



Fall 2007

SIGNS of HOPE

Volume 11 Issue 1

Success Through Mentoring at Summer HOPE for Kids



This summer, the *HOPE for Kids* program was able to serve more children than ever (66) with the addition of a 3rd session. In addition to providing valuable academic tutoring, each session offered a wide variety of recreational activities and arts & crafts, to insure each child had a fun and memorable experience with the program. One special story illustrates the powerful impact of the HOPE mentoring philosophy used in the program.

A young boy who was a former *Pals* (early childhood program) participant, came to the program, — excited as he spoke of the fun he had at HOPE with Miss Laura, the *Pals* Coordinator. However, his first day of the summer session was very difficult because of his inability to stay in an activity until it was completed. He tried many different activities but seemed unable to enjoy any of them for more than a few minutes, despite guidance by staff. At the end of the day, the staff spoke with his mother and advised her of the day's events; they discussed

the possibility that the youngster might not be able to continue in the program if he were unable to accept the structured activities. His mother understood, and it was arranged that her son would come the next day and try again. That afternoon, the adult staff met with the junior staff members. (The junior staff is comprised of *Teen HOPE* participants from the afterschool program; Summer Up, a Mount Wachusett Community College program, funds their summer job experience by paying the teens a stipend.)

Before the meeting with the teens, the staff discussed how to engage the boy in a successful summer experience and considered providing him with a "buddy" to assist him. During the meeting, one of the longtime program participants, a 10th grade young man, stepped forward and volunteered to be this "buddy."

The following day when the second grader returned, his new "buddy" mentored him throughout the day,

providing encouragement and support as needed. The young student was able to successfully complete his summer session as he looked for the Junior Counselor daily and developed a heartwarming friendship with him. This became a positive experience for both boys; the teen was proud of the important role he played for the young boy, and the boy had a happy experience, eager to join the afterschool program in the fall. ■

HOPE Wish List...

- Card tables in good condition
- 100% fruit juices, fresh fruit for children's programs
- Battery-run hand-vacuum for stairs
- Light canister-style vacuum cleaner
- "Scholarships" for afterschool – \$150
- "Scholarships" for *Pals* – \$100
- "Scholarships" for women – \$350
- Copy paper, paper plates, cups, napkins, towels, tissues, toilet paper
- City of Gardner yellow trash bags
- Easel with whiteboard

The House of Peace & Education, Inc. (HOPE) is a nonprofit interfaith organization committed to counteracting violence and promoting peace. In a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment, HOPE offers academic support, leadership development, empowering relationships, and spiritual values to people in need, especially to women and children at risk.

Planning for Transition

Eleven years ago, four dedicated women founded the *House of Peace & Education, Inc.* with a vision to engage their skills for the good of the community of Gardner. Over the years, their vision has evolved into the meaningful and caring acronym of HOPE, or as many call it “HOPE HOUSE.”

Two of its founders, Helen Catherine Shine, SSJ and Nancy Welsh, SSJ have since stepped aside and moved on to retirement. The third founder, Mary Honnen, SSJ remains in Gardner, still quietly sharing her many talents. The fourth founder, Maxyne Schneider, SSJ and Executive Director, is making preparations to leave full-time involvement in the next year. The HOPE founders believe that the organization has been nurtured and has evolved to a point that it is now strongly established, and is able to continue its important work with others at the helm, fulfilling the founders’ dream.

In preparation for this important transition, the Executive Committee began working with Pat Harmon, a transition consultant, last January. They have met during the year to seriously examine the strategic needs of HOPE as it faces a new future. The formal Executive Director search process will begin in early winter 2008, after strategic planning and future goals for HOPE have been established.

The Executive Committee will insure that the mission set forth by the four original founders of HOPE is carried forward into the future, in the process of selecting a new Executive Director. ■

Eighth Annual Pasta Feast



Bob Johansen and Marie Jacques serve Dot and John Fischesser at the **Eighth Annual Pasta Feast** on Friday, September 28, 2007 at the PACC in Gardner. Over 375 meals were served this year. Many hands contributed to making the night a genuine success. Thanks go out to everyone who donated time, space, food, and various items for the Feast.

Community Trustee: Ellen Daly



Ellen Daly of Daly’s Property Shoppe in Gardner has a longtime HOPE association. Ellen was the realtor who helped to find

the building in which HOPE is located and became one of the first members of the Board of Directors of the fledgling organization in 1996. Ellen was elected to the newly formed Community Trustees of HOPE in June 2007. This group, while not part of the organization’s governance structure, serves as HOPE ambassadors to the community at large and symbolizes the deep roots HOPE has in the region.

Profiles of Excellence

Name: Rosie Alicea

Hometown: Athol, MA

Employment: Teller, GFA Federal Credit Union

Personal: Two grown daughters

Quote: *“I have learned that everyone’s life is like a chapter; you don’t only have to turn the page, you have to turn the chapter. Every chapter you turn is a new beginning.”*

Most noted for: Strong determination, positive attitude, willingness to learn and encouraging others



Rosie came to the *HOPE for Women* program after a long career in sales and customer service. She wanted to acquire computer

skills in order to change careers. While at HOPE Rosie applied for and was accepted into the internship program offered in partnership with the Greater Gardner CDC and GFA Federal Credit Union. While completing the internship, she was hired as a full-time teller at GFA.

Annual Meeting Awards

June 20, 2007

“Wings of Hope” Award



The “Wings of Hope” award recognizes a person who was instrumental in strengthening HOPE in its formative years, and who

also has been a source of hopefulness and support for the wider civic community. This year, the second annual “Wings of Hope” award honored David Jacques, CPA.

David Jacques worked with the HOPE founders through his company, Venning & Jacques, P.C., to establish incorporation and public charity status for the new organization. Mr. Jacques was active on many civic boards and committees, and was highly respected in the Greater Gardner community. It was a great sadness to all who knew him when he passed away of ALS on June 23, 2007.

“Lucia Service” Award

Two of the HOPE founders, Nancy Welsh, SSJ, and Helen Catherine Shine, SSJ, were presented with the Lucia Service award in honor of the nearly 40 years of service that each woman gave to the Greater Gardner area in education, pastoral ministry, the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Shop, and at HOPE. Named for the family in whose original home HOPE is now located, the award recalls the civic presence that the Lucia family had throughout the greater part of the last century and into the present one. Sisters Helen and Nancy moved from Gardner in April 2007 to the retirement and health care center of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Holyoke, Massachusetts. The impact that they have had on the Gardner community will remain for many years.



Maxyne Schneider, SSJ

Letter from the Executive Director

Education is the only permanent solution to poverty. This is among the beliefs that guide HOPE programming. It addresses a woman confronting poverty in leaving domestic violence, a person whose job disappeared in corporate downsizing, a high school dropout needing to support a family and the working poor. It is poverty prevention for a teen at risk of school dropout and for the young child whose academic and social skills are not yet strong.

Numerous studies show clearly that high school dropouts are less likely to be employed or to marry, more likely to need welfare, be incarcerated, join gangs or have elevated use of alcohol or drugs. Estimates of the lifetime earning difference between a high school graduate and a dropout in Massachusetts, in 2005 dollars, is \$456,000 according to a 2007 study by Northeastern University. A girl who drops out of high school is estimated to have a 90% chance of living her adult life in poverty.

Against this background, the testimony of teens who have been at HOPE for several years is striking. They note how they have improved attendance, homework completion, sense of responsibility and goal attainment. As the first young pioneers in *HOPE for Kids* now graduate from high school, some are the first in their families to do so. Several are now in college. This is not the work of HOPE alone. It reflects close cooperation with the personnel of the Gardner Public School System and the collaboration with Mount Wachusett Community College (Gardner) and Elms College (Chicopee). Their unique programs prepare the way to college for talented middle school and high school students from income-qualified families. It also gives testimony to the often remarkable courage and sacrifice of their parents in the midst of great odds. These are partnerships for societal as well as personal success. ■

Financial Report 2006–2007

Revenue	2007	2006	Expense	2007	2006
Grants	\$138,713	\$141,376	Program Services	\$226,501	\$190,470
Donations	111,589	98,798	Supporting Services	54,748	45,991
United Way	13,836	17,145	Total Expenses	\$281,249	\$236,461
In-Kind	7,240	0	Net Assets		
Program Income	13,185	4,965	Increase (Decrease)	\$8,141	\$36,107
Special Events (net)	2,817	9,679	Beginning of Year	\$133,178	\$97,071
Interest	2,010	605	End of Year	\$141,319	\$133,178
Unrestricted Revenue	\$289,390	\$272,568			

“Three grand essentials to happiness in life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.”

- Joseph Addison

Thank you, 2007 Foundation and Corporate Donors! Programs at the House of Peace & Education, Inc. have been made possible through generous gifts from the following foundations and corporate donors of major gifts: George I. Alden Trust, an anonymous foundation, Jane Bath Revocable Trust, Charles and Kerry Crew Charitable Foundation, City of Gardner Community Development Block Grant, Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Conrad Hilton Fund for Sisters, GFA Federal Credit Union, Knowlton Foundation for the Elderly, Leclerc Charity Fund, Mount Wachusett Community College/Summer Up, Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation, Sisters of St. Joseph (Springfield), Staples Foundation for Learning, TD Banknorth Foundation, United Way of North Central Massachusetts, and Worcester Diocese Campaign for Human Development. We also received support from the Worcester County Food Bank and numerous service organizations, churches, banks, schools, businesses and individuals.

Heartfelt thanks from all at HOPE!



HOUSE of PEACE & EDUCATION, INC.

20 Barthel Avenue • Gardner, MA 01440

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Contributors/Program Directors: Naomi Charest, Robin Harper, Fran Longton, and Mary Roth

Board Chair: Ronald Cormier

Executive Director: Maxyne D. Schneider

Editor: Rebecca Gould

HOPE Van for Student Transportation

The first official passengers arrive to begin the fall program. Transporting children to and from *HOPE for Kids* is a way to ensure that those who can profit most from the programming are able to attend. A generous foundation wishing to remain anonymous provided \$20,000 for purchase of a van. Now licensed for pupil transport, the vehicle began service with the afterschool sessions on September 24.



Mary F. Honnen, SSJ Retires from HOPE



Mary F. Honnen, SSJ, one of four HOPE founders, was editor of *Signs of HOPE* since its first publication in 1997. She designed and originally directed the *HOPE for Women* job-training program, was HOPE's grant writer for several years and served as HOPE's Executive Director in its first year of operation. Failing eyesight, a challenge for several years, now prevents her continuing what was her remaining HOPE role as newsletter editor.