

HOMESHARING, INC.

The PeopleCare Center
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HOMESHARING'S MISSION

To prevent homelessness by matching "providers," residents who need to share their homes or apartments in order to maintain them, with "seekers," individuals searching for affordable housing in the community.

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HomeSharing NEWSLETTER

Volume 18, Issue 1

Spring 2014

Holiday Giving Warms Hearts

HomeSharing's 2013 Holiday Food Basket program was an overwhelming success. Through the combined efforts of numerous organizations, individuals and corporations, Thanksgiving and Christmas food packages were provided to forty-five HomeSharing client families. Food packages containing whole chickens or hams, fresh fruits and vegetables, holiday 'fixins' and food staples assured a holiday meal and meals for the days to follow, for a combined total of over 1,600 pounds of food collected and distributed!



Christmas baskets included gifts and toiletries that poured in from our many contributors. Gifts varied from warm pajamas and blanket throws to sweaters, pants, hats, gloves and bathrobes. Receiving these items let people know they were thought and cared about. Many HomeSharing clients are struggling financially and don't have family support, so it was wonderful to be able to bring some joy to their holidays.

We received notes of thanks from several clients who were recipients of the holiday food and gifts. With their permission, we share with you their words of gratitude:

"Thank you – two simple words that convey deep thoughts of gratitude and appreciation for assistance, help and kind acts. The Thanksgiving and Christmas food basket not only enabled me to have an enjoyable meal during the holidays but kept me encouraged at a time when depression could set in. I am encouraged to keep working to achieve goals. Thank you for the holiday food baskets and Christmas gift." - Anonymous HomeSharing Client #1

"I recently received the most unexpected and wonderful surprise, several bags of food and a beautiful handmade afghan. I was amazed at the generosity of the donors and wanted to send my sincere personal thanks both to them and to HomeSharing. My stomach and body will be absolutely warm and comfortable for the holiday season as well as during the coming winter. Thank you so much for the many items I received. I am truly grateful. ~ Alice



"I want to thank you for all the wonderful gifts...I really appreciate everything. People as wonderful as you touched the lives of others that are in need...It's people like you who make a true difference in this world!" ~ Anonymous HomeSharing Client #2

A big "Thank you" to our many contributors, as well as volunteers who assisted with coordinating, delivering, packing and distributing the items. We could never have achieved this without all of your help! Susanne Bienkoski, Bridgewater Khalsa School, Bridgewater Women's Club, Maria Calise, Chubb Specialty Insurance and Surety Community and Diversity Efforts (CASCADE), Tanisha Conaway, Council of Catholic Women @ Blessed Sacrament Church, Kimberly Cowart, Alan and Elaine Fass, David Fass, Investor's Bank, The Margolin Family, Mt. Prospect School - Basking Ridge, Roselle Savings Bank, Somerset County Food Bank, Somerset County Prosecutor's Office, Somerset County Retired Educators, Temple Beth El, Jennifer Vogel, Young Women's Christian Council, and Carolyn Zhao





President's Message Winter 2014

Dear Friend of HomeSharing:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, our staff and clients please accept our thanks for all your past support of this organization and its important mission. The great accomplishments of HomeSharing are the direct result of your generosity.

HomeSharing is in a period of transition. Renee Drell, our long serving Executive Director was married in December and is moving out of state. We thank Renee for her service to HomeSharing and the positive impact she had on so many. We wish her well.

HomeSharing is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Executive Director, Lisa Blum L.C.S.W., Ph.D. Lisa comes to HomeSharing from her most recent position with the Resource Center of Somerset and has extensive experience in non-profit management, planning, fundraising and academia. Her skills will be put to good use serving the clients of HomeSharing. Please join me in welcoming Lisa to the organization!

Client Update

We are often asked...where do clients of HomeSharing come from? Interestingly, they are our friends, family and neighbors, people like you and me that reach a point in their life and perhaps hit a rough stretch. Loss of a job, a costly healthcare bill or some other event pushes them over the financial edge. They are people who need a helping hand to lift themselves back to self sufficiency. Many times shared affordable housing can be that helping hand.

HomeSharing is fortunate to be in position to assist these members of our community. We recognize there are people struggling to remain in their homes, places where they have raised their families, and these people have a wonderful asset that can be shared with someone in need of affordable housing in the community. These matches play out each week through the hard work of the HomeSharing staff and now benefit communities in five New Jersey counties (Somerset, Hunterdon, Morris, Middlesex and Union).

How can you help?

If you are a current friend and supporter of HomeSharing renew your generosity and join us to help serve more clients in all of our service areas. If you are new to HomeSharing, please take this opportunity to lend a hand...your collective financial support is critical to our success and maximizing the number of clients whose lives are changed by this organization.

Please take a moment to review the enclosed materials. These news items and client comments will add depth and context to your understanding of HomeSharing's mission and the value we bring to the community. We hope these get you as excited as we are to make 2014 a great one for our clients and the communities we serve.

Robert J Smith
Board President



Homesharing 2014 5K Run & 1 Mile Walk

Thank You to our Generous Sponsors

We deeply appreciate your sponsorship of this event and your continuing support of our efforts to make HomeSharing successful in its mission.

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HomeSharing Celebrates 30 Years of Preventing Homelessness

In 1984, Shuey Horowitz had the foresight and creativity to launch a new program to provide affordable housing for low income families, which allowed them to remain in their communities and maintain their dignity and independence. Working out of her home and then using borrowed space from another agency, she assisted people in finding safe and affordable housing, using the shared housing model, which matches “providers” - residents who need to share their homes or apartments in order to maintain them, with “seekers” - individuals searching for affordable housing in the community. Thus, HomeSharing was born. In the first year, 50 matches were made.

When the PeopleCare Center in Bridgewater opened, the agency moved its operations there, where it remains today. HomeSharing was incorporated in 1988. In those early days, the agency was staffed by Shuey and volunteers, served Somerset County exclusively, and funding was provided almost entirely through public monies. Efforts focused upon educating the public about the shared housing model, becoming an established and respected social service agency, and serving clients not only with housing, but with other basic needs. HomeSharing relied heavily on volunteers to assist with running the program, and still does. HomeSharing expanded into Hunterdon County and hired a social worker. By the end of our founder’s twenty year tenure, 1,000 matches had been made.

The next ten years were ones of substantial growth for HomeSharing.

Highlights include:

- HomeSharing now serves five counties in central New Jersey, including Middlesex, Morris and Union, as well as Somerset and Hunterdon counties.
- Staffing includes two full-time social workers and a part-time bookkeeper, in addition to the Executive Director.
- Funding has been diversified, and HomeSharing revenue comes from fundraising events, private foundations and corporations, as well as from the generosity of individual donors. Public funding is only a small percentage of the agency’s income.
- Annual events include the Phone-a-thon, Handbag Bingo, 5K Run/1 Mile Fun Walk, Gala, Year-End Appeal, and Volunteer Recognition.
- Clients receive Holiday Food/Gift Baskets and have an Annual Picnic.

By 2012, the agency made its 1,500 match!

In 2013 alone, HomeSharing assisted a total of 2,828 individuals; maintained/created 184 housing matches; and provided 84,614 nights of shelter. A typical HomeSharing match is an older adult on a fixed income who needs extra money or services to remain at home, with a younger housemate facing employment or relationship changes.

As with all great ideas, what is old becomes new again, and 30 years later, HomeSharing’s grassroots philosophy is receiving renewed attention. In these tough economic times, more Americans are turning to “sharing economies”, featuring barter for services, cooperative ownership of goods, and sharing of resources, including homes. Some newer challenges faced by HomeSharing include the increasing economic strain on our clients, including a widening gap between what providers need to maintain their homes and what seekers can afford to pay; cutbacks in other social services that our clients need; as well as the diverse needs of the population who can benefit from shared affordable housing. We look forward to increasing our outreach to single-parent families, the newly unemployed, those in danger of foreclosure, as well as the traditional populations the agency has served. HomeSharing is still going strong and is prepared to meet these challenges and thrive in the next thirty years. We are still the only agency in central New Jersey using the shared affordable housing model to serve the low income working poor who are not eligible for other social services.

Many thanks for the steadfast support of our friends, donors, volunteers, board and staff- we could not do it without you! We hope to see you at our events this year as we celebrate our milestone anniversary.



Here's what our clients are saying

The best thing about HomeSharing is that the staff really works to meet your needs with perseverance, but mostly with a loving spirit.

HomeSharing has been a saving grace and has kept me off the streets for the last five years.

Through HomeSharing I met people I wouldn't have met and I am not living by myself.

Because of HomeSharing, I can manage my limited income by living with two other women.

I lost my job when my company closed and laid off thousand of low-paid employees without any planning or concern for the community. HomeSharing found me housing at a reasonable cost.

I have a roof over my head and heat and air conditioning when needed.

It's rare to find someone you can trust with your most personal thoughts who won't be judgmental and who cares and wants to help.

Thanks Homesharing for all your help. You have been a lifeline for me, and I'm sure for others who have also lost jobs and wages.



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The Company We Keep

HomeSharing thanks the following foundations, corporations, organizations, and individuals that have generously supported our work since the printing of the last newsletter.

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