



The Community Day Center of Waltham
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communitydaycenter.org

April 18, 2011

Dear Friends:

"Homelessness is dire. It's not a comfortable situation, it's frustrating."
-Ron, a guest

***Providing Day Shelter
& Support Services for
The Homeless and
Those in Need***

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It has been four months since I've written, but I have been busy at the Day Center. This winter was long and harsh, but longer and harsher for the homeless. Because of your help, we were able to provide over 80 backpacks with winter gear, hats, insulated gloves and scarves; and 150 utility packs with toothpaste, toothbrushes, throat lozenges, and healthy snacks. We also sponsored a coat drive and distributed warm winter coats, boots and shoes. Since December, we served over 80 pizzas, 600 grilled cheese sandwiches, 20 trays of lasagna and 4,000 cups of coffee.

The solution starts here... What we did not measure was the number of times the guests slept on our sofas. Instead, this was more poignantly summarized by Michelle, a guest who said, that *she was afraid to sleep too deeply in her car in case she froze to death*. Nor did my staff and I measure the multiple occasions in which we took our guests to the emergency room because they were burning up or suffering from flu-like symptoms, joint-aches or paresthesias, worsened by living outdoors, or dealing with problems resulting from self-medication. One of the most heart breaking situations occurred when a guest cried because he could not handle living on the streets anymore and he so deeply missed his children. We also lost a guest, David, who became a good friend to many of us before his heart gave out. His memorial service was not only helpful to his brother, but for us as well, in dealing with his sudden loss. Throughout these months, we were there offering a sympathetic ear, chicken soup, blankets, help with Food Stamps, and applying for public housing or MA Health to name a few.

We celebrated the spring with our Annual Meeting on March 26th. Over 50 guests, donors, partners and politicians were inspired by Rev. Karen Montagne's keynote talk: *"Hospitality, the Gift that Keeps on Giving"*; and Angel, Michelle and Prince, who spoke of their own experience with homelessness. There was also a video by Julie Land, reporter at WCAC-TV, of our photo exhibit: *"Homelessness From Our Eyes."* This project, in collaboration with Lasell College, was composed of photographs taken by our guests. This traveling exhibit is currently at the Digital Federal Credit Union, 130 Lexington Street until April 30, 2011. Please check our website www.communitydaycenter.org for what is new at the Day Center.

Would you consider helping us financially again? At the Day Center, we believe in the transformative power of community. Thank you for being a partner in our work.

Fondly,

Marilyn Lee-Tom