President’s Page

By David Yelton

Having just celebrated the 20th anniversary of our homeless family network in late 2018, 2020 seemed filled with anticipation for better times for all, including those who would need our help this year. And then... COVID-19. However, even in times of radical change, like dealing with COVID-19; some things do not change. For example:

There are still homeless families in our community; there are still many people whose resources are such that missing a single paycheck puts them at risk of becoming homeless.

IHNWC employees and volunteers still have a passion to serve those who need the housing assistance we provide. These dedicated people continue to adapt to every roadblock created by COVID-19 with a will and determination that inspires me.

- The network has had to close the day center and replace the host/support church rotational network with a motel room for each family with daily delivery of meals. The host and support churches adapted their service to preparing individual family meals to be delivered to each motel room. But providing food just wasn’t enough, those volunteers started added family-oriented craft projects; books or small games to help children and adults better experience the love that those volunteers had so freely given in person when homeless families were guests in their church home.
- Every one of our employees has adapted how they do their work to ensure that both they and people they serve remain as safe as humanly possible from COVID-19. Most of our employees are working from home and making use of more technological resources to gather information and to assist their clients as they work to resolve their housing crisis.

I have no idea what other roadblocks may come our way this year. But the experience so far this year has shown me that we can and will do whatever is necessary to continue our critical service to homeless families.
Linda’s Letter
By Linda Rabolt

To say that much has changed since our last newsletter in April, is the understatement of the year! As I wrote my last article COVID-19 was just coming to the fore. In fact, the IHN COVID-19 plan was a last-minute insert to newsletter that was all but completed. Yes, we can all agree that there have been many changes in the last 4 months.

First off, to protect both our volunteers and our guests, we removed our guests from the church rotation the week of March 22. We work very closely with a local hotel and were fortunate to be able to house our families there. This enforced the social distancing suggestions made by Governor DeWine for all parties involved.

Knowing that our network volunteers and churches are the backbone of the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County we enlisted them to continue to provide food for the families. This became a heroic effort of retooling the process of each congregation. Our driver picks up a box for breakfast and lunch for each family on Sundays and then every evening Josh picks up dinner. We practice strict social distance, never getting close to either volunteers or our families. And to be honest, the meals are a big part of the hospitality that IHNWC provides. Our families are nourished by body, mind, and spirit. This has been a wonderful way to be the hands and feet of our Lord and Savior.

But what about the kiddos? Another wonderful way that our network volunteers provide hospitality is by loving our children through this difficult time of their housing crisis. Enter our volunteers once more. With each week, our volunteers have shared simple crafts, games, books, crayons, chalk and other items in order for the children to have fun things to do and to know that there is that “someone” out there looking over them.
The smiles tell the stories as the children open their goodie bags. This has been a wonderful outreach.

Soon, thanks to a technology grant that IHNWC has received, we will be able to take hospitality to the next step. Our guests and our volunteers will have the opportunity to connect via technology. We see this as a great way to help with homework, do family crafts, have conversation, play BINGO, and even read a bedtime story. Our volunteers miss this interaction with our families and our families NEED to have this interaction with our faith-based volunteers.

Our staff has had to learn how to be creative in a world that we cannot be together. We have risen to the challenge. Nichole, case manages our families several times a day from her home. She directs the families to housing, employment, daycare, and overall self-sufficiency. Nichole meets with the families via technology doing a financial security class, parenting class and COVID-19 life skills. Our families are being served, served well and the facts show it; 14 families have been housed in their own homes and in these families; 13 adults have employment as their main source of income.

Yes, there have been many changes in the last 4 months, but with that, much has stayed the same. While our families do not stay at the church, they safely stay at a hotel. While our families do not stay at the church, our volunteers continue to provide home cooked meals. While our families do not stay at the day center, they are still receiving case management, classes for financial security, parenting, and COVID-19 life skills. And while most of our staff works from home, we have met the challenges that COVID-19 brings to help the families that need us the most to be housed, employed and self-sufficient.

In this new world where we are asked to “shelter in place” and “social distance”, our hearts go out to families who are without a home, staying in overcrowded places or worse yet in a car or tent. They are not only homeless but also putting themselves and their families in unsafe and unwell situations. The Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County will continue to provide services for these families with children during this pandemic just as we have for almost 22 years. Children should never be homeless and never be hungry and never be at risk of being sick. Thank you to all who have supported IHNWC as we continue to meet and overcome the challenges that COVID-19 presents for it is because of YOU that we are able to continue our work and make a difference to those that need us the most.
Run@Home Winner!

Congratulations to the winner of the complimentary one night stay in a family suite at Great Wolf Lodge: Dan Kuderer! Congratulations Dan and thank you for your support! ENJOY!

Run@Home 5K:

July 4 brought yet another change due to COVID-19. The 14th annual Run4Home 5K and Kids Fun Run, became the Run@Home so as to assure the safety and wellbeing of all.

Just over 104 supporters of the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County, signed up to run or walk at home, socially distant and not at our usual Armco Park. The twist was that they could participate as Medalist, Olympic Hopeful, Athlete, In Training or just Sleep In. Whatever fit their mood on this hot and sunny July day. We are so very thankful that our sponsors stayed with us all along and I ask you to please consider attending worship or using the services of our business partners.

All in all, we raised a total of $12,888.07. These dollars will go directly to the programs that positively affect the families that stay at IHNWC. We look forward to being together again next July for the 15th annual Run4Home!

A very special thanks to our long time supporter Paul Harkins who took the time to mark the 5K run at the Countryside YMCA. This act of kindness is so very much appreciated!

2020 Run@Home Sponsors:

United Way of Warren County
WC Department of Job and Family Services
Eastgate Graphics
Newman Sanitary Gasket Company
Lebanon Optimist Club
Heritage Presbyterian Church
R&W Heating
Lebanon Presbyterian Church
Russell’s Auto Repair
New Freedom Church
ATAC—Pond Management Specialist
Reliable Electric
Rittgers & Rittgers
Warren County Democratic Party
St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church
Creech’s Lawn—Landscape and Garden
Lebanon Eagles #1395
Kevin Cox State Farm
Broadway Family Medicine
Kiwanis Club of Lebanon
Great Wolf Lodge
Minuteman Press of Lebanon
Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church
United Dairy Farmers
LCNB National Bank
Pleasant Plain Presbyterian Church
Aldi — Lebanon
Fox Chiropractic
In consideration of and as a condition for my entry, I, for myself, and on behalf of my parents, principals, executors, child-
ren, wards, minors, and assigns, waive all existing and potential claims, causes of action and damages and release
and discharge the Warren County Parks District — Armco Park, Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County and all sponsors, organizers, volunteers and others associated with the planning or organization of this event of and from all such claims, causes of action and damages arising from or pertaining in any
way to my participation in this event. I attest that I am physically fit and sufficiently trained to participate in this event.

Signature

(Date)

(Parent signature required if less than 18 years of age)

*In the event of a cancellation due to COVID19 we thank you for your donation*

Thank you to our sponsors and participants!
With your help we raised $12,888 this year.
Mark your calendars for July 4th, 2021!
Christmas in July

On July 25 Santa and his elves arrived at the homes of 34 families and a total of 77 children who are currently in shelter or have been past graduates of IHNWC over the past 12 months, bringing grade appropriate school supplies in individually picked backpacks. Oh, and the clothing! Each child received 5 outfits to start the school year along with a shoe card, hair cut card, undies, socks and even a small gift from Santa. Santa reminded each child how important it is to work hard, do their homework and always to do their best! So many smiles and so much excitement for the new year!

While some of our children will be in a school building, and some will be learning virtually, they will all have what they need to be successful.

Many thanks to Jennifer and Bill Keezer, coordinators of Christmas in July and all of their elves. We also want to thank Peggy Jacobs, Barb Davis and the Sewciables at Sycamore Presbyterian Church, who made masks with Christmas and Back to School themes. Lastly, we want to thank all those who support this very important mission.

A thank you from a Christmas in July family: We are so grateful for our visit from Santa and all that he brought to the children to start school. We had cookies and fruit and presents to open! We were so grateful for Santa’s visit and all that he brought to the children. Thanks sooo much! We appreciate everything!

Christmas Sponsorships:

Beginning October 19th, we will begin to accept sponsorships for all IHNWC families that have stayed in shelter and graduated over the past 12 months. Even as we house our families, they continue to live marginally. Our Christmas program allows for all the children who have been in the IHNWC program since January 2020 to have the fun of Santa. IHNWC staff collects the Christmas Wish List from all the children. Classrooms, churches, Sunday school classes, organizations and the like that sponsor a family will be given the wish list. All items must be returned no later than December 18, wrapped and put in a black garbage back with the family number on it. On Christmas Eve, Santa himself will deliver these gifts to the children. Thank you in advance for your kind consideration of sponsoring an IHNWC family.

Thanksgiving Baskets:

IHN families that graduate in good standing are eligible for our Thanksgiving basket program. Community minded groups will often make a basket and bring it to IHN. We keep a tally of those who have the most need and present them with all that they need for a joyous Thanksgiving meal. If you wish to participate in this outreach, call Linda at 513-934-5250. Don’t forget the roasting pan!

Time for Change

November 1st:

This event is held the day of the fall and spring time change. We ask that you save your pocket change; take it out of your car cup holder, look under your couch cushions or however you want to save it and bring it to your church or the day center the week of Sunday, November 1. This year we are designating all funds from the Time for Change to Christmas in July.

A Special Thank You to the IHNWC Host and Support Congregations:

The Board and Staff of the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County send out a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of the coordinators and volunteers of our network congregations. As we turned on a dime to address the needs of our families when COVID-19 hit, you turned right along with us. No questions asked. Just a simple "What can we do?" And you did! You rallied your volunteers to a "new normal". No longer would the IHNWC families be staying at your church home. YOU made boxes for each family for breakfast and lunches for a week. YOU provided daily nutritious dinners and desserts! YOU provided our adults with fun bags filled with candies, crayons, books and love. You provided our adults with gift cards of encouragement and personal items. You even provided our adults with flowers!

A Special Thanks for COVID-19 Support:

IHNWC wishes to thank the Warren County Foundation and the Warren County Commissioners for their COVID-19 support. As always, we will continue to be good stewards of these funds and assure that they are used appropriately to assist homeless families in Warren County.

We also want to also say a special thank you to old friends such as the First Baptist Church of Mason, G3 (formally Impact Church) and our support congregations that have taken on additional duties.

We want to send our thanks to the many folks that made masks for our staff and our guests. Among them are the Warren County Quilt Guild, the SPC Sewciables and many individuals. Thanks so much!
Coordinator Corner

by Cathy McCracken

My name is Cathy McCracken. I serve IHNWC as the host congregation coordinator for St Patrick’s Episcopal Church (St Pat’s). I started supporting IHNWC at St. Pat’s in 2004, providing the Saturday meal for each rotation and continued that until 2014 when I was “promoted” to coordinator. The week is organized a little differently than some other host churches. Below is an overview of how we do it at St. Pat’s.

First a little history....
St. Pat’s has been an IHNWC host congregation since the very beginning – 1998. The following folks have proceeded me as St. Pat’s coordinators - Joan Grant, Jackie Davis, Susan Sorrell, Lisa Cronin and we have supported IHNWC for these 22 years under the spiritual guidance and leadership of Jackie Matisse. In the very beginning, we were supported by Resurrection Lutheran (now a host congregation), some other congregations, as well as a local bible study group. At that time we mixed groups/congregations to cover meals, comradery/hospitality and overnight teams each day. The idea was to build an ecumenical community. While this was a great idea in theory, execution was somewhat complicated.

Fast forward to present day....
The current process goes like this. St. Pat’s hosts the families, provides breakfast and lunch staples, as well as evening meals, comradery/hospitality and overnight for Sunday and Saturday of each rotation week. St. Pat’s also provides overnight only on Tuesday of each rotation week. The support from St. Pat’s is nothing short of AMAZING. There are folks that keep track of the rotation weeks on their own and more often than not, sign up for chores before I even remind them of an upcoming week.

Monday through Friday, 5 support congregations pick up the responsibilities. The lead folks for those 5 congregations are a remarkable group and come together as a team to make every IHNWC week at St. Pat’s a success. Those lead contacts are: Ellen Abel - Lakeview UCC, Tiaera Newland -Tru Kingdom Ministries, Michael Voshefski - St Mary Magdalene, Tiffany Carlisle – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Helen Ulrich – Nexus Church

Planning and preparation ...
2 weeks before St. Pat’s rotation week an email goes out to the support congregations and the St. Pat’s conggregation as a “heads up” with preliminary family information and numbers, hoping everyone can get a slight jump on lining up volunteers. As a general rule all volunteers are set within a couple of days. As soon as the family information and numbers are confirmed for our week another email goes to both groups, so food amounts and activities can be planned. Sunday (the start of the weekly rotation) breakfast and lunch staples are purchased and stored at the church. St. Pat’s is a small and very old church. We do not have a gym or an activities room and every room at the church is used for a specific church purpose. With that said, we transform the library, nursery and storage rooms into bedrooms. The St. Pat’s Rite 13 youth group are PROS at this chore, in fact there are a couple of these young folks that could and probably will rule the country someday.

Execution....
During each rotation week the IHNWC staff keeps me abreast of family/number changes, additional families, work schedules, health issues and general issues. All overnight volunteers provide a status update the AM following their overnight. This way everyone stays on the same page and we can accommodate the families better.

In Closing....
I am so blessed with a St. Pat’s Family and supporting congregations that never fail me, making my gig pretty easy. It takes a village and I live in a really incredible one!!!
Host Recruitment & Retention

By Rev. Mary Joseph & Jennifer Fry

As I sit here looking out the windows of my sun room onto a beautiful, mild, summer day, it’s easy to remember all for which I am thankful. My church, family, and dog are often at the top of my list, but then I remember to be thankful for the roof over my head and the food I have to eat. We’re not nearly through dealing with COVID-19 and many of us will be taking serious, life altering precautions until a vaccine is available.

The families in the IHN Shelter program are dealing with COVID 19 in addition to all the other challenges: homelessness, unemployment, hunger, family dynamics. We have done our best to keep both the families and our volunteers safe by utilizing hotels during this time. Matthew 25:35 reminds us always that we are called by God to minister to those in need. “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.” You have stepped up in big ways in providing meals and activities for the families in this new situation. For all your efforts, we are grateful and know that our families are grateful as well.

Our Host Recruitment and Retention Team has met and continues to work on several initiatives intended to get us back on track when we feel it’s appropriate to return to the recruitment part of our name.

As we consider how to return to regular shelter, please keep an eye out for a survey from us about your reopening plans and your comfort level with returning to a regular shelter rotation.

If you would like more information about the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County please visit our website at IHNWC.org or call the day center office at 513-934-5250.

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—Waynesville.

For more on the IHNWC COVID-19 plan, please visit our web page at www.ihnwc.org. This is updated on a regular basis.
Volunteer Spotlight

Getting to Know

Nelson Kennedy

Heritage Presbyterian Church

What do you usually do to volunteer for IHNWC? What has IHNWC meant to your congregation?
• Heritage Presbyterian Church in Mason (HPC) is one of the eight original churches that have been participating in IHNWC since its inception over 20 years ago. This mission has been extremely important to our congregation, as most members of HPC have stepped up to make significant contributions of their time and effort toward the success of this important work. IHNWC is extremely efficient at finding jobs, child care, and housing for the guests. And through the Homeless Crisis Response Program (HCRP), IHNWC actually helps even more people from losing their homes.
What do you usually do to volunteer for IHNWC? Which is your favorite?
• As one of HPC’s three IHN coordinators, I usually monitor our sign up board, and ask people to volunteer for one of the 72 open “slots” to make the IHN week happen once a quarter. Since the corona virus hit, I have been limited to coordinating our regular meal providers that come from a total of seven different Mason churches. My favorite thing to do is to eat dinner with our guests and then operate HPC’s commercial grade dishwasher that washes and dries a whole load of dishes in about three minutes like magic!

How did you first get involved with IHNWC?
• First, my wife Suzanne Kennedy, and her friend Rosemary Marshall volunteered to be logistics coordinators for IHNWC at HPC. Then, I had to be convinced that homelessness actually existed in Warren County. Then, when my friends Karen Saterfield and Nick Tymitz wanted to get involved, it was natural for me to want to get in on it, too.

What is your “why” for volunteering?
• One day I asked myself: Is there a better way to respond to the grace of God than to provide food and shelter to the homeless in our own community? (I don’t think there is.)

Do you have a memorable moment about your volunteer experience with us?
• These are my top three: (1) Once a young woman whom I did not recognize; recognized me in a restaurant and thanked me for helping with IHN a couple of years ago. (2) Also, I have been overwhelmed by seeing gifts given by local Christians for “homeless infants” that are staying with us. (3) Also, several times I have been allowed to hold an infant while their mother was eating a meal in our church dining room.

What would you tell new members / volunteers about volunteering for IHNWC?
• Look at the sign up board. Ask someone that you know who has signed up for a “slot” if you can go and help them; and get this wonderful experience with them. You won’t regret it. Your service will be so needed and so appreciated.

Tell us a fun fact about yourself.
• I have five wonderful grandchildren and they are all local!
Wish List
We are grateful for your continued support during the COVID-19 pandemic. With that, there are some changes to our donation process that we want you to be aware of:

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.

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. These furniture donations are imperative to our families as they move into their own homes. Thank you!

How to Give
We have online giving! Please visit www.ihnwc.org and click “Donate” to enter your information.

We love mail! Using the information enclosed please make checks payable to Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County. THANK YOU!!

Other donations:
Due to COVID-19 we are unable to take donations (other than above) 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.

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 and see our Community Benefits page.

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 or check out our web page www.ihnwc.org for PayPal instructions. THANK YOU for your continued support of homeless families in Warren County.
IHN COVID-19 Wish List

If you are interested in helping our families during this crisis, below is a wish list of items that are **greatly needed**.

- Kleenex
- Hand Sanitizer
- Bottled Water
- Cleaning supplies: Lysol/Clorox wipes, disinfectant spray
- Thermometers
- Baby items: diapers (sizes 4,5,6), baby wipes, infant and children’s Tylenol and Advil/Motrin
- Adult Tylenol, Advil/Motrin
- Garbage bags: 13-gallon kitchen size
- Walmart, Kroger, Aldi and Gas gift cards
  - *Food Cards: Burger King, McDonald’s, Taco Bell, Arby’s, KFC, Speedway
  - *Poptop Cans: soup, fruit, ravioli, beefaroni, spaghetti & meatball, etc...
  - *Food: cereal, breakfast bars, poptarts, juice boxes, frozen dinners, ramen noodles, mac & cheese cups, applesauce cups, etc...

Monetary donations are also appreciated to keep up with excessive costs. Please see webpage [www.ihnwc.org](http://www.ihnwc.org) for PayPal or mail checks to IHNWC to be sent to the address below.

Your kind donation is very important to us. **Please call ahead when dropping off at 203 East Warren St. Lebanon. Leave donation by the front door along with your contact information for a thank you note.**

We appreciate you!! Stay well!!

*For families sheltered in a local motel*
Did you know January-July 2020 IHNWC assisted:
- 20 families in network
- 63 individuals
- 39 children
- 21 under age 6
- 4 unborn babies
- 553 referrals*

*This represents anyone who contacts IHNWC for any need

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. For more information about IHNWC go to www.ihnwc.org

As you are all my family, I want to share a joy. In the midst of the pandemic and on my birthday, May 26, my first grandchild, a boy, was born. Tristan Daniel, weighed in at 10 pounds, 2 ounces and was 22 inches long. He has brought much joy to our family. We pray for him as well as all of these children who have come into this world of uncertainty. We know that God is with them.