

Your congregation may want to open the doors of your facilities to provide overnight shelter and meals, or to assist another congregation during its host week. Your congregation may want to offer financial support or collect items needed by the homeless families.

Individuals also are encouraged to make financial contributions to support the IHN mission.

What can you do?

Share ... Your Time

Become a volunteer in our Network to assist homeless families by preparing food, hosting guests in the evening or overnight, playing with children and helping them with homework, or teaching living skills, parenting, home management, budgeting, nutrition and other needed skills.* Your personal gifts and abilities can become special gifts to IHNBC and to struggling families.

Share ... Your Money

Contribute to IHNBC to help fund our program. We are registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable organization under IRC 501(c)(3), making your contributions tax deductible.

Share ... This Brochure

Share this information with your church leaders and congregation. Teamwork makes IHN work!

**We also need volunteers at our Mount Laurel Day Center, providing clerical and maintenance support.*

Host Congregations

Agape Christian Fellowship Church
Browns Mills United Methodist Church
Calvary Presbyterian Church
First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown
First United Methodist Church of Moorestown
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
St. Mary of the Lakes
St. Matthew Lutheran Church
St. Paul United Methodist
Medford Methodist Church
Mount Laurel Evangelical Free Church
Vincentown United Methodist Church

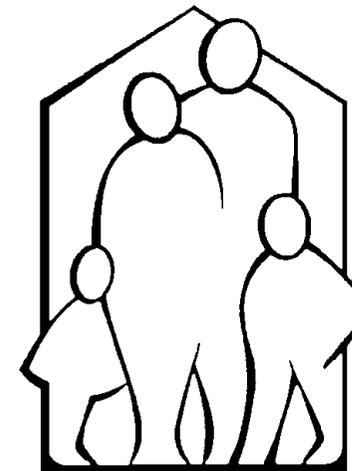
Support Congregations

Asbury UMC, Cinnaminson
Bethany Lutheran, Palmyra
Central Baptist, Palmyra
Holy Eucharist Catholic Church
Marlton United Methodist Church
Medford Friends Meeting
Palmyra Moravian
Sacred Heart Church, Riverton
St. Charles Borromeo, Cinnaminson
St. Peter's Episcopa, Medford
Temple Sinai, Cinnaminson
Trinity Episcopal Church, Moorestown

Day Center

IHNBC, Inc.
228 Mount Laurel Road
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054
856-638-0110: Phone
856-638-0115: Fax
IHNBC@aol.com: E-mail

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Burlington County



A community response for homeless families

United Way Agency

OUR MISSION

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Burlington County (IHNBC) is a non-profit interfaith organization committed to a united outreach by the religious community in Burlington County providing shelter, meals and assistance to homeless families. Our program provides help, hope and a safe haven for our guests while they seek affordable housing.

How does IHNBC carry out this mission?

The program mobilizes existing community resources: church buildings for overnight lodging, congregations for volunteers and social service agencies for screening and referrals.

Each host congregation furnishes overnight lodging and meals for up to 14 people for one week on a rotating schedule. The religious communities provide a safe, peaceful and welcoming atmosphere for our guests during the evening and overnight.

The Day Center offers a daytime base for personal care and the pursuit of housing possibilities and a job, if necessary.

Who administers the program?

Our Board of Trustees, composed of faith community leaders of Burlington County, guides the overall program through long-range planning and fundraising activities.

Our full-time Director oversees the day-to-day operations of the program, reviewing applicants for our program, training our volunteers and providing assistance, as needed, to our guests and their search for housing.

Volunteer coordinators from each church direct the local church programs weekly. They arrange for meals to be prepared, and for hosts to provide fellowship to our guests.

When did IHNBC begin?

Members of the local religious community who were interested in alleviating homelessness began meeting during the winter of 1996. The organization was incorporated in the spring of 1997, and we hosted our first guests in the summer of 1998.

Is IHNBC the only IHN Network?

We are part of a national program with over 130 networks operating in more than 38 states and the District of Columbia. There are also many more IHN Networks in the development stage.

Who are the homeless?

Today's diverse homeless population includes growing numbers of traditional families, one-parent families, working people, victims of domestic violence, and many others.

New Jersey has the highest housing costs in the nation. This adds to the difficulty of low-income working families finding and maintaining housing.

The number of homeless families with children has increased significantly over the past decade. Families with children are among the fastest growing segments of the homeless population. Families with children constitute approximately 40% of people who become homeless (Shinn and Weitzman, 1996). In its 1998 survey of 30 American cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors found that families comprised 38%

of the homeless population (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1998). These proportions are likely to be higher in rural areas; research indicates that families, single mothers, and children make up the largest group of people who are homeless in rural areas (Vissing, 1996).

Are guests screened and interviewed?

A professional social worker and/or our Network Director interview all guests. Guests sign an agreement, acknowledging their understanding of the Network rules and their responsibility to comply with them while in the program. Persons with severe psychiatric, medical or drug or alcohol abuse problems are not accepted into the program.

Why are volunteers important?

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of the Network; without them, we could not exist. Beyond providing meals and staying over night, volunteers offer compassionate assistance to those who have suffered the loss of their home.

Volunteers do simple but valuable things: they talk and listen, treat the guests with respect and respond to them with compassion. They may also help the families search for housing or employment opportunities.

Why should my congregation get involved? How can we help?

For many congregations, IHNBC has provided a hands-on outreach program that serves the homeless and fosters congregational unity and interfaith cooperation. Our program is an excellent way for your congregation to witness its faith to your youth and the community at large.