
you and appreciate your
contributions!

If we had no
winter, the
spring would
not be so
pleasant; if we
did not some-
times taste of
adversity,
prosperity
would not be
so welcome.

~Anne Brad-
street

The 2009 WYCE Hat Trick Concert Series

Was a smashing success!!!

Thanks to WYCE!!

Thanks to One Trick Pony!!

And a special thanks to Roanna Cooper, Well House Board Member!!!!

Thanks to Chris Smither, the featured performing artist. He has a great following and they were very generous to Well House greenhouse project!!!

"[Smither] taps his foot to keep the rhythm, much like the late blues legend John Lee Hooker. His finger-picked guitar lines are sleek, unhurried and insistent. And then there's the voice – equal parts gravel and molasses, Smither's singing sounds like a distillation of the folk and blues heroes he grew up listening to in New Orleans."

-National Public Radio



Volunteer Opportunities

COMMUNITY-BASED SPONSORS

Needed paratners to help support permanent residents in a variety of "one on one" activities such as: being a mentor, listening ear, financial support or vocational, and personal growth.



Ellen, Kathy and Therese spend quality time with other Well House residents- our plants!

WELL HOUSE SPRING CLEAN-UP

Volunteers to help with general spring clean up such as raking, picking up litter and branches, getting gardens ready and etc. General facilities clean up. Call in advance if you want to pitch in for an hour or two. Fridays are good days weather permitting!

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Volunteers needed to drive Well House residents to outings, job and apartment hunting.

STAFF RELIEF

Have some time to "hang-out" over the summer so that staff can get breaks. Give us a call.

PLAY BUDDIES

Play with kids after school from 4-6 on the playground, read books and stories and help kids with activity books or building academic skills in a natural setting. Call for times when parents could use help during the day as well.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Needed folks to come and lead an activity with families. It can be done as a one time activity, monthly or seasonal. Needed for Monday or Thursday evenings from 6:00-8:00.

Special thanks to all those who work tirelessly behind the scenes.....we couldn't do it without you!

If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall.

~Nadine Stair

EMBRACING THE PAST AND BUILDING THE FUTURE

Seeking self- directed, retired or retiring specialist from the building industry to evaluate, plan and implement a green, non-toxic, eco-friendly, sustainable facility.

We are looking for motivated volunteers who are interested in:

- Becoming a part of a team.
- Visioning a green, sustainable facility.
- Helping to recruit co-workers in building industry.
- Creating a model that others in the community can learn from.
- Working with Well House, a non-profit emergency transition to permanent, sustainable community
- Becoming a miracle worker with houses that are over 100 years old.
- Respecting the tradition of living simply with the environment.
- Keeping the integrity of the past while designing for the future.
- Continuing the tradition of a fragrance/chemical free facility.

SUPPORT WELL HOUSE!

SAVE THE DATE
Come *Walk* With Us!

GRACE Hunger Walk

May 2, 2009

207 East Fulton

Check-in begins at 8:00 a.m.

5K or 12K Walks start 8-9:00 a.m.

Call Hope or Roanna @

616-245-3910 for more

information and/or to pledge.

The Meanwhile Bar presents:

a benefit for

WELL HOUSE COMMUNITY

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2009

1005 WEALTHY ST. SE

Reception from 5 - 8 pm.

Appetizers and Drink Specials

A portion of the entire nights sales will be donated to the Wellhouse community to fund their new green house.

Come support Grand Rapids' most sustainable shelter/housing provider for our homeless neighbors.

For more information about Well House, check out:

www.wellhousegr.org