



Good Neighbor Homeless Shelter Annual Report 2007

Mission Statement: The mission of the Good Neighbor Shelter is to provide men, women, and families with temporary shelter and with physical, emotional, and spiritual support. A caring staff assists the guests with developing and prioritizing goals for their return to the community as productive members.

I. Program Description:

The immediate goal of the Shelter is to provide temporary shelter, food, and clothing to those in need. However, any guest who desires to remain at the Shelter must meet our guidelines and comply with all house rules. Guests are required to obtain employment within two weeks of entering the shelter so that when they exit the shelter they can live independently.

Entry guidelines include: 1) possession of state issued ID (emergency 3 day stay may be granted to allow guest time to obtain ID, which is needed to obtain work); 2) no history of crimes against children or sexual crimes; 3) guests must not be actively using drugs or alcohol (testing available onsite); 4) guests must not display evidence of severe mental health issues (e.g. schizophrenia - based on self-report of diagnosis or hospitalizations).

Homeless members of our community, whom we call guests while they are with us, arrive at the Good Neighbor Shelter in crisis. The loss of shelter, a most basic human need, is the presenting problem, but many issues lead to becoming homeless. The Shelter, through our Goals Program, provides guests an opportunity to address many of the issues that lead to being homeless and facilitates a return to self-sufficiency.

The staff member who accepts the guest into the shelter completes registration process with the guest. The Goals Coordinator completes a Goals intake interview within 24 hours of guest registration. The purpose of the interview is to assess the guest's situation and create a plan of action for addressing the issues that caused the individual to become homeless. In weekly individual meetings, the Goals Coordinator helps guests develop a plan, prioritize solutions, and focus on strategies to accomplish their goals. Problem solving skills are emphasized to help guests deal with current issues and future challenges. Each week, the director meets with the Goals Coordinator and all other staff to assess the guests' progress and make further recommendations.

II. Program Highlights:

A. Census: 223 persons were sheltered between January 1 and December 31, 2007 for a total of 4,375 bed-nights. Of 223 guests, 19 were children and were not part of the Goals program. During 2007, 204 adults stayed at the shelter.

Of the 204, **104 stayed 1 to 13 days**. These 104 persons achieved 99 goals total (avg approx 1 goal per person). Of those staying 13 days or less 25 moved in with family/friends; 27 obtained their own apartment, house or mobile home; 28 left voluntarily, generally because they did not like the structured nature of the program; 10 missed curfew & lost their bed; 7 went to other shelters; 3 were non-compliant with rules and were asked to leave; 3 were taken to jail for active warrants (probation violation; failure to pay child support or fines); 1 was placed in a long term rehab.



65 adults stayed at the shelter from 14-42 days, completing 153 goals total (avg 2+ goals per person). 40 obtained their own housing; 13 had arrangements to stay with family or friends when they left; 4 had severe mental health problems and were referred to other programs, but it is unknown if they reported to the program; 4 were non-compliant with rules and had to leave the shelter; 3 went to another shelter; 1 was placed in rehab.

29 persons stayed 43-70 days, completing 182 goals total (avg 6+ goals per person). 19 obtained their own housing; 8 moved in with family or friends to save money; 1 was placed in rehab; 1 went to another shelter. All created a budget & opened a savings account. Other goals accomplished: 16 received accessed needed medical services; primarily for chronic conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure); 11 received counseling/mental health services during their stay; 9 participated in AA/NA; and 5 were able to purchase a vehicle.

B. Guest Demographics:

138 (62%) males; 48 (22%) females; 37 (18%) persons in families
157 (70%) white; 59 (26%) black; 7 bi-racial (3%); 3 were Hispanic (1%)
The average age was 40. The average length of stay was 21 days.

C. Day Services – The shelter provides services to individuals & families who do not stay overnight at the shelter but need food, clothing, etc. Persons receiving Day Services: 83.

75 received food (a hot meal or canned goods), 16 received clothing, shoes, blankets, etc. and 9 received referrals for other services not provided by the shelter (some clients received more than one service). Those who received food were either transient or did not have access to other food pantries at the time they were referred.

D. Referrals – This year we continued detailed recording of referrals made by the shelter. *Total number of referrals: 403.* The large number is attributed to better record keeping, an increased profile both locally and on the Internet, and the closure of some Atlanta area shelters.

56% were referred as they were *outside Bartow County* and had no transportation to Bartow. The vast majority of these were located in communities with homeless services closer to their location than we are and they were appropriately referred. 12 were calling from out of state and were checking on bed availability for a planned trip. Most accessed our information through our website.

20% reported that they were *on disability* and could not meet our program requirements and were referred to other shelters.

11% were referred because there was *no bed available* at the time they called. Note that men are not housed in the women/family areas and vice versa, which means persons could be referred when the shelter was not 100% full.

7% reported the need for shelter was due to *domestic violence* issues and were appropriately referred.

4% reported having *severe mental health issues and were unmedicated*. The Shelter is not equipped or staffed to render assistance to people with severe psychoses who are unmedicated. They were referred to the appropriate facilities.

2% stated they *could not pass a drug test* and were referred for rehab or services from agencies that assist persons with substance abuse issues.

E. The Fresh Start Furniture Program served 15 persons in 12 families. Guests who need furniture when they move out from the shelter make a furniture request and set up an appointment



for moving. Then donated furniture is given to guests as available and guests must sign an agreement that they will use the furniture as intended and return it to the shelter should their needs change. The program was not as large as last year because more guests moved to fully furnished apartments or efficiencies. Donated furniture is stored at a volunteer's house and at a storage room donated by Euharlee Storage.

F. Resources – The shelter continues to offer on-site meetings for guests dealing with addiction issues: AA meets weekly; Al-Anon meets once weekly. The NA meeting became so large it had to move, but we are seeking to start another group when a leader can be located. The Goals Coordinator makes sure all guests in need of support groups are notified of all local meetings and arranges transport to meetings through the local groups. Guests who express an interest in attending regular worship services are linked up with volunteers from various local churches as part of their outreach programs.

Periodic house meetings continue to be held to allow guests an additional opportunity to raise concerns and allow staff a structured time to clarify rules. The meetings are especially helpful to new guests who are trying to learn all the rules, to defuse potential conflicts between guests, and to recognize “graduating” guests.

For our guest's safety, donated, non-active cell phones are issued to guests who must travel to/from work after dark. These phones can dial 911 in an emergency.

All guests are provided with 3 meals a day. Those who will be absent during meals due to work commitments have the option to carry a lunch/dinner from the shelter with them. All guests are provided with basic clothing as needed, with special needs referred to the Community Church Shop, the Empty Food Pantries thrift shop, or Salvation Army. The shelter is open and staffed 24 hours a day. Regular registration is 7 am to 8 pm daily and emergency registration (when accompanied by a law enforcement officer) is available after 8 pm.

The community continues to have the need for more access to mental health facilities for both addiction and behavioral issues. More drug rehabilitation treatment, both short and long term, is a crucial need. Healthcare is a pressing need for our guests who are almost always uninsured. While some relief is expected to be provided by the new Bartow Health Access clinic, the level of service that they will be able to provide is unclear at this point.

III. Administrative

A Needs & News E-mail list continues to be sent out each month. The list is emailed out to all supporters who have provided emails and all who request to be added when the director speaks at various functions. Additionally the needs list is sent to the Daily Tribune and Bartow Trader who publish the needs list, resulting in an increase in donated items to the shelter. The “News” portion of the email updates readers on fundraisers, events, and shelter activities.

The Board decided that to allow the Executive Director more time to increase public awareness of the shelter, a very part-time Assistant Director position would be created. The five-hour a week position was filled by current Goals Coordinator, Kay Brownlow. Ms. Brownlow has worked for the shelter for seven years and fulfilled numerous roles. She has extensive experience in managing staff scheduling & training, which along with facility maintenance will be her main areas of responsibility. This addition has greatly relieved time pressures on the Executive Director.



All employees are required to maintain certification in a Red Cross certified CPR course. In addition to periodic individual supervision, regular scheduled staff meetings are held to maintain the standard application of all policies/rules regarding guests. These meetings also serve as a program roundtable and an opportunity for staff to brainstorm ways to help individual guests as their case file is reviewed.

The Staff Manual was updated in August 2007 to maintain standardize procedures and incorporate any changes made in the past year. Two core staff members have been with the shelter 7-10 years and two others have 2 or more years' tenure with the shelter. The part-time/on-call position is the position with the greatest turnover.

The three full time staff that were eligible for the insurance benefit were offered coverage in Feb 2007. Only two staff members chose to participate in the insurance, a basic HMO plan. One of these staff members has since left the shelter however, as of September, the shelter was fully staffed.

A security camera monitoring the parking lot was added to the camera system to provide better monitoring of the area. This allows staff to observe conditions in the parking lot, especially at night, providing better security to guests who have to come and go after dark to fulfill job commitments.

The Shelter continues to participate fully in the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The program provides an online database for all homeless service providers to register their clients to provide accurate homeless counts, facilitate referrals, and avoid duplication of services. All staff members who assist in data entry are required to attend Confidentiality Training provided by DCA. A routine Monitoring visit was conducted in November 2007 and the Shelter is in full compliance with all policies.

The Executive Director attended the Georgia Coalition to End Homelessness (GCEH) Conference this year and received much valuable information from presenters from all over the state and the country. The Shelter participated in a statewide Homeless Awareness Week October 28 - November 3 as a result of this conference.

IV. Board

Butch Emerson assumed the position of President of the Board of Directors in January 2007. Other officers were: Chuck Nida, Vice President; Amy Ransom, Treasurer; and Rebecca Battle, Secretary. In an effort to continue to expand our leadership structure, Board membership reached 21 members this year.

The Executive Committee met monthly before every Board meeting to review the agenda, committee activities, and financials. All Board members serve on one standing committee: Board Recruitment, Church Liaison, Finance, Long Range Planning, Policies & Procedures, and Fundraising. Additionally, the Georgia Barbecue Classic Cook-off Committee and the Our Hearts Their Harbor Committee met with both Board & community members (see Funding below) to plan and execute the events.

In addition to regular media, the Shelter utilizes a website to educate the public and provide a place for volunteers to access information & opportunities. In 2007, we added online giving to our website to make it easier for individuals to make donations. With pull down menus related to



our major fundraisers, this has made sponsoring events, participating in events, and giving to the shelter easier. The web address is: www.goodneighborshelter.org.

V. Community/Volunteers

Volunteers worked a total of 5,014 hours on behalf of the shelter this year. This total includes fundraisers, on-site work groups, meal providers, Board members, Committees, and household & office volunteers.

Two volunteers were recognized for their efforts at the Board of Director's December Meeting. Dennis Collier was honored for his tireless participation in the Georgia Barbecue Classic since the original event's inception in 2004. Judi Bedell was honored as the Shelter's Volunteer of the Year for her faithful work at the shelter sorting in-kind donations every week and filling in wherever needed.

In conjunction with Homeless Awareness Week, an Open House was held at the Shelter on November 2nd, with videos about homelessness and the Shelter, tours, and brochures about the shelter provided. Green & white ribbons provided by the GCEH were distributed from several locations in town in advance of the Open House. The event was deemed a success and is likely to be repeated next year.

The Assistant Director participated in monthly Bartow County Interagency meetings, serving as the group's Vice President. Interagency participation promotes knowledge about the shelter and facilitates collaboration with local agencies. She also represented the Shelter at Bartow Health Access meetings.

A donor provided funds for the Executive Director to continue to be a member of the Bartow Rotary Club to increase the shelter's contacts with the business community. Additionally, the Executive Director continued to participate in the Non-Profit Executive Roundtable (NPER) sponsored by the Cartersville-Bartow Chamber of Commerce. Just prior to the beginning of 2007, the Shelter's Executive Director was asked to co-chair the Roundtable. With the loss of the original chairperson, our Executive Director became the sole chair of the committee. This organization now provides not only collaborative and networking opportunities, but serves as a training venue for local non-profit directors. The group has also explored ways to create a common Non-Profit Event Calendar, increase its membership, and ways to increase communication between Non-Profits and local businesses.

VI. Funding

Fundraising continues to provide a significant source of support for the shelter, providing 37% of the Shelter's revenue.

The Fourth Annual cook-off was held June 1-2. The event name was changed to the Georgia Barbecue Classic and the venue was changed to Milam Farm (now Sam Smith Memorial Park) to provide more space to expand the event. This year, 51 Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS) teams competed for cash prizes and plaques custom made by Dennis Collier to reflect the event's Bartow County locale. Twenty-seven Backyard teams competed for custom plaques and a grand prize of a Grill Dome cooker. A festive Sponsor Dinner, hosted by the local Holiday Inn, kicked off the event. Bartow County Bank was the Title Sponsor with a children's area provided & staffed by the Optimists. Craft and concession vendors were new this year. South 107 joined as a media sponsor, which promoted the event well outside of Bartow County. The Cook-off



committee coordinated the event with leadership from Event Coordinator Kim Caves. Gross proceeds from the event were over \$58,000.

The Our Hearts, Their Harbor Gala was held Tuesday, August 21 at Ambra Restaurant in downtown Cartersville. Since the community continues to have an abundance of black tie events, Our Hearts maintained is less formal tone, but benefited from the downtown venue. The event was a success, as all who participated reported they enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere, excellent food, and interesting auction items. Receipts for the event were over \$19K under the leadership of Board member Ginny Weaver.

The Young Artists' Concert: Home for the Holidays took place on December 27 at a new venue, the Grand Theater. Sponsorship by Cartersville Medical Center allowed the move to the Grand, which was deemed an excellent choice for this musical event. Fourteen talented local artists participated in the event, which raised over \$2800. Ivy Jordan was once again the Chair for this event.

The Board participated in Belk Department Store Charity Day, selling discount tickets in advance of the October event and holding a bake sale the day of the event. Almost \$1300 was raised through ticket sales and bake sale proceeds.

Overall, fundraisers accounted for 37% of the funds taken in by the shelter in 2007. Individual contributions totaled 14%; private grants provided 11% of income; grants from government (state & local) 11%; church donations 11%; United Way allocations 11%; investment income and other miscellaneous sources 5%.

The Board continued its partnership with the Community Foundation of Northwest Georgia to increase the endowment fund. Additionally, two grants for \$1,000 each were received from the Foundation.

Respectfully submitted,

Marina Robertson,
Executive Director