

OUR HOUSE

Spring 2007

Programs for the Working Homeless

Former Resident Roars To Success



Our House has received a special gift from a former resident who is now a full time artist and apartment manager. Recently, Bennie Parker showed up at Our House with a beautiful painting in hand. His situation was much different than when he came to Our House three years ago.

This time, Bennie explained, he was here because, "My heart told me to bring this picture over to the place that had something to do with my success. That's this place."

Bennie Parker was a resident at Our House in 2000 and 2004. Bennie participated in the training program at Our House and lived both at The Shelter and in the Family Housing Program. After being in and out of shelters and on the street, Bennie finally said to himself, "I'm just tired of this life."

Bennie recalls a prayer he made when he was still homeless. "I prayed to God that He would open doors for me—He gave me talents to use and I prayed that he would open doors for me to use them."

Now Bennie is an artist working from a home studio in his own apartment. His art is on display at Starving Artist Café, The Showroom and The Clinton Museum. He primarily uses charcoal, pastel, oil and ink and paints and draws portraits on request.

Beaming with pride, Bennie explained, "When I was at Our House, the staff told me that the only way I was going to be a success was if I got motivated and pursued my dreams. I did that and now I'm going for bigger and better goals!"

We are proud to highlight Bennie as an Our House Success Story. To read about other Our House Success Stories, please visit our website at www.ourhouseshelter.org.

To commission a portrait or artwork from Bennie, contact him at 501-398-8438.

February 2007

Dear Ms. Mjartan,

Enclosed is my donation. I hope it helps someone and is a blessing to others.

A few months after my stay at Our House, I promised God if I was given another opportunity to teach again, that I would tithe. This past spring, when I interviewed for the teaching position in Conway, I made another promise to God that if I got this job, I would tithe. I got the job out of 30 applicants.

Then, when that first payday in September came around, I once again "forgot" my promise.

A couple of weeks later, it hit me like a little voice saying, "What about that tithe that you promised?" So, when the October paycheck rolled around, I wrote the first check to Our House. It was painful to do, since I had mounting medical bills, so that first check was hard to let go of.

And then I got your letter, thanking me and inviting me to visit. Ever since, and particularly so since I visited, it is not hard to write that check. Now, I feel joy when I make that check out, because I have seen where it goes and know it helps others, just as Our House helped me on that cold December night four years ago. It is my intent to send a check each month.

If you find some way in which I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Jalisha Vandiver

NEWS BRIEFS

MAYOR DAILEY TAKES A BOW

“Standing Ovation! A Tribute to Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey,” was held on December 4, 2006, on the campus of Philander Smith College. 282 people attended the third annual event, which raised \$18,540 for Our House. In addition to comments from friends and associates of Mayor Dailey, the crowd enjoyed an acapella performance of “This House” by the multi-talented Lawrence Hamilton.

“OUR WAY” DONATES TO “OUR HOUSE”



LEARNING CENTER

Don Renshaw, representing Our Way, presented a \$10,000 check to the Our House Learning Center. Former Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey participated in the check presentation (pictured above).

JOIN THE “DINNER OF THE MONTH” CLUB! SERVE A MEAL AT OUR HOUSE!

Want a great way to bring your friends or organization together to help the homeless? Join the club, get involved and serve one meal a month! Call 501.374.7383 to sign up. We have 3 MEAL TIMES AVAILABLE.

We acknowledge and thank the following groups and individuals who serve a meal at Our House on a regular basis. Many other groups graciously serve meals when the need arises or on an annual basis. Thanks to all of you for your commitment to helping the working homeless!

Dinner Serving Groups:

- Axiom Corp.
- Calvary Baptist Church
- Cathedral of St. Andrew Catholic Church
- Christ Lutheran Church
- Christ Temple Cathedral
- Christ the King Catholic Church
- Faith Lutheran
- Faith United Church
- First Christian Church of Sherwood
- First United Methodist of Maumelle
- Greater Second Baptist
- Highland Valley Methodist
- Holy Souls Catholic Church
- Law Offices of Peter Miller
- Mount Calvary Baptist
- Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church
- Second Presbyterian
- Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran
- St. Anne's Catholic Church
- St. James United Methodist
- St. John Baptist
- St. Mark Baptist Church
- St. Michael's Episcopal
- Temple B'nai Israel
- Trinity United Methodist
- Unitarian Universalist Church
- Upper Room Apostolic Ministry

CONGREGATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

KIDS SERVING KIDS

St. James United Methodist Church is a long-time supporter of Our House, and their kids have gotten involved in Our House BIG TIME. Last summer, the St. James UMC Children's Ministry adopted Our House as their mission project and raised \$658.89 to buy a playhouse for the children of Our House!

Here's what their letter says:

“The children of our church know about the wonderful work that you do. I also want you to know that you and the people you serve are in our prayers daily. This summer we chose Our House as one of our missions for Vacation Bible School. We had record attendance this year and the boys and girls competed to see which group could raise the most money. The children gave very generously; one child even donated his life's savings! Our children really wanted to make sure that the children you serve got a playhouse for your playground. Our children donated a total of \$658.89.

I hope that this donation covers your costs and a little joy can be brought to the children in your care for years to



come. God Bless.”

In addition to the playhouse and significant financial support, the members of St. James UMC come to Our House once each month to prepare and serve a meal to the residents of the shelter—typically around 75 residents per meal.

Thank you to the St. James congregation – young and old!

Our House Board of Directors Executive Committee

- Van Tilbury, President
- Janell Mason, Vice President
- Reg Robinson, Treasurer
- Lynn Hamilton, Secretary

Board Members

- Rabbi Martin J. Applebaum
- Reverend Steve Copley
- Kevin Couch
- Heather Detherow
- M. Claire Haun
- Robert Holloway
- Greg Joslin
- Jon Lewis
- Lee Anne Overall
- Annette Sanders
- Jan Scholl
- Johnna Thomas
- Guy Wade
- Kathy Wells
- Robynne White
- Stacy Williams
- Bev Wittenberg

Advisory Board

- Beth Coulson
- Hon. Annabelle Clinton-Imber
- Barry McDaniel
- Evelyn Rose
- John Tisdale

Dinner On The Grounds – An Evening On The Terrace

SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 2007

The second annual Our House Dinner on the Grounds fundraiser will be held at the beautiful new home of Clark and Janell Mason overlooking the Arkansas River. Tickets are \$42 per person, representing the cost of feeding a family of four for one week. 400 people are expected to attend.

Presenting Sponsor = \$10,000

Benefits Include: • Preferred seating at the event and white glove service • Prime listing in invitation, program, and in the official title of the event • Preferred parking for the event • Recognition poster/banner at site of the event • 10 free tickets to the champagne toast pre-reception • 10 free tickets and gift bags

Educational Benefactor = \$5,000

Benefits equal to your investment. Call for information.

Life Skills Champion = \$2,500

CJRW Silent Auction Benefits Our House

Each year, CJRW, Arkansas' largest and oldest creative communications company, offers out-dated computers to its employees. This year, the company gave a socially conscious spin to their annual tradition by holding a silent auction to benefit Our House. Employees buying computers made their checks payable to Our House, the shelter for the working homeless. CJRW employees raised \$880 for Our House--money that will be used to pay for family housing, free daycare, and work skills training for the homeless.

As Brenda Worm, Associate Vice President of CJRW noted, "We became aware of Our House at our United Way campaign kickoff, and because every one of us has had interactions with the homeless on our trips from our parking lot to our building, the presentation about Our House stirred us to want to do this. It was the staff's idea and then the company agreed to do it."

Our House extends our warmest thanks to the staff of CJRW.

Benefits equal to your investment. Call for information.

Work Skills Donor = \$1,000

Benefits equal to your investment. Call for information.

Housing Patron = \$300

Benefits equal to your investment. Call for information.

Individual Tickets = \$42

Benefits Include: Admission to the event

For more information or to reserve a sponsorship level, please contact Susan Altrui at susanaltrui@yahoo.com or 501-351-0273. Please reserve sponsorship.

Our House is a 501 c (3) and all donations made to Our House are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please make checks payable to Our House Dinner on the Grounds.

Thanks, Our House Donors and Partners!

(Major Donors from December 1, 2006 – March 31, 2007)

Congregations (\$500)+

Cathedral Of St. Andrew
Christ the King
Faith United Church of Christ
Immaculate Conception
Our Lady of The Holy Souls Catholic Church
Parkway Place Presbyterian Church
Second Presbyterian Church
St. James United Methodist
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Individual Donors (\$500+)

Andrew Upchurch
Barbara Graves
Dr. Chester Hight
Fred Edick
Jalisha Vandiver
Gifts in Honor of Dr. and Mrs. Gary Tharp's Marriage

Corporations and Foundations (\$500+)

US Bank
Wal-Mart Foundation (Especially to the Jacksonville store)

Grants (\$500+)

DHHS - Emergency Shelter Grant
Junior League of Little Rock
United Way
New Futures for Youth, Inc.

One Hundred for the Homeless (\$1000+)

AR Democrat-Gazette
Bailey Family Foundation
Baker & Virginia Kurrus
Chester Phillips
Claire Haun
Coulson Foundation
Dr. Thomas & Vicki Kovaleski
Jan Scholl

Janell & Clark Mason

Kathy Wells

Kinco Constructors, Inc.

Lynn Hamilton

Michael McCarty

Miles Goggans

Paradigm Pizza

Ronald & Marsha Meyers

Summit Bank

Capital Campaign Partners (\$1000+)

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Carleton McMullin

East Harding, Inc.

Metropolitan National Bank

Robert & Sue Winter

Twin City Bank

Donors of Supplies, Professional Labor and Services (Valued at \$500+)

ALPS Food (Food)

Attitudes and Latitudes (New Clothing and Racks)

Bennie Parker (Painting)

Bob Dahms (Newsletter)

Bradco Roofing Supply (Shingles)

Central Arkansas Restoration & Roger Smith

(Renovation of a Family Room)

Compassion Center (Food)

Coulson Oil (Furniture and Plants)

Custom Laminated Tops, Inc. (Counter Tops)

EEOC (Renovations in Family Housing)

Eric Britt (Vehicle)

FABCO (Refrigeration Repair)

Freeman Custom Cabinets (Oak Cabinets)

Jon Lewis Home Builders (Renovations)

Kathy Barbeire (Website Design)

Kenny and Lynda Fier (Renovations)

Martinous Rugs (Rugs)

Stoby's Cheese Dip (Food)

THEA Foundation (Art Supplies for Children)

DONATION FORM

Your Name _____

Address: _____

Check one:

100 for the Homeless (\$1000)

Capital Campaign

Family Sponsor (\$500)

Individual Sponsor (\$250)

Greatest Need

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

Our House Mission

Our House provides the working homeless – families and individuals – with safe, clean, comfortable housing; food; free childcare; education; and job training in order that they may return to independence and lead fulfilling, productive lives.

Our House will send an acknowledgement to _____

Please include this form with your tax-deductible contribution and mail to:
Our House, ATTN: Executive Director, P.O. Box 34155, Little Rock, AR 72203

Our House Recognized As Finalist For Arkansas Business Nonprofit Organization Of The Year

Our House was honored as one of five finalists for the prestigious Nonprofit Organization of the Year award at a sold out event on February 22, 2007. The ARC Arkansas won. The other finalists were Arkansas Foodbank Network, Lion's World Services for the Blind and Methodist Family Health.

Former Miss Arkansas Bunnie Holbert Is An Inspiration Once Again

In 1977, Bunnie Holbert became Miss Arkansas. Her beauty, grace, and positive spirit was an inspiration to many. Children lined up to get her autograph. She was on top of the world. In the thirty years since, illness and a struggle with alcoholism led Bunnie to homelessness—to bed No. 5 at the Our House Shelter.

But that Bunnie spirit persevered. Bunnie came to Our House to find a way out of homelessness. She enrolled in classes at the Learning Center, participated in a job training program, and began saving money. Three months into

her stay at Our House, Bunnie made a conscious decision to share her story with others. Surely it would have been easier to let this difficult time in her life go by unnoticed.

But instead, Bunnie told the story of her journey from the stage to the streets. A front page article in the *Democrat Gazette* and a feature in a nationally broadcast documentary airing on The CW made the point that homelessness can happen to anyone. Bunnie's very real story inspired many.

Following the article in the *Democrat Gazette*, Our House and Bunnie received phone calls, letters and emails, not just from former fans, but from others recovering from alcoholism and addiction. One letter from a woman named Sheri read, "I saw that you were real and honest...you have had a huge influence on my life and I want you to know I love you and appreciate all that you are."

Our House is proud of Bunnie and of



our many residents who are committed to their own journey out of homelessness and into productive society.

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Our House is looking for 4 Americorp VISTA positions: Volunteer Coordinator, Community Specialist, Program Specialist and Youth Program Coordinator! If you are interested in joining our team, please email ourhouseshelter@sbcglobal.net.

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