

The mission of FISH Hospitality Program is to serve homeless women and families by providing shelter and meals, and such other assistance as we are able, in order to give them a new opportunity to live independently in their communities as respected families and individuals. FHP does assist and enable our guests to obtain housing, jobs, medical services and other assistance to which they are entitled, as far as resources allow. FHP serves people in need without regard to race, religion, national origin or disability.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 11 – Drive-through Children’s Christmas Party, Rose of Sharon Community Church, Plainfield
 Jan 18, 2022 Annual Meeting & Board of Directors: 7:15 pm
 Via Zoom

SERVICE STATISTICS

(January 1 – November 15)

Persons sheltered – 49	Families – 15
Sheltered Adults – 18	Children - 31
Nights of Shelter provided – 4,229	

Guest Corner #1

During the pandemic, I found myself at what I thought was the lowest point of my life as a parent. My children and I faced being homeless along with severe financial setbacks and I was unsure of which way to turn. Through several calls with 211, I was connected to FISH Hospitality.

I was thankful for the option but terrified of taking my family into a shelter program and struggled with the decision. I could have never imagined the impact FISH would have on my family.

From day one, we were treated with kindness and dignity, which means so much when you are struggling. While in the FISH program, I was given the support and assistance needed to get my life back on track. Not only to help us move forward as a family but also the tools needed to ensure we would continue to be successful once no longer in the program.

Theresa is a Godsend! She listened when I needed to talk things through, broke down what was next into manageable weekly steps, and made sure we had everything we needed. Theresa was an excellent accountability partner in setting/achieving our goals. It was such a help knowing she was just a call/email away if I needed her, and her cheering me on as I made it to each milestone of getting back on my feet, is one of the reasons we thrived. Every person that I was in contact with made a lasting impression on us. From Marquis with his consistent joy and kindness, to the churches/ organizations who donated toiletries, dinners, and items to make us feel supported. My family is so very thankful for each and every one of you. To the board of directors, office staff, volunteers and everyone who assists with this life changing

program - words will never be able to express how what you do makes such a difference in the lives of the families that enter this program.

Before FISH, the challenges we faced seemed to be insurmountable, we were trying but it felt like we were never able to move forward. Through this program, we found a path to follow that not only helped us find a place of our own and have options, but also a fresh start and restored our faith that good can happen even in the worst of situations. I am forever thankful for the blessing FISH Hospitality has been in the life of my family.

Former Guest X

Guest Corner #2

My name is Enjoli “Li”. I moved to New Jersey in the summer of 2019 with my two daughters shortly after an abrupt break up with their father. We needed a fresh new start and I, a sense of independence. My parents agreed to help with finances and babysitting for 1 year while I worked part time and worked towards earning a degree in nursing. That year went by quick. I couldn’t afford school, my pay was low, and my job at the time was not my passion. Then COVID hit in March and everything went downhill FAST. Living with my parents got more uncomfortable and stressful by the day, especially with two young loud children! I looked at several options before deciding to live in hotels just to have “my own place”. I quickly racked up so much debt, it affected my credit, I struggled to pay my bills on time or at all, I barely had enough money for basic necessities such as gas and food. My parents said I had to find help, “we’re not gonna be around forever.”

I thought I had a great plan!

I was at a serious low, to where my mental strength diminished, my confidence shot, and that positive bubbly personality turned into sad, undetermined, and scared of my children’s future. I refused to ask for help and let anyone outside of my family know what was going on. Me being in a new state, not knowing where to go for help, and being the stubborn person I am, I thought I could do it. I finally reached out to 211 and soon after, I got a call from Theresa at FISH Hospitality. She was determined to help me get back on track. I needed a strong support system and she was that and more. Due to COVID Theresa and I only saw each other face to face a total of 2 or 3 times! Didn’t take away from our relationship. I said I was stubborn, so she was on top of me from day 1! I didn’t know what to expect. Theresa and I went over budgeting, my credit report, and just became someone I could talk to. This helped me regain my confidence, and get more organization, and the stability I was missing. Theresa made sure my children and I were always good. Then came to

DECEMBER 2021

FISH Hospitality Program, Inc.

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Board of Directors

President: Carole Cook; Vice President: Margo Seaman
Secretary: Patricia Klatt; Treasurer: Jeffrey Rumen
Members: David W. Casterline, Marjorie G. Hall
Robert J. Spencer, Sharon J. Hunt, Claudine Lewis
Director: Theresa Donatiello Neidich, MSW/LSW

GUEST CORNER #2

searching apartments, what a task AGAIN! However, I had a stronger support system this time, and I was determined.

After almost a year of struggling I am back on my feet. A new better paying job doing what I love in order to move me forward in my future nursing career, a place my kids and I can call home, self-confidence and love for myself through the roof, and a sense of wellbeing! I could write a 3 page thesis about my experiences with FISH Hospitality, that would not explain or measure up to what they've done for my children and I.

A special thank you to my amazing, caseworker Theresa, she put up with all my stubbornness and I will never forget her; Marquis and FHP staff and volunteers. I also want to thank Kathy from Catholic Charities and everyone at Trinity Presbyterian Church: Diane (my pen pal in email and furniture connoisseur lol), Debbie and the youth group teens I met. We also want to thank those who donated every single item, before, during and after our big move. A big thank you to Board of Directors at FISH Hospitality that helped us get to where we need to be. We couldn't be more grateful.

Thank you with all our hearts!
Enjoli; Ryli (8); Eryn'Li (4)

COVID -19

From Carole Cook, President
Board of Directors

Covid continues to affect our rotational shelter program as we await houses of worship to open up. Our guests are still being housed in local motels with host churches donating or preparing meals. We have made lemonade out of lemons for nearly two years! The cost of our program has increased dramatically; any donation is gratefully accepted!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! ✨ HAPPY, HEALTHY 2022 🕒

PARTICIPATING CONGREGATIONS

Host Congregations:

Aldersgate United Methodist Church, East Brunswick
Christ United Methodist Church, Piscataway
Community Presbyterian Church, Edison
First Presbyterian, Avenel
First Presbyterian, Cranford
First Presbyterian, Dunellen
Rose of Sharon Community Church, Plainfield (day/night)
Ruth Fellowship Ministries, Plainfield
St. Francis Episcopal Church, Dunellen (day/night)
St Paul's United Church of Christ, Milltown
The Presbyterian Church in Westfield
Trinity Episcopal, Woodbridge
Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick

Support Congregations:

First Congregational Church of Westfield
The First Presbyterian Church of Iselin
Jack and Jill of America - Greater Union County
Mount Olive Baptist Church, Plainfield
Negro Women Council - Plainfield
New Beginnings Church of the Nazarene, Edison
New Dover United Methodist Church, Edison
Our Lady of Mount Virgin, Middlesex
Park Community Church, South Plainfield
Presbyterian Church of Woodbridge
St. Cecelia's Roman Catholic Church, Iselin
St. Frances Cabrini, Piscataway
St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, Dunellen
St Paul's Lutheran Church in Edison
Stonecrest Community Church, Warren
Trinity Reformed Church, North Plainfield
United Methodist Church, Woodbridge
YMCA, Metuchen Branch
Zion Tabernacle, Piscataway

Who's in the program now?

(Kid's age in parenthesis - County)

Mom & 2 boys (6 & 3) - MC Mom & girl (17) - MC
Mom & 2 girls (17 & 12) - MC
Mom & dad 1 girl (9) and 3 boys (7, 6 & 15 months) - UC

WISH LIST

Household items: for our current guests and when they move into their own homes including bathroom & kitchen cleaner; dustpan, laundry detergent, dryer sheets, dishwashing liquid, hand soap, paper towels; and sponges
Toiletries: baby wipes, men's & women's deodorant & body wash, Dove sensitive skin bar soap; mouthwash (no toothbrushes PLEASE), and qui-tips
Gift Cards for Walmart, Acme & Shop Rite



FISH Hospitality Program, Inc.

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Serving Homeless Women and Families since 1990

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December 2021

Dear Friends,

In March 2020 we suspended our rotational shelter to protect the health and safety of our guests and volunteers. We never imagined that the pause would still be in effect, nearly two years later. Our guests continue to be housed safely in local motels at an unprecedented cost to our program. We have watched as our budget has been stretched to the point of breaking as our expenses skyrocketed.

Our mission at FISH Hospitality Program (FHP) is to work with families who find themselves temporarily homeless by getting them back on the road to independent living. While in our program, our guests are given the skills to manage their finances along with access to resources that enable them to create financial stability for their families. Changing churches weekly or staying in a motel for several months provides our families with a safe respite but it does not give them the permanency of living in their own homes, which is always our goal.

The past twenty-one months may have shaken us a bit as things all around us seemed to change. What has remained constant during these months is the care and support that FHP provides to the families who seek us out. We have been the light for families who are struggling in this darkness. All that we do for our guests is thanks to you, our donors. This holiday season, please prayerfully consider how you can be that beacon of light for FISH Hospitality guests. We appreciate each prayer and every gift, large or small!

May you enjoy a happy and healthy holiday season!

Peace,

Carole Cook, President
Board of Directors

Vice President, Margo Seaman
MEMBERS David W. Casterline
Robert J. Spencer

Secretary, Patricia Klatt
Marjorie G. Hall
Claudine Lewis, MSW/LSW

Treasurer, Jeffrey Rummen
Sharon J. Hunt