



Bearing Witness

A NEWSLETTER of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SHELTER & HOUSING CORPORATION

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

5
Casa de Francisco Update

7
Annual Statement

10
Facts about No Freeze

VOL. 1, ISSUE 1



Location of No Freeze Shelter:
Second Church of Christ Scientist
129 Lafayette Street, Hartford

A Note from the Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Jacqueline Reardon

Vice President

John Mayo

Secretary

Carol A Scott

Directors

Ellen Donnarumma

Jerry Frazee

Dr. Bradford Howard, Jr.

Elizabeth Hucker

Thomas McCabe

Janier Caban-Hernandez

Regina V. Coleman-Roundtree

Jane Ann Starkowski

Carol Steinke, RN, BSN

Carlos Vasquez

Executive Director

Frederick Lynn

Welcome to the first issue of "Bearing Witness," the newsletter of the Immaculate Conception Shelter and Housing Corporation.

Homelessness in the Hartford region is a very difficult and challenging problem with many tangled roots and causes... lack of affordable housing, social and economic injustice, addictions and mental illness, poverty, racism, and failure of prison re-entry programs, among others.

For nearly three decades, Immaculate has borne witness to the societal shame that is homelessness. We have been fortunate to walk in the good company of many supporters over these years.

By leaving the relative comfort and security of their lives and visiting our shelters and the unknown, our supporters are bearing witness to these complex social problems and to the lives, stories and inherent value and dignity of our guests who find themselves in our shelters without the resources that many of us take for granted most of the time.

This practice of bearing witness inevitably calls us to action, transforming forever our relationship to homelessness and the people we meet on the streets. We can no longer look the other way, pretending not to see. What once was unknown is now known. There is a name with a face, whose eyes we now see. There is a human being.

It is my hope that this newsletter, by telling the story of Immaculate and our guests and the larger community that supports us, stirs you to action.

May there always be room at the Inn,



Fred Lynn, Executive Director



Immaculate
Conception
Shelter & Housing
Corporation

Homelessness *Submitted by The Poet Amin*

*The sun brightens our world everyday
Walking on a path full of chaos as our soul decays
Depression alone causes anxiety
How can individuals be lost within this society?*

*The weight of my brain is feeling like external
pressure
like a college professor
in the drawer of the dressers
That represents the evils of two lessers
Trying to clean up an unknown world that has
gotten messier*

*Through the times, of hearts surrounded by darkness
and empty minds, the shadow of death
hides me in the day time
then tortures me at night
and expresses itself in anything that I write*

*Knowledge and wisdom have no meaning
when the conscious sleeps
and the god within stops dreaming (manifesting)*

*Everything we need becomes irrelevant
A shelter-less world is evident
Therefore our forefathers get no credit
I'm just one of the many poets with a story that's
telling it*

*On the highway of life
Where only deaths and exit
A graveyard comfort with pain becomes our
residence
A forever lasting memory that's always present*

*Cunning and stunning
With perception that's a prolegomenon
An issue that even the universe is shunning
What? But! Probably struck and stuck
So wake-up! "America" it's time to make the donuts!*

Summer Respite Program

Winter is not the only time the homeless need assistance. The summer months can be just as devastating. In cold weather, Immaculate Conception's Shelter protects men from snow, sleet, and exposure to frigid weather. From May to October, our Summer Respite Program helps a select group of 60; men with documented HIV/AIDS, those with severe mental or physical challenges and those over 60 years old. Our shelter protects them from summer's intense heat, dehydration, insect bites, and daily harassment. Without it, some risk physical abuse or having their make-shift shelter destroyed.

At Immaculate, aside from nightly shelter, the men will have access to kitchen services, case management, bathing facilities, medical care, laundry, mail and phone services.

The program gives people critical support services, and more important—the knowledge that someone cares. Without Summer Respite, many lose ground in their struggle against homelessness.

We are currently seeking donations to fund the Summer Respite Program. Please consider making a contribution either on our web site (www.icshc.org), indicating "Summer Respite" in the message field, or by mailing a check, with "Summer Respite" in the memo, to ICSHC, PO Box 260669, Hartford, CT 06126.



Fred Lynn, ICSHC Executive Director (right), and Linda Hadgkiss from the St. Ann Food Group.

Flatbread Pizza Fundraiser to Benefit Summer Respite Program a Success!

Many thanks to the St. Ann's, Avon, Food Group, for organizing a fundraiser to benefit Immaculate's Summer Respite Program. The fundraiser, which took place on Tuesday, May 4, 2010, at Flatbread Pizza in Canton, consisted of a portion of all pizza sales donated to the Summer Respite Program, as well as a Tea Cup Raffle with many interesting prizes that were so kindly donated by supporters in the Avon community. Over \$1,500 was raised to benefit the Summer Respite Program. Words cannot express the appreciation Immaculate has for all that St. Ann's contributes. *Thank You!*

Immaculate is currently looking for Food Groups to help feed 60 clients each evening during the five-month Summer Respite period. If you are interested in getting a group of family and friends together to cook and serve, please contact Katie Gosen (860) 724-4823 x 12 or Katie@icshc.org.



Beautifying Park Street

Giving back to the community that has housed them for decades, Immaculate shelter and housing clients are excited to embark on a new project during the warmer months—a Community Garden, which the clients volunteer their time to manage.

This Community Garden, the first of several "Community Enhancement Projects" that Immaculate has been diligently working on, incorporates seasonal vegetables, fruits and herbs. In addition to the vegetable garden, a 15 x 20 flower bed consisting of both annuals and perennial flowers, adds beauty and color to Park Street.

Project Facilitator, Mabel Cabrera, said, "The men are excited about giving back to the community."



Sweet Sixteen Gift Shared with Immaculate

Conard High School student, Lauren Anne Konopka, recently had a Sweet Sixteen birthday party. Lauren is also a member of St. Peter Claver Church in West Hartford, and through her CCD classes, she has served dinner to the clients at Immaculate Conception Shelter a number of times and feels a connection to the clients and to Immaculate.

Lauren's Nana decided to throw Lauren a Surprise Sweet Sixteen Party, and in lieu of gifts to Lauren, who considers herself pretty lucky, her Nana requested that guests give a donation to Immaculate Conception Shelter. As a result, Immaculate received 19 checks, with a total donation of \$520.

Executive Director, Fred Lynn had this to say, "What a generous and kind gesture this family extended, giving to those less fortunate. On behalf of our clients, everyone at Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation appreciates greatly the thoughtfulness shared with our organization from this compassionate family."

A Look Back

A Final Wish

Submitted by Karen Finocchio and the St. Ann, Avon Food Group

It was a February evening in 2001, an evening like so many that we had shared with the guests at Immaculate. Food was heating on the stove, bread was being buttered, Kool-Aid was being mixed, and a group of teenagers were passing around cheese and crackers. Conversations, some loud and some in whispers, were being held throughout the church basement. This was before there were beds at Immaculate, and while many of the men were up and socializing, others lay quietly, hooded sweatshirts now rolled up, serving the dual purpose of being used as pillows.

Suddenly there was a lot of commotion. From the back of the shelter, two police officers accompanied the rushing men in their EMT uniforms. They ran through the room to a mat where a man lay still; he had other guests all around him who quickly moved out of the way of this medical team. The man was gently put onto a stretcher and whisked out of the shelter. We asked Rick, one of the line staff, what was wrong. He lowered his head and simply said, "He is dying."

We absorbed the news but had to immediately get back into action. The food was ready to be served. We'd process it later.

Dinner went well and no one discussed the man that had been taken out by the ambulance crew. But, as we started with the desserts, there was another commotion. Like a movie being rewound, the same police and EMTs came into Immaculate, the same guest on the same gurney, gently being laid down on the same thin mat. Now, we were angry. This group of blessed with good health insurance, suburban women, immediately decided that we knew just what had happened. This homeless man at the end of his life had obviously been turned away at a hospital and, geez, in a rich country like the United States. How could this travesty take place? Inhumane and immoral. Cruel. We went to one of the nearby staff who had been talking to the emergency team. We started ranting about what we concluded had happened.

"Oh, no. You are wrong. That's not what happened. He got to the hospital and pleaded with them to bring him back to 'the Mac.' He said he would rather die surrounded by his friends and people that cared about him, than in some cold hospital where no one even knew him."

Lots of lessons learned that night. Sometimes home is not so much about where you choose to live, as where you choose to die.

Sometime during the night, surrounded by friends and people that cared about him, this gentle soul died, at home.

*In celebration of our 30th Anniversary,
we will continue to take "A Look Back"
in future issues of Bearing Witness.*



Our Supportive Housing Program

Submitted by Jim Riccio

Jim Riccio is Immaculate's Clinical Director. He is a licensed professional counselor and has worked with the homeless population for 18 years.



One of the greatest joys and challenges of working with our men is that no two days are the same. This point was brought home to me during our work with one of our newest supportive housing residents. This individual, John*, a long

time client of the Capital Region Mental Health Center (CRMHC), had been housed with us for about a month. One day he called our housing coordinator saying that he felt like going on a "killing spree." Our housing coordinator immediately notified me of this and kept him talking on the phone while I traveled to the client's residence.

Once in his apartment, and after a period of agitation, John settled down. He had no plan to hurt himself or others; he said that he goes through periods when he is overwhelmed. After 75 minutes, he was calm and sure of himself. An hour later, however, he phoned staff again. Now the Hartford Police Department (HPD) were at John's home, mediating a dispute between him and his brother, trying to get his brother to leave. John's housing case manager was sent to his home to give him support. The police escorted his brother out and our case manager phoned me to say that she was going to stay with him until he calmed down. I agreed with this course of action as it offered our resident continued support.

While our case manager stayed with John at his home, I called the CRMHC and left a message for the client's primary therapist. I also phoned their mobile crisis team to alert them that John was having a difficult day and requested that the team go out to further evaluate him. A short time later, his case manager called to report that John was now threatening to kill himself and had taken a kitchen knife into the bathroom. She was instructed to call 911 and to leave the apartment immediately. I called mobile crisis to provide this update and was informed that the team was already on its way. HPD and the mobile crisis team got John into an ambulance where he was taken

to the hospital for further evaluation. He was there for several hours for observation before being released. John called his case manager later that evening to let her know that he was OK and to thank her for all of her help.

Over the course of the next week, our team continued to work with him in an effort to keep him safely housed. This case is a vivid example of how our supportive housing team works together as an internal unit, with our residents, and with outside agencies to keep our clients housed and safe. We continue to work with John to provide appropriate support to keep him safely housed, while working on his issues to assist him to improve his quality of life.

Sometimes people think the answer to homelessness is simply finding a place to live. As the story indicates, it is really just the beginning.

We will continue John's story in the next issue of Bearing Witness.

** Name has been changed.*

Annual Raffle Underway!

Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation will be selling raffle tickets to support the Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Programs through June 30, 2010.

Should you wish to purchase tickets, log on to www.icshc.org and purchase through Pay Pal or contact Amy: amy@icshc.org or (860) 299-6721.

Seven prizes will be awarded in total. Prizes include:

1st Prize: (\$750 Value) – Tickets for 20 in a New Britain Rock Cats Luxury Suite plus \$250 to spend on food and beverages.

2nd Prize: (\$650 Value) – Overnight accommodations at Hartford 21, two tickets to Ha! Ha! Hartford at the Bushnell and a \$100 gift card to Agave.

3rd Prize: (\$600 Value) – Tickets for 10 for a Wolf Pack hockey game in an XL Center luxury suite plus \$100 to spend on food and beverages.

4th Prize: (\$395 Value) – A Tiffany & Company Sterling Silver Return to Tiffany Heart Tag Necklace and a European Facial at SPA Radiance, Glastonbury.

5th Prize: (\$361 Value) – Overnight accommodations at the Litchfield Inn, in Warren, CT and passes to Hopkins Vineyard. Plus a Vissani 52 Bottle Wine Cooler.

Casa de Francisco Proceeds Ahead of Schedule



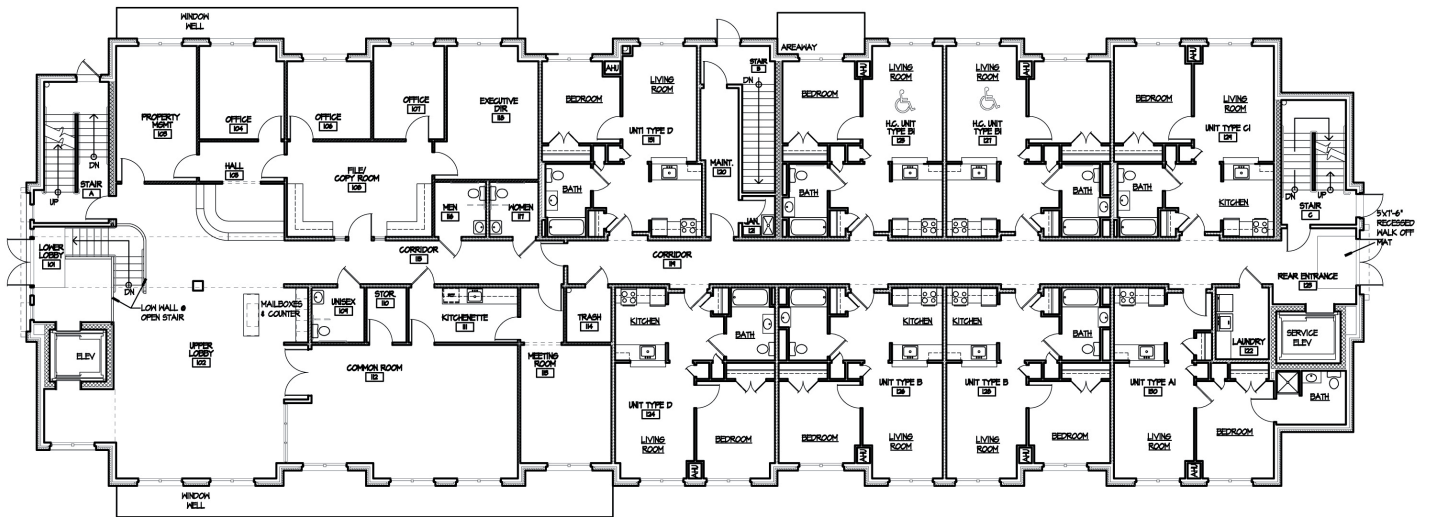
When completed, Casa de Francisco will be a 50-unit, 47,800 square foot, 4-story apartment building and parking area, built on five vacant lots on Hungerford Street and Oak Street in Hartford. Four of these lots are contiguous and the other, which is across the street, will provide parking.

Just a short walk from the development is Park Street, a major commercial retail/service thoroughfare that runs east/west in the Frog Hollow neighborhood of Hartford. There are various community services, houses of worship, medical facilities, employment opportunities, shopping and grocery stores located within walking distance of the development. Public transportation is available to the development with Park Street on a regular bus line.

The development will be owned by Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation and has the support of the City of Hartford and community organizations (the Spanish American Merchants Association and the North Frog Hollow Neighborhood Revitalization Zone).

The development will contain 50 one-bedroom apartments with an average of approximately 680 square feet per apartment. 25 units are targeted as Next Steps "Service-Enriched" units for chronically homeless individuals and will have service subsidies provided by the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). All 50 units are targeted as affordable units at 50% of HUD Area Median Income. All 50 apartments will receive rental subsidies provided by the Department of Social Services (DSS).





Development of the project could not have been made possible without the financial support we received, which includes a Next Steps first mortgage loan of \$10,400,00 and a City of Hartford HOME Grant of \$1,000,000.

The project's development team consists of Brad Schide, consultant; Paul Bailey, Architect; and Enterprise Builders, Inc., contractor/construction manager. The owner and developer of the project is Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation. The property will be managed by DeMarco Management Corporation, of Hartford.



Mark your calendar!
 November 17, 2010
 Casa de Francisco
 Grand Opening Celebration!



SUPPORT CASA DE FRANCISCO

This fall, we will be celebrating the grand opening of Casa de Francisco—soon to be home for those of our clients who are ready for more independent and sustainable living as well as other tenants who need a safe place to call home.

We invite you to help us finish this important project by becoming a supporter today.

There are a variety of giving levels available that will fund the furnishing of apartments and the building, technology, art and landscaping. Donations of all sizes are appreciated!

For more information or to discuss a contribution call Fred Lynn, (860) 724-4823 ext. 33 or go to www.icshc.org.

A Note from the Board President

Dear Friends,

I welcome this opportunity to share with you how Immaculate's Board of Directors bears witness to its mission of providing housing and decent shelter with unconditional love to those with no other options.

The full Board meets (at a minimum) six times a year. In addition, each Board member is asked to serve on at least one standing committee — Finance, Personnel, Development, Facilities and Governance. These committees generally meet once a month. Additionally, ad hoc committees are formed when an issue arises that one of the standing committees might not address. All committees report on their work, ideas and initiatives at Board meetings.

The Board is cognizant that Immaculate's staff works tirelessly to carry out the mission of Immaculate. At the Board meetings, Fred Lynn, Immaculate's Executive Director, gives a report in which he updates the Board on all aspects of Immaculate: programs and services for the clients, staff work, comments from external stakeholders and funders, and ideas on how to expand Immaculate's mission. In the fall of 2009, when Fred suggested the bold initiative of Immaculate expanding its services by operating the No Freeze Shelter, the Board was unanimous in its assent and enthusiasm.

Additionally, Board members use their individual talents to aid Immaculate's growth. Two directors with a background in communications have assisted Immaculate's Development Director with designing Immaculate's website (www.ICSHC.org); other Directors with a background in employment law have reviewed and suggested changes to Immaculate's employee handbook; still other Directors have used their background working in the anti-poverty arena to assist some of our clients with their needs. The Board as a whole donates a raffle prize for the annual raffle (and helps staff in selling tickets), and serves dinner at the Shelter.

And of course, as the Board bears witness to Immaculate's mission, we encounter so many of you, our key supporters, performing untold acts of kindness and generosity. It is knowing that you support Immaculate's mission with both passion and compassion, that affirms our charge of ensuring that Immaculate provides housing and decent shelter to those with no other options.

With gratitude for all that you do,



Jacqueline M. Reardon

Jacqueline Reardon
President, Board of Directors

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SHELTER & HOUSING CORPORATION Statements of Financial Position

	2009	2008
ASSETS		
<i>Current Assets</i>		
Cash:	\$195,220	\$75,408
Cash, restricted:	\$260,569	\$96,189
Grants receivable:	\$97,908	\$144,982
Accounts receivable:	\$235	\$18,738
Investments:	\$41,685	\$90,000
Prepaid expenses:	\$4,384	\$2,061
Total Current Assets:	\$600,001	\$427,378
<i>Property & Equipment</i>		
Land:	\$140,898	\$140,898
Building:	\$153,592	\$153,592
Building improvements:	\$95,393	\$95,393
Equipment:	\$169,937	\$169,937
Vehicles:	\$29,880	\$29,880
Construction in progress:	\$2,341,806	\$226,795
Total:	\$2,931,506	\$816,495
Less, Accumulated depreciation:	\$195,731	\$152,716
Net, Property & Equipment:	\$2,735,775	\$663,779
Total Assets:	\$3,335,776	\$1,091,157
LIABILITY AND NET ASSETS		
<i>Current Liabilities</i>		
Accounts payable:	\$404,408	\$28,115
Accrued payroll & taxes:	\$50,126	\$44,006
Accrued pension contribution:	\$0	\$17,917
Accrued interest:	\$0	\$19,596
Client Funds:	\$35,662	\$0
Deferred revenue:	\$83,146	\$27,793
Lease Payable:	\$3,972	\$9,205
Note Payable:	\$0	\$28,000
Total Current Liabilities:	\$577,314	\$434,632
<i>Noncurrent Liabilities</i>		
Mortgage payable:	\$2,041,458	\$0
Accrued interest:	\$19,186	\$0
Lease Payable:	\$0	\$2,837
Total Noncurrent Liabilities:	\$2,060,644	\$2,837
NET ASSETS		
Temporary Restricted:	\$135,115	\$0
Unrestricted:	\$562,703	\$653,688
Total Net Assets:	\$697,818	\$653,688
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$3,335,776	\$1,091,157

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SHELTER & HOUSING CORPORATION
Statements of Activities for the years ended September 30

2009

Revenue:	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total	Restated 2008
Grants and Contracts	\$1,715,863	\$0	\$0	\$1,715,863	\$1,586,264
Developers fee income	145,685	135,115	0	280,800	0
Contributions	113,732	0	0	113,732	100,458
Donated goods and service	97,660	0	0	97,660	97,660
Special events	26,319	0	0	26,319	55,169
Program service revenue	26,280	0	0	26,280	21,279
Interest and dividend income	2,985	0	0	2,985	8,359
Depreciation on investments	0	0	0	0	(35,676)
Total Revenue:	2,128,524	135,115	0	2,263,639	1,833,513
Expenses:					
Program Services:					
Supportive Housing Program	1,075,115	0	0	1,075,115	933,350
Emergency Shelter Services	873,091	0	0	873,091	796,994
Total Program Services:	1,948,206	0	0	1,948,206	1,730,344
Management and general:	191,676	0	0	191,676	199,967
Fundraising:	79,627	0	0	79,627	57,888
Total Expenses:	2,219,509	0	0	2,219,509	1,988,199
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	(90,985)	135,115	0	44,130	(154,686)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	653,688	0	0	653,688	808,374
Net Assets, End of Year	\$562,703	\$135,115	\$0	\$697,818	\$653,688

In 2009...

- ... we sheltered 476 unduplicated individuals.
- ... we found 7 individuals a home to call their own.
- ... we kept 84 individuals housed in their own home.
- ... Food Groups served 21,000 meals.
- ... we engaged over 500 individuals living on the streets, under bridges and in abandoned buildings.



Donations 2009

We'd like to extend deep appreciation to the following organizations and our many individual donors.

Foundations/Corporations

- Aetna Foundation
- Auerbach Schiro Foundation
- Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation Fund
- J. Walton Bissell Foundation
- Bruyette Family Foundation
- Charles Nelson Robinson Fund
- Ensworth Charitable Trust
- Fisher Foundation, Inc.
- Harry E. Goldfarb Family Foundation
- Hartford County Bar Association
- Hartford Foundation
- HCC Global Financial Products, LLC
- William & Alice Mortensen Foundation
- Lucien B. & Katherine E. Price Foundation, Inc.
- McDonald Family Trust
- Reid & Riege Foundation
- Reynolds Foundation
- Swindells Charitable Foundation
- XL Specialty Insurance Company

Government Grants

- City of Hartford, Emergency Shelter Grant
- CT Department of Social Services
- Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Homeless Outreach Persons with AIDS
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Communities of Faith

- Archdiocese of Hartford
- Blessed Sacrament
- Catholic Book Store
- Church of St. Adalbert
- Church of St. Elizabeth Seton
- Church of St. Helena
- Corpus Christi Church
- Corpus Christi Social Action Committee
- East Granby Congregational
- First Church in Windsor
- First Congregational Church
- Holy Spirit Church
- Holy Trinity
- Incarnation
- Knights of Columbus
- Men's Club of St. Catherine of Siena
- Our Lady of Peace

- Pilgrim Way Baptist Church
- Sacred Heart
- South Congregational Church
- St. Ann's Church
- St. Bernard Church
- St. Brigid
- St. Catherine of Siena
- St. Elizabeth Seton
- St. Francis of Assisi Church
- St. Gabriel's Church
- St. James Church
- St. Johns Parish
- St. Joseph Parish Social Action Committee
- St. Joseph the Apostle
- St. Luke's Church
- St. Mark's Church
- St. Martha
- St. Mary's Church
- St. Patrick's Church
- St. Paul Church
- St. Timothy
- Universalist Church of West Hartford
- Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Wilson Congregational



Q & A with David Fay



David Fay: President & CEO, The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts

What were your first thoughts when you heard the No Freeze Shelter was opening so close to the Bushnell?

Actually, I didn't feel that the originally proposed location of Center Church was all that close to The Bushnell. Yes, it is in our "downtown district" but not right next door - as it would have been for several retail businesses across Bushnell Park from us. I was one of many people running downtown businesses sent an email asking for help to stop the shelter from being located at Center Church. My initial thought was, "If we are going to say 'no' to Center Church we must find a workable alternative site. We cannot simply say 'Not in my back yard' and leave the problem for someone else to solve." It was at that point I became involved to help find a better solution.

How has your intimate involvement in helping to find a suitable location after the controversy surrounding the Church Street location erupted changed your thoughts about homelessness?

I, like many more people than one might think, have been closely touched by homelessness through the lives of people I know struggling with mental, emotional and addiction issues. So when the No Freeze Shelter issue surfaced, I was confronted with the thought of a friend or loved one being faced with having no shelter on a bitter cold winter night. The issue had a face on it for me - and I couldn't simply turn my back. For me, becoming involved introduced me to a number of people and organizations who are committed to addressing this issue on a daily basis. Frankly, I've learned a lot over the past several months. The biggest change in my thinking has been that I now believe homelessness to be a problem WITH a potential solution. The work that has been done in recent years in a number of cities across the country is very encouraging. I now have much more optimism that we CAN make a difference and that we can dramatically reduce homelessness and provide the essential cluster of services needed by the homeless to not only find permanent shelter but to make their way back to living productive, contributing lives in our community. It is very hopeful!

How do you view the shelter system differently now that the issue has come to the forefront?

I see a need for far more coordination between the organizations providing shelter and services for the homeless - and I see a very definite move in that direction. I understand that a "shelter system" is not just a set of physical shelters available throughout the region, but a system of services that are readily available and thoughtfully administered to support the homeless as they work to regain control of their lives in a way that puts them back into productive roles in our society.

How do you think local businesses and organizations can come together to address homelessness in Hartford?

First, the community of organizations that are serving the homeless need to ask for help! I know this sounds fairly obvious. But I'm saying that the request for help needs to take into careful consideration all the elements necessary to provide for the long term solutions - not just a series of Band-Aids! The system - the plan - must be carefully constructed and then local businesses and organizations, along with local, state and federal government agencies need to be asked to participate in the program. They need to be educated in the process of being asked. But the argument for funding must be persuasively based on a plan that leads to significant reduction in all levels of homelessness and pays particular attention to the chronically homeless. It cannot just be a request for funding. I believe the business community will actively support a program that can demonstrate a result oriented outcome - not just funding a "black hole" of need.

Specifically, how do you think the Arts Community can help bring awareness?

The Arts Community is a caring and compassionate community continually addressing social issues through the work we do every day - whether it is a thought-provoking song sung by an artist on one of our stages at The Bushnell or a deeply moving play at the Hartford Stage or TheatreWorks - or from the artistic expression exhibited in the galleries of the Wadsworth - the arts community cares. We also have immediate access to a large and caring population in the form of tens of thousands of patrons who visit our facilities and participate in our artistic events every year because they, too, want to be challenged, provoked and moved by their interaction with this type of artistic expression. We touch people in their souls. The entire Hartford arts community rallied around the issue of the No Freeze Shelter - providing clothing and food and volunteers. I'm sure we can do much, much more and are willing to do it when asked. So please ask!

How do you think the response to the location of the No Freeze shelter could have been handled better?

Actually, I think it was ultimately handled very well. The Governor graciously and caringly offered the use of the recently purchased church building on Lafayette. The City and the State Department of Public Works with support from the business community (The Travelers and Northeast Utilities, just to mention a few) jumped in quickly with the services needed to set up the shelter in a matter of just a few days. The City of Hartford has worked closely with Immaculate to fund and operate the shelter, and the homeless have been very, very well served during this winter. I look at results. The result has been a completely suitable space located between two large government buildings (The Supreme Court and the Criminal Court), both of which are closed several hours before the shelter is opened each evening. It is not located in a retail area. The use of this space as a shelter has turned out to be a "non-issue" in the area. And while the building is much closer to The Bushnell than the originally proposed Center Church location, it has had no negative impact on our highly active night-time business. I give my compliments to the good folks at Immaculate for the leadership they have provided in successfully managing the shelter throughout the season.

“We tried to treat the guys with the same respect that we would want for ourselves.”

~ AJ Leddy, Shelter Coordinator



Last fall Immaculate was selected by the City of Hartford Health and Human Services Department to operate two No Freeze Shelters from December through March 31, 2010, which was ultimately extended to April 15th. The contract called for up to 60 beds. 20 were located at Immaculate's seasonal shelter at 560 Park Street; and for the remaining 40, Governor Rell offered the use of the former Second Church of Christ, Scientist, on Lafayette Street, located between the State Public Library and Supreme Court and the Superior Court and just within ear shot of the Capitol.

Immaculate Chosen to Operate No Freeze Shelter



The No Freeze Shelter operated very much like our regular shelter at 560 Park Street with some important exceptions. Due to limited financial resources, there were little support services offered and the interim facility lacked a kitchen and showers.

Someone visiting the shelter on any given evening would be very surprised at how tranquil 49 men can be. Guests arrived at 7pm nightly, and were welcomed into the shelter by staff. After spending a day on the streets, all who entered the shelter were exhausted and disheveled; many were disoriented.

The men would then break into small groups, and play cards or games, watch TV or movies, or simply rest on their cots. Some would interact with staff, make small talk, or inquire about services or fill out intake cards.

At 7:30pm the men were fed, usually by one of the numerous food groups who volunteered to both prepare food and serve our guests. Some guests, many of whom have experience in the food service industry, would assist in serving the meal. Some helped with the trash. Others did not.

At 10pm the lights went down, and the already quiet room became engulfed in silence, only broken by the occasional loud snore, cough, or late arriving guest. The men woke at 5:30am, dressed and ate, and by 7am, returned to the streets. Many returned again that evening.

None of this could have been possible without the dedication of Governor M. Jodi Rell, Mayor Eddie Perez, the Commissioner of Public Works, Raeanne V. Curtis, and their devoted staffs. Additionally, the collaboration of the arts community – The Bushnell Center for Performing Arts and the Greater Hartford Arts Council, and the business community – Traveler's, Aetna, The Northland Corporation, and the Hartford Business Improvement District, helped and supported No Freeze in numerous ways. And of course, the dedication of the staff at Immaculate ensured that No Freeze was operational and ran smoothly during the coldest months of the winter.

Who Did Not Freeze?

During the controversy around citing the No Freeze, much was alleged about the nature of its potential residents. So who was served in the No Freeze Shelter?

As of April 15th, 250 unduplicated men were served at the main No Freeze location. Another 20 men each night were served with beds at Immaculate's main location. Together, 69 people were housed per night, nine more than we were contracted to, about nine less than would be served if not for space/permit limitations.

Overwhelmingly, the men served had substance abuse or mental health issues, about 14% of those served had arrest records. Only one was a sex offender. This is almost an inverse image of Immaculate's traditional population, where re-entry issues dominate the house population. About 60% of those served claim Hartford as their last residence, the rest were from places other than Hartford.



SINCERE APPRECIATION to the entire community of faith that is the Church of Christ, whose generous offer to shelter our men should not be forgotten.



ICSHC
PO Box 260669
Hartford, CT 06126

Non Profit Org
U. S. Postage
PAID
Hartford, CT
Permit No. 312

About Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation

Since 1981, Immaculate has been providing emergency housing and shelter services to thousands of homeless individuals. We focus on men who are most vulnerable, including those with HIV/AIDS or other health issues, alcohol or drug abuse problems, and mental health issue.

Mission

Because housing is a human right, Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation will provide housing and decent shelter with unconditional love to those with no other options.

Immaculate's service delivery is based on a Housing First model informed by a public health, harm reduction framework. Home is seen as a right and a foundation upon which fragile, broken and vulnerable individuals can, with proper supports, focus on improving the quality of life.

Programs

- Street Outreach
- Education and Employment
- Emergency Shelter
- Permanent Supportive Housing

Within these four components, Immaculate offers shelter, food, clothing, medical and mental health services, case management, alcohol and other drug counseling, entitlement assistance, education, job training, referrals and housing services.

For more information on Immaculate or to find out how you can help, call Fred Lynn at (860) 724-4823 ext. 33.

VIEW IMMACULATE'S VIDEO!

Log on to www.icshc.org to view a video about Immaculate and the care offered in the emergency shelter, supportive housing program, the clients, dedicated staff, board and community members who fulfill Immaculate's mission.

Special thanks goes to Cathy J. Cohen, who served as our Interim Executive Director from December, 2008 until August, 2009, for volunteering her time and energy conceptualizing, directing and producing the video (www.cjcohen.com). Another special thank you to Joe Pedalino, who dedicated many hours serving as the camera-man on this project (www.independentpro.com).