

# Faith In Action

## Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County Newsletter

203 E. Warren St.  
Lebanon, OH 45036  
[www.ihnwc.org](http://www.ihnwc.org) • 513.934.5250

### President's Page

By David Yelton

My heart is thankful for the privilege of being a part of Warren County's effort to help families who have lost the security of a home, find their way home again.

I am also thankful for all who makes this ministry of service possible.

IHNWC:

- network volunteers who freely give time, energy and love so that others know that they are also loved.
- network employees who willingly adapt their efforts to meet the changing demands and needs of homeless families.
- network benefactors whose monetary gifts help us pay the bills incurred to keep our doors open.

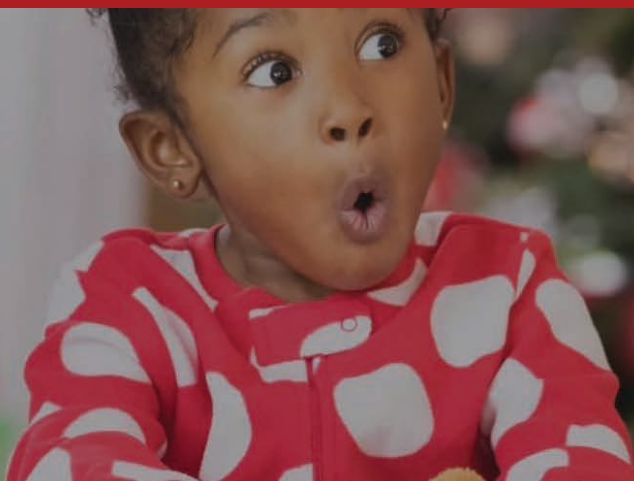
This pandemic year has been challenging and some might even think it overwhelming. However, the IHNWC staff and volunteers responded to the pandemic as they have to every challenge that IHNWC has faced over the last 22 years. Their determination to adapt in order to continue serving the needs of homeless families has inspired others over these 22 years to also respond. That is why I am hopeful as well as thankful.

We will continue to house the homeless families using motel rooms. In August it became apparent that school age children would need the means to attend school virtually. There was suitable space available in our Heaven and Hearth building and COVID-19 grant funding was used to convert that space into virtual classroom settings. This is just one example of why I believe we will get through this pandemic crisis. It has and will not be easy and it will take more time than we want. All I know is that with your continued prayers and gifts of time and resources we will get through this pandemic obstacle.

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## Vision:

A county where every family has a home, a livelihood and a future full of promise.

## Mission:

To assist Warren County homeless families achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response.

We are so grateful for IHN and the help we have gotten already. I know we have only been here for a week, but we feel like family which i haven't experienced in a really long time. All of you will forever have a special place in my heart. Looking forward to continuing my journey with you. With love, Mel (mother of 1)

## Linda's Letter

By Linda Rabolt

On a busy day in late September, I picked up the phone. The gal asked for me and identified herself as Mary F, but I would probably know her as Mary M. Did I remember her, she asked? I did...

Mary, her significant other, Jim and her 2 young children were guests at IHNWC several years ago. Jim was tough. He had a past, a bad boy as some parents would say. Megan was a hairdresser and a hard worker. Due to her unusual schedule of nights and weekend, we made an exception for her to come in late. Our volunteers were so understanding and made sure that she had a hot meal and a new friend to talk with at dinnertime. She recalled many nights being exhausted and being greeted so warmly by the church family as well as help in getting her children to bed and many words of encouragement.

Mary wanted to do more with her life and wanted to go to college. She started at Sinclair while in shelter, juggling both school and work. This family was eventually housed through the Transitions program of Warren Metropolitan Housing Authority which made her rent affordable.

Mary shared that she was no longer in a relationship with Jim as it became unhealthy. She completed Sinclair with high grades and was accepted into the Ohio State University Social Work program. She met and married another man; they own their home and have another child. She shared that they even have two cars!!

She shared that she would graduate in May and has been accepted into the accelerated master's degree program.

Mary shared that her time at IHNWC was significant in her life. She shared that it gave her the strength to follow her dream and to get out of her situation.

Many times, I will tell a family when they are feeling discouraged that I expect them to pick me up some day, in their fancy new car and take me out to lunch. Mary shared that she has often thought of that throughout her years. She shared that come May, we will have a lunch date. She will not pick me up in that fancy new car, just yet...but in her own paid off car and we will have lunch.

*Linda's Letter cont. on next page*





I was so touched and thanked her for the call. I thanked her for following her dream and for not giving up and I thanked her for taking the time to catch me up. I think that showed great character.

This has been such an unusual year. A year where we have all had to make significant changes in our lives. Where we have had to shelter in place, keep social distance, wear a mask.... Families who are homeless have no where to shelter in place or even keep social distance. Many who were maintaining in the home of a family member were asked to leave for the health and safety of all.

At IHNWC we faced the challenges that this pandemic has given us. We adjusted and our church families have adjusted. While we do not see our families as we once did, our volunteers continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus by nourishing the body, mind, and spirits of our families. They provide wonderful food, flowers, fun for the children and notes of encouragement.

In this newsletter, you will see many examples of the successes that our families have made. The notes of thanks. The appreciation.

We have been blessed by the presence of Mary, Holly, Brandy, Alan, Kendra, Ele, Mel and so many others that in many cases, due to circumstances beyond their control they find themselves homeless – especially this year. And, we have been blessed by so many volunteers like, Pam, Todd, the LDS Missionaries, those who make the dinners, collect the food for breakfast and lunch, and write those notes of encouragement. Indeed, you are in the hearts of our guest families.

This holiday season and always, I hold each of you close. I thank the families who join us for their hard work and for bravely taking the next steps like Mary did towards a better life. I thank our donors, our volunteers and all who take the time to care for our families for your continued support and prayers. And I wish you all the best in this holiday season as well as health, safety, and happiness in the New Year. Thank you for all that you do!



Holly and her 3 children were housed this month and send their sincere thanks to everyone who supported them while at IHNWC! Congratulations Holly! Enjoy your new home!

## Board of Directors

David Yelton – President

Tom Ludeke – Vice President

Rev. Mary Joseph – Host Recruitment

Todd Rockstroh – Facilities Chair

Paul Dillenburger - Member

Linda Rabolt – Executive Director

## Advisory Board

Monica Widdig – Treasurer

Carol Spicer – Personnel Chair

## IHNWC Staff

Nichole Richardson – Case Manager

Jesse Taylor – Day Center Coordinator

Doug Gilham - HCRP (A-M)

Danielle August – HCRP (N-Z)

Andrew Rabolt – Statistics, HCRP

Josh Beckett – Driver

Dave Hawkey – Driver

Marianne Duerre—Special Projects

Linda Rabolt – Executive Director

### Park and Ethel Gast

Park and Ethel Gast were longtime supporters of IHNWC. From the early years when IHNWC was just a concept, Park and Ethel worked tirelessly to assure that families in Warren County had a safe place to live. Park sat on the original Board of Directors. It was not unusual to see him working in and around the day center doing whatever needed to be done. Both Park and Ethel volunteered their time during hosting week at Lebanon Presbyterian Church, enjoying the families, listening to their stories and reading or playing with the children. With generous and giving hearts, Park and Ethel's hard work and dedication were the backbone of what has now become the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County. Sadly we lost both Park and Ethel in 2020, but they will be forever in our hearts as we continue to help those families who fall on hard times with a program of hospitality.

I am so grateful for people like you in the world who carry compassion for those in need. Thank you so much for all you do and may you be blessed abundantly for your giving spirit. Sending you love, Shannon (mother of 2)



## Homeless & Poverty Facts

In America, just over **16 million children** (1 in 5) live in households where they have to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet.

To meet the needs of low-income families, **4.5 million affordable housing units must be added** to the current supply.

For every **10** extremely low-income households, there are only **3 affordable** rentals available nationwide.

Only **25%** of those eligible for federal housing assistance receive help, due to lack of funding.

A worker needs to earn **\$12.73/hour** to reach the poverty level for a family of four.

More than **1.3 million** school children were homeless in school year 2016-17.

Nearly **40 million people (1 in 8)** in the U.S. live below the poverty line.

Nearly **35%** of all homeless persons nationwide are families with children.

**51%** of homeless children are **under the age of 5**, and therefore, too young for school, and are not counted.

The official poverty line for a family of four with two children is **\$25,465 per year**.

Many thanks to the LDS Church for their donation of diapers and other much needed supplies. And, thanks to the Elders and Sisters for unloading! We appreciate all that you do!



Your kindness in our time of need is appreciated and will never be forgotten. We thank you and will be sure to pay this forward when possible. You have lightened the heavy burden on our family. With love, David (father of 2)





## IHNWC Updates

### Special thanks to:

Warren County Quilters for many, many quilts that we share with every child that joins us.

IBM: for their donation of 10 computer towers which will be distributed to graduate families.

Many thanks to the crocheters and knitters at Main Street Yarns in Mason for the beautiful hats, scarves and winter items. We also want to thank the many people that donated homemade masks for our adults and children.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!!



### Where are they now??

Many of our volunteers will remember this family. Brandy, Alan, Kendra and Eleanore successfully became housed in February 2019. They still live in the same 2-bedroom apartment that they moved into when they left IHNWC. They will happily tell you that they are paying their full rent and now have 2 cars! Alan works 3rd shift as a dock worker and is earning \$22.00 per hour. Brandy is still employed part time at a local fast-food restaurant job she started while at IHNWC and has moved up to a shift manager!

Kendra is involved in the school choir and just loves it. Eleanore is now a happy first grader and hopes to play soccer when the pandemic ends.

Brandy shared that some of her fondest memories while a guest at IHNWC were the homemade waffles and chicken that they enjoyed while at Lifehouse Church. She also said that as a family, they were encouraged and made to feel at home throughout their time at IHNWC. They especially bonded with Rob at Lebanon Presbyterian Church who embraced this family and all families with his love and kindness. He treated them like his own family.

Brandy and Alan have "given" back by volunteering their time both as hosts at Lebanon Presbyterian Church and at the day center. Their success brings encouragement to other families that are just beginning their journey at IHNWC. It is always great to see them!

Brandy shared that for the first time in more than 12 years, they took a weekend vacation to the lake and had a wonderful time. She said that because of their time at IHNWC "they can now do things that they have never done before".

Congratulations to Alan and Brandy and best wishes for further success! We are proud of you!



### Did You Know

...that IHNWC now has a virtual classroom? In an effort to provide for our school age children who are not in the physical building, IHNWC has transformed the space above the Heaven and Hearth furniture ministry into a classroom. This is a comfortable learning environment, internet ready and supervised by IHNWC staff.

Additionally, we have a number of trained current and/or retired teachers that are willing to tutor our children through their schoolwork. Many thanks to Todd, Marianne, Caitlin and Jess for making this space so perfect for learning!





## Coordinator Corner

by Amy Augeri—Lifehouse Church, Lebanon Ohio

For the last four years, LifeHouse Church has been honored to be in a partnership with IHN, strategically helping members of our community that are “down on their circumstance.” Being a graduate of a similar organization myself, I know what a devastating situation it is not to know where your’re going to sleep or when your kids will be able to eat a home cooked meal again. Here at LifeHouse Church we try to fill the void for our guests. Our vast volunteers and Team Leads really take God’s word and put it into action by supporting our families and making LifeHouse a place of refuge as well as giving unusual kindness in the process. That’s where our name MALTA comes from.

We set up our church like a home with all the amenities. Throughout the week we offer activities through our kids’ program. This is to ensure that the parents get a breather and the kiddos can just be kids. But it doesn’t stop there. We have activities for the adults too! Our kitchen volunteers and Team Leads set the tone to welcome our guests with country cooking, just like Grandma used to make with our family style dinners. Our Overnight crew of volunteers continue the week with making our guests feel like it’s their home. Last but not least, our Housekeeping crew keeps us nice and tidy with clean sheets and towels throughout the week.

We have a saying at MALTA, “Once you cross our threshold, your part of the family!” We tell each and every guest this as they start the week with us. Just like when we accept Christ, we are apart of HIS family.

To learn more about how your congregation, business or organization can become part of the IHNWC network and how you can assist homeless families as Lifehouse does, contact Linda Rabolt at 513-934-5250 or at [ihnwc.org](http://ihnwc.org). We would love to welcome you!

### IHNWC NEEDS YOU!

Do you have a passion for the mission of IHNWC?

Do you have expertise in marketing, real estate, banking, law, business and a compassion for those in need?

Then IHNWC needs YOU! We are excited to be expanding our Board of Directors as well as our committees. Please reach out to Linda Rabolt at [linda@ihnwc.org](mailto:linda@ihnwc.org) for more information on how YOU can make a positive effect on the homeless community here in Warren County!

### Merry Christmas!

If you are looking for a way to make a positive impact this Christmas season, please consider adopting a guest family or even IHNWC! Families that have been with IHNWC in 2020 have completed their wish lists. We will provide the list to you and ask you to return the gifts to the IHNWC office no later than December 18. On Christmas Eve, Santa will deliver your gifts to the children keeping the joy in the Christmas season. Another way to impact upcoming families is to adopt IHNWC by purchasing items that are on our Wish List. These items will directly impact families that will join us in 2021!

Thanks so much for your support this holiday season. Questions? Contact Linda at 513-934-5250 or [linda@ihnwc.org](mailto:linda@ihnwc.org).

## Host Recruitment & Retention

By Rev. Mary Joseph & Jennifer Fry

Holiday greetings to you all. For the members and friends of our Christian congregations, Advent has begun welcoming in a new season for the church year where we are challenged to wait and prepare. For other faith traditions, the preparations for the season of festivals and celebrations have already started as well. And the secular world continues to figure out ways to have us all be safe from a devastating virus as we attempt to celebrate at this time of the year.

Waiting is difficult. Preparing is difficult. Caring for others are tenants of most faith practices but sometimes even caring can be challenging. The volunteers and pastors at our hosting and supporting churches have continued to follow their call to care for homeless families. There has been no hesitation to carry on their dedication to this great need in Warren County. Their preparations sustain our families through healthy meals, crafts for the children and youth, and perhaps an encouraging note to each family. And our exceptional volunteers have always been ready to step up when asked to make changes to their schedules or planned meals, adjusting to the needs of each family.

We who serve on the Host Recruitment and Retention team have been steadfast in reaching out with phone calls and emails following each church's rotation week. Before we begin making contact with each coordinator and pastor, we wait for news from Linda (our executive director) as to how the week progressed for the hosting and supporting churches. We have enjoyed our conversations as each has provided us with valuable insights as we continue this portion of our ministry with IHN.

Looking ahead, each member of our team is working on selecting two or three new churches to contact with an invitation to consider joining the current IHN family of volunteers who, together, fulfill multiple roles to keep the network running well. We hope through this effort that we will be able to add some new congregations to the rotational network in 2021.

On behalf of our team, Jenn Fry, Jennifer Goepper, Doug Gilham, Paul Dillenburger and Don Mowry, I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to our host and support faith communities for their good work. I also will add my thanks to Linda Rabolt for her support to this team and to me as we venture together to uplift and encourage our homeless families to achieve sustainable independence.

## Host & Support Churches

Heritage Presbyterian Church

St. Susanna Church

Mason United Methodist Church

Hope Church, Mason

Compass Christian Church

Grace Baptist Church

Open Table Church

Lebanon Presbyterian Church

Lebanon United Methodist Church

Pleasant Plain Presbyterian

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church

Lakeview UCC

True Kingdom Ministries

St. Mary Magdalene

Nexus Church

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Resurrection Lutheran Church

Bethany UCC

Sycamore Presbyterian Church

St. Vincent de Paul of St. Philip's Catholic Church

Our Lady of Sorrows

Monroe United Methodist

Monroe Presbyterian

The River Church

First Church of God

North Cincinnati Community Church

Springboro First United Methodist

Springboro United Church of Christ

Pilgrim South

Red Lion United Methodist Church

Living Water Lutheran Church

Cobblestone Community Church

New Freedom Church

Lifeline Church

## COVID 19 Support Churches:

First Baptist of Mason, G3 Community Church, Saint Vincent de Paul of St. Phillips Catholic Church, Living Water Lutheran Church, St Augustine Catholic Church, St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church.



**What do you usually do to volunteer for IHNWC?**

- I volunteer at Heaven and Hearth in the linen area. When donations come in, the linens, towels, blankets, etc., are inspected, sorted, and put on shelves. Clients who are setting up housekeeping come and select items they need for their future home. At Sycamore Presbyterian Church I am part of the laundry detail that washes the linens after our rotation of housing IHNWC overnight guests.

**How did you first get involved with IHNWC?**

- My husband and I joined Sycamore Presbyterian Church in 2017. During the church-wide volunteer day, I chose to go to IHNWC. When Linda Rabolt asked our group who wanted to work in the linen area, I raised my hand. That's all it took!

**What is your "why" for volunteering?**

- My sisters, brother, and I saw the generous hearts of our Grandma, Grandpa and Mom. Each one of us, in our own way, continued that legacy of giving. Volunteering is honoring my beloved Grandparents and Mom.

**Do you have a memorable moment about your volunteer experience with us?**

- My memorable moment came when I was working in the Heaven and Hearth linen area. A family came in the building selecting furniture and other household items for their new apartment. The family consisted of a mom, several young children, her dad, and her brother. It was an honor to pull bed linens, towels, and blankets for them. I was especially grateful to find little kid character bedding that was currently in style, so each child could have something special. Seeing this family put a face to the reality of why IHNWC and everyone who volunteers or donates items is a vital link in getting families back on their feet.

**What would you tell new members / volunteers about volunteering for IHNWC?**

- The ladies who went before me in the Heaven & Hearth linen area set it up so beautifully. These women set up a measuring system and a shelving system. It is easy to follow and maintain. I never met these women but I am grateful for their organization and dedication. When you volunteer at IHNWC all you need is an open heart and willing hands. Many people have walked the road before you and added their special gifts. They paved the way for you and your special gifts. Whether you volunteer, be it once a year, once a month, once a week or donate needed items for IHNWC, yours "are the hands with which He will bless others. (St. Teresa of Avila)"

**Tell us a fun fact about yourself.**

- I am enjoying learning how to do Sudoku without using up all the pencil eraser.



## Volunteer Spotlight

*Getting to Know*

*Pam Bartholomew*

*Sycamore Presbyterian Church*

## Board Spotlight

*Getting to Know*

*Todd Rockstroh*

**How long have you been a board member of IHNWC?**

- I've been on the board for about 2 years after volunteering for another year. I've been a part of St. Patrick's support volunteers since IHNWC was formed.

**What do you enjoy most about being a board member?**

- I enjoy the care, concern, and respect the board demonstrates toward keeping the families safe and helping them secure a sustainable future. The board is focused on expanding our support of current and future clients by updating the long term vision for IHNWC growth. I enjoy working with the team, the families, and our support churches to make the plan a reality.

**Why did you join IHNWC?**

- I saw that IHNWC has a furniture ministry, Heaven and Hearth. Being a hobbyist wood worker, I saw the opportunity to use my skills to recondition donated furniture and convert less useful items into practical furniture like dressers and tables. Some may look like Frankenstein but we like to call them Steampunk.

**What is your current occupation?**

- I retired from GE Aviation after 32 years as an engineer and manager. My last assignment was the Consulting Engineer for GEA Additive Manufacturing as we went into production printing 3D metal parts for jet engines.

**What do you love most about IHNWC?**

- I love that Linda, the Board, and the Staff, throughout our history, have been able to lead and galvanize a diverse group of churches in supporting this vital mission in Warren County. The relationships built between parishioners, staff, and clients is priceless. Every family sees that they have a chance to succeed and sustain with the help of IHNWC.

**What's something about you (a fun fact) that not many people know?**

- I have a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering and play classical piano.



## Heaven and Hearth:

We are doing limited pickups of furniture and household items. The items MUST be outside or in the garage. The driver and volunteers WILL NOT enter your home. This is for the safety and well being of you as well as our staff. Items MUST be in good condition with no tears, stains, animal hair and the like. Please call the IHNWC office at 513-934-5250 and ask for Andrew to make an appointment for pick up. No pick ups will be made when the State of Ohio is in level 3 Red or level 4 Purple COVID status. We thank you for your understanding and ask that you hold on to your important donation until the level drops to level 2.



The Staff and Board of IHNWC wishes you a joyful holiday season and a happy, healthy and safe New Year. We thank you for all that you have done and all that you continue to do for families in Warren County who need us the most.

Please call in advance when you are dropping off a donation. Please be aware that due to strict social distancing policy, IHNWC staff will not be able to assist you with your drop off. Please realize that we are so very appreciative of your kindness and that while we would LOVE to visit with you as we have in the past, we simply cannot at this time. Be sure to leave your name and address with your donation so that we can send you a proper thank you! If you prefer to send a monetary donation to help us defray our additional costs please send to: IHNWC, 203 East Warren Street, Lebanon, Ohio 45036. Check out our web page [www.ihnwc.org](http://www.ihnwc.org) for PayPal instructions. THANK YOU for your continued support of homeless families in Warren County.



### Amazon Smile

#### Shopping Amazon?

Please be sure to select IHNWC as the beneficiary!

Your shopping can generate funding for families in need with zero personal expense. Register with our organization on Amazon Smile before placing your order with Amazon Smile.

### Wish List

See our IHN Christmas Wish List on the next page for our items of need.

We are grateful for your continued support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kroger and Dorothy Lane Market will also allocate a portion of sales to IHNWC. For more information on all of these programs visit [www.ihnwc.org](http://www.ihnwc.org) and see our Community Benefits page.

### Other donations:

Due to COVID-19 we are unable to take donations (other than items to Heaven & Hearth) unless they are listed on the IHN Wish List. Items that are new and in the box will be considered on a case to case basis.

Your donation of just \$35.00 will house a family of 4 in a hotel room for one day during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your donation of \$250.00 will house a family of 4 in a hotel room for a week.



## IHN Christmas Wish List

Christmas is right around the corner! If you are interested in helping our families this holiday season, below is a wish list of items that are greatly needed.

- Paper towels (**High Need Item**)
- Lysol spray (**High Need Item**)
- Pots/Pans: – (can be purchased at The Dollar Store for \$19.99)
- Kitchen needs: silverware sets, spatulas, wooden spoons, slotted spoons, measuring cups, measuring spoons, mixing bowls, dish towels, kitchen sponges, microfiber cloths etc.
- Bath towels and washcloths
- Cleaning supplies: Pledge, Lysol wipes, mops/buckets, brooms/dustpans, toilet bowl cleaner, floor cleaner, Windex glass cleaner, toilet brushes
- Laundry detergent and dryer sheets
- Fingernail clippers (adults and children)
- Hairbrushes
- Children's shampoo, conditioner
- Body wash for adults and children
- Socks and underwear for children of all ages, boys/girls
- Baby items: diapers (sizes 4,5,6), baby wipes, baby wash and shampoo, diaper rash cream, baby lotion, infant and children's Tylenol and Advil/Motrin
- Hair ties and bands for girls
- Walmart, Kroger, Aldi and Gas gift cards
- Liquid hand soap
- Vacuum Cleaner
- Garbage bags: 13-gallon kitchen size
- Gallon and quart size Ziploc bags
- Food Cards: Burger King, KFC, Taco Bell, McDonalds, Arby's, Skyline, etc...







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F: (513) 934-5261

## DID YOU KNOW?



**Did you know** January-October  
2020 IHNWC assisted:

- 36 families in network
- 108 individuals
- 64 children
- 37 under age 6
- 7 unborn babies
- 1 born in shelter
- 908 referrals\*

\*This represents anyone who  
contacts IHNWC for any need

### The Impact of the Cares Act on your Taxes!

This year because of the  
COVID-19 emergency, the  
federal government approved  
legislation called the Cares Act.  
This law allows you to deduct  
up to \$300 for donations to  
public charities even if you do  
not itemize deductions.

Thank you to all the many volunteers  
at our host and support churches for  
providing meals, fellowship,  
hospitality and unconditional love  
to our families. If you would like  
to get involved please contact  
Linda Rabolt, Executive Director,  
at 513-934-5250 or  
[linda@ihnwc.org](mailto:linda@ihnwc.org). For more  
information about IHNWC go to  
[www.ihnwc.org](http://www.ihnwc.org).