



*From Homelessness to Hope,
One Family at a Time*

Spring/Summer 2010 Issue

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SECOND ANNUAL GALA PROVIDES A “YELLOW BRICK ROAD” LEADING TO A HOME FOR SEVEN NEW FAMILIES, RAISING MORE THAN \$200,000!

The Fellowship Housing Gala was held at the beautiful Stonegate Conference Center in Hoffman Estates, February 27th. The *Wizard of Oz* “*There’s No Place Like Home*” has become our theme, helping to connect the event to the mission of the organization.

A sold out crowd of 250 guests celebrated the evening. Barbara Beckman, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity, Northern Fox Valley was the event Honorary Chair. Guests were also inspired by the life stories of a current Fellowship Housing mom and a 2008 Fellowship Housing graduate. Bev, a current FHC mom, shared that she had been raised in an abusive household. Bev is working her way to becoming independent as she thrives in the Fellowship Housing program. Kym, a FHC graduate, spoke of the struggle she had raising her son on her own and how Fellowship Housing was able to provide housing at a time when she didn’t have money to pay her next month’s rent. Kym was successful in the FHC program, now has her own apartment and plans for further life achievements. The audience showed support to the two moms, encouraging them with a standing ovation and lots of hugs.

Fellowship Housing’s Executive Director, Susan Forbes, shed light on the many ways FHC supports families in addition to housing. Due to the economy, several single mothers had been laid off. However, with the support and guidance of FHC staff, these moms found new employment within a matter of weeks. Fellowship Housing also allows families with teenage boys to enter the program and, in many cases, these families would be turned away from other agencies simply because of the age of their sons.

Toward the end of the evening, a Fellowship Housing Board Member, Tony Orsini, shared his personal story of being raised by a single mother, followed by a compelling challenge to all the guests to match a \$12,000 donation to support and house a family for a year. This challenge spurred guests to come forward with funding to support a family for an entire year.

Before the night came to a close, “*There’s No Place Like Home*” resonated with all in attendance, as enough had been raised to bring seven new families into the program. These families will now have access to case management, subsidized rent, and other assistance that Fellowship Housing has to offer.



Family Sponsorship Donors



Angelo and Jennifer Grossi with their guests



Fellowship Housing Gala Committee

Fellowship Housing Board of Directors

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Melissa Lindstrom, Program Manager
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Letter from the Executive Director



Susan with her
husband, John,
at the 2010 Gala

Several weeks ago, I resigned my position as Executive Director of Fellowship Housing, due to family circumstances. I shared with the Board of Directors how much I have appreciated the opportunity to lead Fellowship Housing for the past 5 years. It has been a great privilege to serve alongside committed Board members, a dedicated and professional staff, and hundreds of talented volunteers.

Fellowship Housing has experienced tremendous growth in recent years. In 2007, Doreen, was the first FHC mom to be awarded a Habitat for Humanity home. Six more women have followed in her footsteps. Our first Gala took place in February 2009 and allowed us to introduce many new people to the transformational work that takes place as FHC empowers women to change the trajectory of their lives—from homelessness to hope. The 2010 Gala raised more than \$200,000 and we are now in the process of accepting seven new families.

Every donor, volunteer, staff and board member has been a part of the growth we are experiencing. Thank you for participating in this life changing work. The true heroes are the amazing women who come to FHC broken and leave whole and independent.

As Karen Fitzgerald, our Board President, steps in to bridge the gap until a new Executive Director is hired, I would ask each of you to pray for her and the search for the new Executive Director.

It has been an honor to serve this ministry.

Blessings,
Susan

Letter from the Board President

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Susan for her exemplary performance over the past five years. Under the auspice of Susan, Fellowship Housing has continued to flourish. We are grateful for all she has accomplished. We ask that you continue to pray for Susan and her family.

We have begun the process to hire a new Executive Director. In the interim, I will be assuming the responsibilities as Executive Director, while remaining the Board President. You can be assured the vision of Fellowship Housing will be carried on until a new Executive Director is hired.

We are grateful for your willingness to partner with us and the moms, who remain our driving force. I am heartened to see the overwhelming responsiveness and passion of our donors to be a part of something that leaves a mark on generations to come.

“There’s No Place Like Home”,

Karen Fitzgerald

FHC Celebrates Four New Graduates and Hope That Has Been Restored!

In May, Fellowship Housing celebrated four women who have completed our program. We have a Graduation ceremony where they wear a cap and gown to commemorate all they have accomplished during their two years with Fellowship. **In addition to four women who have changed, seven children's lives were impacted over the past two years.** Those children no longer have to watch their moms struggle to provide a safe place for them. All four moms and seven children are moving into stable housing.

The Graduation speeches these women wrote describe desperate circumstances leading to their initial phone call to FHC. "I came to this program with many fears. I was renting a house because I wanted the American dream. On the outside I accomplished that, however I was months past due on rent, had my gas disconnected and was behind on my water bill. **I had three jobs but still could not get my head above water.**" "I came into the program with \$20,000 in debt." "I spent my adult life feeling as though I could barely survive, moving all the time, financially putting myself deeper in debt. I can recall feeling as though I was completely numb to the world, just walking through the motions."

Before the Graduation ceremony I met with this group. They didn't believe me when I told them they don't even look the same physically as when they first walked through our office doors. **Hope has transformed them;** it has given them the confidence to hold their heads up, pull their shoulders back and look people in the face when they are talking. These four women have accomplished incredible things through the Fellowship Housing program and the hope this has given them to move forward is something I wish you could see. **Over \$32,000 of debt has been paid off with the help of the Debt Retirement Program; every one of them has a better paying job with a future; two are buying homes through Habitat for Humanity, one is buying her own townhome, and one is renting a townhome close to her job.** "I am closing on my new home with Habitat for Humanity and looking forward to my last and final move. I can now enjoy financial freedom and stability." **"I leave FHC completely different than when I came in. I am not even the shadow of that other person two years ago.** I will be able to move into my new place without dragging bills behind me. I have never moved without bills behind me." **"I am completely DEBT FREE!"**

These are stories of women who live in your community, whose children attend school in your school districts. Fellowship Housing has given them the tools to break the cycle of poverty and create a new future for their children.

Lisa Bohn, Program Director



The four moms graduating this spring at the 2009 Christmas Party with another FHC mom

May 2010 Graduate Statistics

- **100% are debt free**
- **100% have established a career path**
- **100% are moving into the housing of their choice**
- **Increased their earnings on average by over \$5,000**
- **Increased their credit score on average by 129 points**
- **Paid off over \$32,000 in debt**

Your donation not only changes the life of a single mom, but her children's lives are greatly impacted. Here are some thoughts from the children whose moms are graduating the FHC program...

Jasmine, Age 13

In all honesty, my mom is my hero! She fed me, nurtured me, and kept a roof over my head no matter what the circumstances may be. I never have to worry about where my next meal will come from or situations with the economy because my mom keeps her burdens on her shoulders and tries her hardest to keep mine free of stress. When I think about how much she has done for me it brings a smile to my face because my mom had to play both the mother and father role in my life. So I just want to say thank you mom from the deepest bottom of my heart and I love you a lot!

Ebony, Age 3

I love my mom so much, she is my best friend. When I had a boo-boo she put a band-aid on it. My favorite thing about her is when she listens to me.

Leo, Age 12

My mom protects me and my brothers. Once a kid was being mean to me and she stepped in and stopped him. I always feel safe with my mom, she takes care of me.



Sharon Segall, Habitat for Humanity, Northern Fox Valley Board Member with Barb Beckman, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity, Northern Fox Valley

Fellowship Housing Moms Realize “The American Dream” of Owning A Home, Habitat for Humanity and FHC Partner for a Win-Win Solution for Families

Habitat for Humanity, Northern Fox Valley (HFHNFV) has become an instrumental partner with Fellowship Housing. Because of FHC's stern program focus on creating a stable future for clients, HFHNFV has waived the financial literacy requirements for our graduates, due to budget counseling FHC offers in addition to the Debt Retirement Program, launched by one of our donors. Thus allowing our moms to have a home and continuing to give HFHNFV good candidates for their program as well.

The qualifications for the Habitat program are the applicant's level of housing need, their willingness to become partners in the program, and their ability to repay the no-profit, no-interest loan. Employment history, credit history, and ability to make the monthly mortgage payments are also considered. Applicants must live or work within Habitat's service area for at least one year prior to applying. Neither race nor religion is a factor in selecting families.

Barbara Beckman, Executive Director for HFHNFV, has played a large role in helping to create the partnership. Beckman was the Honorary Chair at the FHC 2010 Gala held in February. She shared with the attendees of how Fellowship Housing's program prepares families for independent living. Since 2007, seven FHC moms have been awarded a Habitat home. Currently, we have three families in the pipeline, working to become Habitat Homeowners.

A Note from Barbara Beckman, Habitat for Humanity, Northern Fox Valley

If someone tried to design a successful collaboration between two non-profit organizations, the relationship between Fellowship Housing and Habitat for Humanity would be the model. Here's why.

Fellowship Housing and Habitat for Humanity are both ecumenical, Christian organizations sharing many of the same values and whose missions are in alignment. Fellowship Housing's holistic approach works. While providing safe affordable rental housing for 2 years, Fellowship Housing helps moms with budgeting, reducing debt, repairing credit, savings and life skills. When moms enter Fellowship Housing they have doubts and feel uncertain about their futures but when they graduate they are hopeful and feel destined to succeed. Fellowship Housing delivers on their promise to guide the moms toward long-term stability and independence. While the moms have different backgrounds and different stories, their aspirations are the same. They want a good job that pays the bills. Financial health. Stability and bright futures for their children. And a healthy home for their family.

A home for their family is where Habitat for Humanity comes in. Fellowship Housing prepares the moms for long-term stability and independence. Habitat for Humanity takes some of the moms to the next step. Fellowship Housing graduates are excellent candidates for Habitat because they are employed, have good credit, have a history of paying rent on time, know how to budget and save money.

Fellowship Housing moms also have a determination that defies description. We witness their strength and determination as they go through the process of owning a Habitat for Humanity home. It is especially evident as they put sweat equity into their homes. It takes a lot of dedication to work 7 or 8 hours every Saturday for 6 months constructing or rehabbing a home. How do they remain focused and motivated for so long? Because at the end of the process, their dream of providing a stable home for their children becomes reality. They become homeowners and can afford their monthly mortgage payments because of Habitat for Humanity's zero interest financing.

The 2009 Homeless Count in Suburban Cook County recorded **186 families with children as homeless**—that's 578 parents and children.

What FHC is doing Crisis Management

FHC clients set goals the moment they enter the program to work on creating stable and proactive ways to handle issues that arise.

Debt:Income Ratio

FHC Case Managers work with clients to create a plan to search for better paying jobs as well as improve skills along with negotiating debt and building savings.

Restoring Hope

When a client is in the FHC program, they are surrounded by a support system that encourages them to keep pressing on toward better days for themselves and their children.

14th Annual Golf Outing Sponsorship Opportunities

\$10,000—St. Andrews Sponsor

(Event Sponsor)

Event Sponsor recognition in all media, signage, etc.

Complimentary foursome, including lunch and dinner (\$1,600 value)

Plus four dinner tickets (\$300 value)

Prominent logo and link on FHC website

Tee Box Signage

Recognition in FHC annual report and newsletter

\$5,000—Augusta National Sponsor

(Lunch, Dinner, or Beverage Cart Sponsorship)

Recognition in all media, signage, etc.

Complimentary foursome, including lunch and dinner (\$1,600 value)

Recognition at tables or beverage cart

Logo and link on FHC website

Recognition in FHC annual report and newsletter

\$1,000—Pine Valley Sponsor

(Putting Green, Driving Range, or 19th Hole)

Recognition in all media, signage, etc.

Complimentary golf for one, including lunch and dinner (\$400 value)

Recognition at your selected sponsor opportunity

Recognition on FHC website

Recognition in FHC annual report and newsletter

\$500—Cypress Point Sponsor

(Hole Sponsorship)

Signage at your sponsored hole

Recognition in event-related print materials

Recognition in FHC annual report

14th Annual Golf Outing— Thursday, August 19th
Stonewall Orchard Golf Club in Grayslake, IL

From Mike Rolfs, our Golf Chairman:

I hope everyone has marked down the date for the 14th Annual Fellowship Housing Golf Outing, scheduled for Thursday, **August 19th, 2010**. We will be returning to the beautiful **Stonewall Orchard Golf Club** in Grayslake. Stonewall Orchard has consistently been rated in the **Top Ten Courses** you can play by Golf Digest and has hosted US Open Qualifiers and the Illinois PGA Championship. We are looking forward to a beautiful day of golf and fellowship and hope to raise significant funds to support the families in FHC programs. **We welcome groups or individuals to participate in this event** and are actively looking for sponsors for the day. We hope you can join in the fun!



For more information on this event go to www.fhcmoms.org or call (847) 882-2511.



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FELLOWSHIP HOUSING AND WINGS RESALE STORE PARTNERSHIP

FELLOWSHIP HOUSING is continuing to partner with the WINGS Resale Store in Schaumburg! Below is a list of items needed for donation and remember that 50% of the proceeds go directly to the FELLOWSHIP HOUSING program.

Clothing in great condition (men, women, and children)

Housewares and Collectibles

Accessories (shoes, belts, handbags, and jewelry)

Toys (in good condition and no small pieces please)

Electronics in working condition

Home accessories (lamps, rugs, pictures, etc.)

Furniture (for large furniture please call (847) 884-7599 for pick up service in limited area)

Small appliances (toasters, microwaves, etc)

Make sure you designate your items for FELLOWSHIP HOUSING.

The WINGS resale store is located at
855 W. Higgins Rd
Schaumburg, IL 60195
(847) 884-7411

FELLOWSHIP HOUSING **NEEDS VOLUNTEERS** to help sort and tag donations at the WINGS Schaumburg resale store. Liz Lyons is overseeing the FHC volunteer team. This is a great opportunity for volunteers to serve 2-4 hours a week on a regular basis.

For more information about donations or volunteering:

Contact Amanda at (847) 882.2511 ext. 2112 or Amanda@fhcmoms.org

The Beauty of the Matching Gift Program....

Another great way for you to provide even *more* help to our moms is by checking into the matching gifts program at your place of business.

Oftentimes, if a company has a matching gifts program it will match your gift 1:1, 2:1, even 3:1! You simply fill out the form provided by your matching gifts program manager and provide a copy of the receipt from your gift to Fellowship Housing.

Your employer's matching gifts program might be found online, too, eliminating the paper trail altogether! The online form is sent to Fellowship Housing for verification of the gift, and then sent back to the company which then mails us a check. **It's that simple!**

Volunteer Auxiliary

Are you interested in making a difference in the lives of families and generations to come?

FHC is looking for dedicated volunteers to serve on our Volunteer Auxiliary. This is an opportunity for you to be the change agent in the life of a single mom and her children.

The auxiliary team will be involved in supporting fundraising events for Fellowship Housing families. These events provide a significant source of revenue for the organization and give single mothers a chance to transform their lives and create a better future for their children.

To join this fun-loving group, contact Denise Pitcher, Auxiliary Chair at (847) 359-2179.

FHC MOM NEEDS AND HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

When a family enters the Fellowship Housing program, they need assistance in more ways than housing. Often clients come into the program with very few items, sometimes not even a bed. Below is a list of items that are continually needed for our families.

Items Needed

Diapers and Baby Wipes
Beds
Vacuums
Sheets/bedding (new preferred)
Lamps
Towels
Microwaves
Kids Clothing
Pots and Pans
Toiletries

Services

Dental Services
Delivering Items to Moms
Legal Assistance
Office Equipment
Counseling/Therapy
Resale Store Help
Marketing Support
Gala Committee
Grant Writing
Auxiliary Board
Administrative Support in Office
Volunteer for Events
Meals for Community Activities
Assist Families Moving In/Out

If you are interested in assisting our families but don't have the means or items needed, we are always in need of those with trucks or large SUV's to help deliver these items to the moms in our program. Please contact us if you are able to assist our families by delivering larger items.

For more information about donations:

Contact Melissa Lindstrom at (847) 882.2511 ext. 2122 or MelissaL@fhcmoms.org

A Poem from a Recent Graduate

To Cathie, FHC Staff, & All the Donors
THANK YOU for the Day of the **Lease Signing** and the **Keys!**
Through ALL our **tough times**,
Praying for us on Hands and Knees!
Thanks for providing a **Comfortable Home** to lay our Heads!
Thank You for the **Food Goods** that kept us Fed!
Thanks for the **Counseling** that allowed us to dig deep,
And discover the things we didn't even know!
Thanks for the **Holiday Parties**, especially the show!
Thanks for the **Special Activities**, that helped us grow!
Thanks for the **Christmas Gifts!** Thanks for the **Shoes!**
Thanks for helping pay ALL my **Delinquent Dues!**
A shoulder to cry on! A listening ear!
When I say, "Thank you!" You reply, "That is why I'm here."
To Cathie, FHC Staff & ALL the donors,
THIS POEM IS MEANT!
Blessed by the One Above! You are **GOD SENT!**
A Toast...to New Beginnings!
My Time with FELLOWSHIP was TIME WELL SPENT!

This spring four FHC moms are graduating. All four are moving into the housing of their choice, debt free, and have better jobs thanks to your support!

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
CAROL STREAM IL
PERMIT NO 460



Fellowship Housing Corporation
2060 Stonington, Suite 200
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

Help Needed!

One of the BIG needs of single mothers is help moving into and out of our program. For many single moms, resources and support are very limited.

Volunteers who can assist with heavy lifting of furniture and boxes are always needed and appreciated.

If you are interested in helping but can't participate in the physical aspects of moving, **trucks and large SUV's are a great way to help a family move by transporting their items to and from the clients housing.**

Assist FHC in Conserving Resources

Fellowship Housing is now offering the option of receiving an e-newsletter instead of a printed newsletter.

If you are interested in this option, e-mail Amanda@fhcmoms.org, include your full name and the word e-news in the subject line or sign up for the newsletter on the website at www.fhcmoms.org

