

The

# OPEN DOOR



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORWALK EMERGENCY SHELTER

VOL. 17, NO. 2 FALL 2006

## Adopt a Child or a Family for Christmas

**Community members can become Santa Claus by providing gifts for someone who might otherwise be forgotten this Christmas and holiday season.**

Many in our area struggle daily just to provide the basic needs for their families. By adopting a family or a child, you can purchase items from the letters written to Santa by the many families and children we serve. This allows parents who can't afford gifts for their children their privacy and dignity. It shows that Santa really does exist and gives HOPE to those who

need it most. Individuals, families, churches, civic groups and businesses have helped us deliver thousands of gifts in the past.

Please contact us at **203-866-1057** for more information about adopting a child or family for Christmas.



Photos courtesy of Jeff Weir

## IRA CHARITABLE GIFT

The need for charitable giving has never been higher. As a result this Congress included a temporary charitable incentive as part of the recently passed Pension Protection Act. The new law allows individuals 70 ½ years and older to transfer up to \$100,000 in a given year directly from your IRA to a charitable organization, like the Norwalk Emergency Shelter, and pay no income tax on that distribution. The Pension Protection Act is only in effect until December 31, 2007. If this is something you wish to consider, please speak to your tax advisor to see if this new temporary opportunity meets your personal financial and charitable giving goals.

## HOLIDAYS 2006!

### PLEASE HELP...

Urgently Needed:

**Warm clothing** for men women and children, **Casual men's clothing:** sweat-shirts, sweatpants and socks and **blankets and towels.** Please bring any items you can to the Shelter so we can stock our clothing room. Thank you

### Food for the Holidays

At the Manna House of Hospitality, we depend upon holiday donations to provide much of the food used during the year. With the coming holidays, turkeys, hams and chickens are our most sought after donation items. All food and pantry items can be dropped off at the Shelter at 4 Merritt Street anytime. Turkeys can be fresh or frozen.

### Donate Your Old iPod

When you upgrade your iPod, please consider donating your old one to the shelter.

Welcome our

**NEWEST RESIDENT –**

**Baby Alexander**



## Save This Date

**April 26, 2007**

*Norwalk Emergency Shelter  
Annual Dinner and Silent Auction*

## Success Story

Voices of mothers, babies, children and teenagers have been a daily part of the life and sounds at the Norwalk Emergency Shelter for years. We hope to provide a safe, warm, healing and productive atmosphere for the families we serve. This is what Dorothy Backus and her two children, Victor, 13, and Victoria, 6 found when they entered the open door at 4 Merritt Street in 2002.

In her wildest dreams, Dorothy never thought she and her children would not have a place to live. At first, it was very hard for the family to adjust. Immediately, case managers began working on their case. After the families basic needs of food, clothing and shelter were met, Shelter staff began looking for appropriate daycare and schools for Victor and Victoria. This was vital so Dorothy could find a job and not have to worry about her children's care so the family could ultimately become self-sufficient.

Living at the Shelter was difficult for the family but Dorothy's goal was always clear. She wanted to have a job, and an apartment for her family. With the help of the Shelter's staff

and much hard work on Dorothy's part she was able to achieve that. Dorothy said, "Whatever my children and I needed, the Shelter and its staff provided. We just had to be ready and willing to accept their help." It was very hard for Dorothy to find a job, but with great effort and determination, she never stopped looking until she found one. She is a crossing guard at the Columbus Magnet School in Norwalk.

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According to Dorothy, "Staying at the Shelter allowed me to save up money for rent and to get back on my feet." With the help of the Shelter's Housing Coordinator, Dorothy found an affordable apartment, and today Dorothy, Victor and Victoria call that apartment home. The family received furniture from the Shelter's furniture program and they participate in the Manna House Food Pantry program as well.

Currently, Victor is in high school and Victoria is in elementary school. The family is thriving and continues to receive follow up case management support from the Shelter.

The long term goal of the Norwalk Emergency Shelter is to make homelessness a temporary condition for all who walk through the door of 4 Merritt Street. Dorothy and her two children are a shining example of what hard work, determination and a good support network can accomplish. This is just one of our many success stories.



Dorothy Backus is now a crossing guard at the Columbus Magnet School in Norwalk.

## What Do Your Donations Do?

**The Norwalk Emergency Shelter is very dependent upon the generosity of individuals, groups, religious and civic organizations, businesses and foundations. All donations are used very effectively in a variety of ways. When you walk into the Shelter you can see with your own eyes where your dollars are being spent. We are proud to say that 88 cents of every dollar received goes directly to our program participants in the form of food, shelter, supportive counseling and housing.**

**These are just some of the ways your donations are used. Please be as generous as possible to help us get through the holiday season and the cold winter months. Thank you for helping us to be able to offer help and hope to those in need.**

### Your Donations:

- Provide a meal for someone who is hungry today
- Help pay for the increasing cost of heating and fuel surcharges
- Provide shelter, security, support and comfort to a man, woman, or child for a night
- Prevent someone from sleeping alone on the street tonight
- Provide groceries for hungry families

## Saying Goodbye and Good Luck



Norwalk Police Deputy Chief, Mark Palmer, has served on the executive Board of the Norwalk Emergency Shelter for many years. He will be leaving our board and the Norwalk

Police Department, after a 30 year career, to become the police chief in Coventry, Ct.

Mark will be greatly missed by us at the Shelter and we wish him much happiness and success in his new position. Thank you, Mark, for all of your years of service and dedication to the City of Norwalk and the homeless.

# Golf Tournament Was Definitely A Hole In One

**Our 7th Annual Golf Tournament, chaired by Liz Ball, President of Tom Fowler, Inc., and David Cudiner, Board Chairman and President of Gateway Graphics, held September 11th at Norwalk's Oak Hills Golf Course, was quite a success.**

The weather could not have been better at Oak Hills Golf Course—blue skies, a light breeze and comfortable temperatures in the low 70s—for the 101 golfers who participated. We were fortunate to have David Springer of Channel 12 News as our emcee.

We owe a big thank you to our major corporate sponsors this year, including Title Sponsor G.E. Commercial Finance, Event Sponsor Beam Global Spirits and Wine, Inc. and Pepsi. Thanks to Tom Fowler, Inc. for donating the graphic design services for all the materials related to this event, which were printed (and donated) by Gateway Graphics. Thank you, Karl Chevrolet of New Canaan, for sponsoring the Hole in One contest. U.S.A. Bank has committed to being a major sponsor of our golf tournament for the next five years. Plan on joining us for another fun filled day of golf at our tournament in September 2007.



**Measuring for a potential hole-in-one. Peter Bertolini, Joe Perella, Marian Vitale and Harry Haubert**  
Photo courtesy of Liz Ball



**Joe Fagon, Herb Edmondson and James Clemons enjoy the day**  
Photo courtesy of Susan Miller



**Board Chairman David Cudiner and David Springer of Channel 12**  
Photo courtesy of Susan Miller

## Fill the Pantries

FILL THE PANTRIES for Make a Difference Day was sponsored by the Hour Newspaper on Saturday, October 28. Volunteers from the Norwalk Emergency Shelter collected donations at two locations in Darien. Members of Youth Group from the Noroton Presbyterian Church collected donations of nonperishable food items from generous patrons of Shaw's Supermarket in Darien. Other teenage volunteers were fortunate to be at Palmers Market in Darien where the customers magically filled 12 shopping carts with groceries. Thank you Shaw's and Palmers Market for helping us make a difference.

# Thank You to Our Supporters and Volunteers

So many groups and individuals do different things to help us at the Norwalk Emergency Shelter. The following are just a small sample:

October 19, 2006: **Jill Dotlo** and **Elizabeth Yates** of radio station WEBS 108 visited the Shelter with a car filled with delicious homemade pies. The pies were generously donated by Plasko Farm in Trumbull.



August 7, 2006: Campers from the **Norwalk Parks and Recreation Play and Learn Summer Program** at Marvin Elementary School collected canned goods for our food pantry.



Photo: Matthew Vinci, Norwalk Hour

June 4, 2006: **The Young People's Creative Ballet Theater**, under the direction of Margaret Bisceglie, held a benefit performance of Summer Solstice for the Norwalk Emergency Shelter.



To the Norwalk Emergency Shelter  
In honor of my son's 3rd birthday, and in lieu of gifts a collection was taken to benefit your organization. These two checks represent the sum of the birthday party gifts I keep up the valuable, esteemed work you do.  
Sincerely,  
Tate's mom,  
Jennifer

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## THE SHELTER IS IN NEED OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

Canned soda/ bottled juices	Juice	Tomato sauce	Powdered drink mix
Sugar	Canned beef stew	Onions	Canned green vegetables
Coffee and tea	Rice	Corn starch	Hot dogs
Bath and shower shoes	Ham	BBQ sauce	Chicken
Laundry and dish detergent	Sausage	Microwave popcorn	Individual snack packs
Fresh/canned fruit	Spam	Chips and crackers	Individual body soaps
Mayonnaise	Bacon	Aluminum foil	Men's & women's socks
Grits	Potatoes	Paper sandwich bags	Men's & women's undergarments
Oatmeal	Salad dressing	Plastic sandwich bags	Deodorant
Ketchup	Punch (powder mix)	Macaroni and cheese dinners	Sneakers for men, women & children
Mustard	Fruit juice	Hot sauce	Summer clothing
Tuna	Instant mashed potatoes	Garlic powder	
Luncheon meats	Complete pancake mix	Garlic salt	
Cheeses	Syrup	Salt and pepper packets	

This is just a partial list! For a complete list of items needed at the Shelter, please call us at 203-866-1057 or visit our Web site at [www.norwalkemergencyselter.org](http://www.norwalkemergencyselter.org).

## Shelter Wish List

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are many opportunities for those who want to help at the shelter or at one of our events. Those who would like to give of their time and talents should contact: **Carole Antonetz at the shelter 203-866-1057**

*The mission of the newsletter is to act as an educational and awareness tool. It illustrates the plights, joys and successes of our residents.*



ADDRESS	HOURS	AN AGENCY OF THE UNITED WAY
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PHONE: (203) 866-1057 ■ FAX: (203) 866-4974 ■ WEBSITE: <a href="http://www.norwalkemergencyselter.org">www.norwalkemergencyselter.org</a>		Design by Tom Fowler, Inc. Printed by Gateway Graphics

