Schenectady HOME FURNISHINGS Program, Inc.

People Helping People

603 State Street Schenectady, NY 12305 Phone/Fax: (518) 346-2444 homefurninc@aol.com

Visit us on the Web: www.schenectadyhomefurnishings.org

From the President

As we prepare to enter our 45th year, The Home Furnishings Program quietly serves the residents of Schenectady County who are most in need. During these years, your overwhelming generosity has allowed us to assist thousands of families struggling with emergencies such as homelessness, domestic violence, flood or fire, joblessness, nursing home discharge, or mental illness.

The first three quarters of this year show an increase in every statistical category, indicating that the program is working more effectively and efficiently than ever before. We now average 4+ truck runs/week and have delivered 200+ mattresses and beds so far. In fact, ***we have depleted our supply of mattresses and are in desperate need of twin, full, or queen mattresses to fulfill upcoming referrals.*** *Please consider donating one of your own or perhaps make a restricted donation to our "Bucks for Beds" program.*

HFP has made strategic connections with City Mission and Habitat for Humanity key executives, as Program Coordinator Jamie develops resource sharing plans with both groups which we expect will result in beneficial partnerships for all.

Several Board positions expire at year's end; we are now looking for energetic professionals who are 'movers and shakers' in the community. If you are passionate about serving those in need, motivated, and enjoy social interaction with others ***we would love to have you!*** *Please contact our Nominating Committee Chair, Naomi Agans at anaomi1@verizon.net or attend our Board meeting on November 14th.*

On a personal note, we would like to thank Reverend Batcher and the entire congregation from Stanford United Methodist Church for their tireless volunteer support and use of the church facilities during our recent warehouse sales. Your adoption of our program has allowed us to benefit through your community service ministry.

Watch this Newlsetter for upcoming events as well as info about our 45th year celebration coming in the fall of 2013! Thank you again, for being part of the Home Furnishings Family!

Rob Carney, President, HFP Board of Directors

2012 HFP Board of Directors

Rob Carney, *President*
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Anita Paul, *Secretary*
Wayne Brule, *Treasurer*
Nancy Davidson, *Bookkeeper*
(non-voting Board Member)

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Sally Bestgen
Greg Cleveland
Colleen Donovan
Joyce Gayne
Mike Harrigan
Dot Henwood
Sharon Hutchinson-Jones
Don Leach
Dave Lurie
Carol Mohrmann
LuAnn Santabarbara

Jamie Doriguzzi,
Program Coordinator

Falling Leaves

Mission Statement

The *Home Furnishings Program* (HFP) is a registered non-profit organization that exists to recycle good quality donated furniture and household furnishings, free of cost, to low income Schenectady County residents in need due to transition from *emergency situations* such as fire/flood, domestic violence, prison/rehab/hospital/nursing home discharge, homelessness, and mental illness. Our Program Coordinator receives client referrals from social services agencies and local clergy, arranges truck runs for the delivery of large furniture items and "Elsie's Room" appointments for client pick-up of small furnishings as needed. For more information, find us on the web at schenectadyhomefurnishings.org or on Facebook, or call (518) 346-2444.

How Are We Doing?

*Other agencies tell us how valuable our service is to the community. But it is **your support** that makes possible our assistance to these people in need!*

Category	YTD Avg.	August
Referrals Received	110	119
Adults Helped	90	85
Children Helped	91	93
Families w/children Helped	40	32
Truck Runs	16	16
Elsie's Room Appointments	36	36
Households Served	61	88
Donations Picked Up	37	47
Donations Dropped Off	30	37
Avg # miles driven monthly	208	233

Budget and Fundraising Report

Our projected budget for 2012 is $42,942, which included almost $24,000 in deficit spending. As a result, we have devoted an enormous effort to fund-raising, especially through sales of warehouse items not basically useful to clients. Now 3/4 of the way through the year, our YTD income is $31,473, or roughly 3/4 of our projected budget, so we anticipate being on target by year's end. Even though we may look solvent, we still have a long way to go!

We need a plan not only to maintain solvency for the foreseeable future, but one that allows for program growth and fair payment of staff.

Like Us on Facebook!

Become a fan of the Home Furnishings Program. Just type in the search bar: homefurnishingsprogram,inc

Calendar of Upcoming HFP Events

The following events are all focused on raising community awareness of the Home Furnishings Program and raising money to support our operating budget.

- **October 5/6** — **Warehouse Sale** with Stanford United Methodist Church, Fri & Sat, 9am—1pm; corner of Consaul Road and State Street
- **October 13** — **Upper Union Street Harvest Festival & Art Show,** 10 am—3pm. Focus: furniture, linens & dishes, more art work and mirrors than usual. Location: in front/along side of Chic Vintage Furniture, courtesy of owner Donna Pochaski Thomas—Thank you, Donna!
- **November 2/3** — **"Christmas Stuff" Sale** 'piggy-backing' on a Stanford Methodist Church Sale, Fri & Sat from 9am—1pm; corner of Consaul Road & State Street. All Christmas stuff must go!
- **November 4** — **"Mitzvah Day" at Temple Gates of Heaven, a Donation Drop-Off opportunity,** coordinated by Wendi Gapczynski. The HFP truck on site (852 Ashmore Avenue, corner of Eastern Pkwy.) from 9 am—1 pm. Available to receive furniture as well as smaller house hold furnishings. Congregation members may also work in warehouse or on a truck van.

Special thanks to Board members Carol Mohrmann, Joyce Gayne, Sharon Hutchinson-Jones, & David Lurie; also to Covenanter Dan Kosten and volunteers Peg Miller and Karen Guizio for their labors on these sales events.

Grants Gratefully Received

(Since our last Newsletter)

Source	Amount	Designation
Fenimore Asset Management	$1250	Unrestricted = operating budget
NYSATE	$500	Truck Expenses
Rotary #4940	$393	Elsie's Room purchases
SEFCU	$500	Bed purchases
WalMart Foundation	$1000	Bed purchases
WGY Christmas Wish	$500	Elsie's Room purchases

Most recently received: an unsolicited $500 grant from a private family gift foundation that came to us via the U.S. Charitable Gift Trust and an $868 contribution from Burnt Hills Baptist Church.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you, All!

Most grantors want to know an organization is financially viable, i.e, able to support its own operating budget and not likely to become dependent on annual assistance. So they do not provide operating funds, but prefer projects that meet a defined and measurable need. Our major grant successes have been with requests for purchasing items so much in demand that we cannot meet the need from donations alone, as seen above. However, we really treasure unrestricted giving that supports our operating expenses; without it, we would be out of business. ***So, we welcome all contributions, restricted or unrestricted.***

Ideas to explore for giving gifts to support this program:

- Direct a gift to HFP from your charitable gift annuity plan, if you have one.
- Keep us in mind when giving to someone who is hard to shop for, or is mission-minded.
- Make a contribution in memory of loved ones and their concern for others.

"Little Italy" Festa Success, Thanks to the Rossi-Ditoro Funeral Home

The gift of space to set up in their parking lot was a huge boon for the HFP's sale on Saturday, Sept. 8th. In a few short hours, we took in almost $500 and no doubt would have been able to do even better, had it not been for storm warnings and concern for public safety that closed the whole street down around 3:30 pm. ***Special thanks to Doreen Ditoro*** and her family, who were also some of our best customers as soon as our feet hit the ground!

Volunteers Make This Program Run!

In The Spotlight

Meet Covenanter Dan Kosten

through his own words:

Dan Kosten, looking his work-day best (love the hat!) at the Little Italy Festa on Sept. 8th.

"I came from Grand Rapids, MI, to join the Covenanter program at First Reformed Church in Schenectady. The program is AmeriCorps-like, in that the church provides communal housing and a modest monthly stipend for four Covenanters for a year; and we, in turn, work for non-profits in Schenectady. I was lucky enough to get placed with the Home Furnishings Program for the majority of my time. I get to see all facets of the program, from contacting clients and setting up truck runs, to delivering and picking up donations. In fact, the thing I like best and find most rewarding about the variety of my work, is that I've been able to see all of Schenectady and to work with many different people. I started in May and will be working here until next July, and I've learned a lot already!

Note: First Reformed Church launched the Covenanter program in response to the community's demand for volunteers to help those in need and the growing number of young adults looking for meaningful work after college that might be helpful in clarifying or advancing their career goals.

Thank you, First Reformed!

First Reformed has also made its third floor dorm-type facilities available to work groups from all over the country, most of whom have assisted with Schoharie flood clean-up efforts. *One terrific group of 16 young people from an Iowa church, en route to serve as counselors at Camp Fowler on Sacandaga Lake, also put in a workday at our warehouse.*

Special thanks to our regular truck run volunteers and in particular to **Kate Centefanlo**, who has gone above and beyond the call of duty.

She may be short, but she is mighty!

Thank-you letter from Union College Kenney Center

To all of the wonderful Schenectady organizations that hosted student volunteers from our Community Experience pre-orientation program:

Thank you so much for helping introduce our new students to your organization and to ways they can give back to our community! We had a very busy and very successful few days with our 51 new students and 10 student leaders who visited 20 different organizations and did a variety of tasks.

The students were all surveyed at the end and overwhelmingly stated that they have a greater understanding of the needs in the area and appreciated learning about each of your organizations. It's a great group of students who spent their very first days of college volunteering! We are proud to have such an active and caring student body!
I appreciate your time with them!

Please note that we have our big annual **Day of Service** coming up on October 13 from 1:00-4:00. I will be contacting you soon to see if you need more volunteers that day. We generally get over 200 students to sign up, so please let me know if you need people, how many and what type of work will be done.

Janet Sweeney, Asst. Director, Community Outreach and STEP

***(HFP Note:** three different Union College teams of entering freshmen worked for us over a two-day period at the end of August, and we anticipate using three or four volunteers from their campus wide "Day of Service" to help out at our Upper Union Street Sale on October 13th.*

They thanked us—we are thanking them!)

Thanks also go to the SICM Summer Interns assigned to us for the hours when they weren't working SICM's Lunch program:

- Justin Bogardus
- Paul Daley
- Colin Foster
- J.J. Moran
- Richard Reitz
- Jeffrey Scharet
- Leia Smith

BRIDGE-BUILDING

With CITY MISSION:

City Mission has gone out of the business of picking up furniture, closed its Schenectady store and put it to alternate use (although their Glenville store is still open). They are focusing instead on clothing and increasing the number of clothing drop boxes in Schenectady and the surrounding area.

Home Furnishings, in contrast, takes furniture and household items, but turns over the occasional clothing we receive to City Mission (or the YWCA women's shelter).

As a result of their change in focus, ***City Mission's question to us*** was, "Would we be interested in receiving from them furniture pick-up referrals that they keep getting, and in exchange would we be willing, when doing pick-ups that included clothing, to take the clothing to our warehouse, where they would come promptly when called to pick it up?" Both organizations would benefit by cooperating, saving gas and volunteer time rather than taking separate trips to pick up each type of item.

We agreed to their proposal and are implementing it on a trial basis – so far so good! They may also be able to help us with volunteer recruitment, as they have more volunteers than they have jobs.

Historical note: When the Home Furnishings Program first spun off from Church Women United in 1979, it was City Mission that took us under its wing, helping us with payroll administration, insurance and truck garaging/maintenance. It was not until 1988 (following the "Great Turkey Chase") that we were adopted by Albany Street Methodist Church as part of their mission and began receiving those services through them.

With HABITAT FOR HUMANITY:

Habitat's "ReStore" (on 115 North Broadway in Schenectady) sells donated and surplus household goods and building supplies cheaply to help support their program. Some items they receive don't sell well, just as some of HFP's donated items are not suitable for clients or for our warehouse sales. ***We are negotiating trading some of these things:*** we will each identify what we are willing to part with that might be useful to the other, and we will each have the right to refuse what is offered if it's not useful to our program. For example, we always need beds, and they don't sell well for them, whereas we can't handle large rugs or big, heavy hutches but they sell well at ReStore, so we might trade hutches or rugs for beds, no cash involved. ***Let's see how this works out!***

History: When First Reformed Church launched its "Missioner" program, hiring individuals to do the work of mission in the Schenectady community, Randy Sparrow was hired to work with both Habitat and HFP. At the end of that two-year term, Randy continued with Habitat as the manager of their "ReStore" program.

With SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES:

Representatives from ***Bethesda House, Catholic Charities, Department of Social Services, Mohawk Opportunities, Northeast Parent and Child, Parsons Family & Child Center, Salvation Army, Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP), Visiting Nurses and the YWCA*** all participated in an HFP sponsored breakfast meeting on July 16, sharing information and procedures regarding their respective agencies. It was a valuable networking opportunity, and kudos go to Jamie Doriguzzi for setting it up, and to James MacFarland (chef for First United Methodist's Sunday free community breakfasts) and crew for providing enough food to feed an army!

Truck Run Tales

"We picked up a table and four chairs from "*Nancy's*" family at Socha Plaza in Glenville because they were in the process of moving an elderly parent into assisted living. The table and chairs sat in the warehouse for 48 hours, lonely as could be. Hoping to be of service to another family with active children, they started dreaming of a new home. Lo and behold, *Jamie* found just the place for them: with a young Mom, "*Connie,*" and her three kids. *Dan* and *Kate* made the delivery within two weeks of "*Connie's*" referral from SCAP, and everybody was happy that old things were getting a new life, especially the table and chairs!"

Note: Nowadays we are getting to pick-ups and referrals frequently within 1-2 weeks rather than having a months-long backlog! Of course, if we don't have it, we can't provide it, so keep those donations coming!

☺

"Two families, neighbors whose children had moved out on their own, called up *Jamie* to suggest that one truck run might be able to pick up all their children's single beds together rather than make separate trips. *Jamie* was thrilled, not only because she had so many referrals asking for beds, but because it saves HFP volunteer time and gas for the truck to be able to organize pick-ups and deliveries by zip code. The first little girl to receive one of those beds, "*Christie*," (age 6) was so thrilled that she immediately began bouncing up and down on it, excited for the first time to have a bed all her own."

Think about it: If you have things to donate, check with your neighbors to see if they might have some, too, so that we can consolidate our pick-ups, as well as our deliveries, by zip code. Often when we've been to a neighborhood, it gives others the idea and we get called back to the same area.

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"SEFCU's Thursday night truck run in September was a real joy to deliver, especially because the first place they went they were eagerly greeted by "*Tom,*" who had a crew of friends/family ready to help carry furniture up to the second floor apartment. *"I'm here and I've got my guys all lined up to work,"* he said.

Bravo! More and more we are asking for recipients to do this – it adds to their dignity and saves volunteer backs. May "Tom's" tribe increase.

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AND NOW, A WAREHOUSE TALE

"Sometimes we receive items that have obviously been offered at someone's yard sale because they have little round colored stickers with prices on them. After sorting things one day, *Peg* found one such sticker stuck on her clothes. "Let's see how much you're worth," said *Jamie.* Imagine their surprise and amusement when it turned out that the sticker said (dangerously) 'Make an offer!'"

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REGARDING DONATIONS: ***Please, Please, Please –Nothing huge, extraordinarily heavy, broken or soiled!*** *No console TV's, entertainment centers, large appliances, or cracked/chipped dishes, etc. Help keep us from having to pay dump fees.*

DESPERATELY NEEDED!

Beds, dressers, kitchen table sets, end & coffee tables; twin & queen sheets and blankets, bath & kitchen towel sets, hot pads, large pots & pans, bakeware, mixing bowls, cooking utensils (large spoons & spatulas) can openers, and small appliances.

What is "Elsie's Room"?

Lois Atkinson, our current "Elsie" sorts items at the warehouse.

The smaller "essentials" needed to set up housekeeping in any living area are available in the Home Furnishings Program's (HFP) Elsie's Room at First United Methodist Church (FUMC). Clients are generally able to pick up needed items within one or two weeks of being referred by a social services agency.

A lot of preparation is involved by numerous volunteers prior to the distribution of these "essentials." Donations are sorted. Dishes, glassware, and flatware are each packaged into different sized sets for varying sized households. Bath towel sets are prepared. Blankets and sheet sets are sized, and folded. Each week numerous containers of kitchen, bedroom and bathroom items are trucked to FUMC and "organized" in Elsie's Room in preparation for their distribution to the families in need.

When the items donated do not meet the needs of clients, we must resort to monetary donations to purchase the most needed items. You will see a listing of the most needed items in your church bulletin and on page 6 of this Newsletter. Please feel free to solicit donations when family members or friends down-size or move.

Help Wanted!

Are you good at office work—phoning, filing, computer data entry? Do you have the muscle to move heavy furniture and help with truck runs? How about sorting in the warehouse or working on warehouse sales? Maybe you'd like to try your hand at writing: grant applications, newsletter articles, or publicity releases? Or would helping with occasional mailings and special events like parades be more your cup of tea? If you would be interested in helping for a few hours, we'd appreciate it!
Contact us at 346-2444 or at homefurninc@aol.com

Want to help the HFP? It's easy to give financial support—just mail a check made out to HFP at 603 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12305.

"Making It Easy For You To Help"

⇒ We used the **"Niska Day Parade"** in May to pass out flyers announcing that our truck would be parked at the Niskayuna Co-op on June 2nd to receive **drop-off donations** of furniture & household items. **Response was overwhelming**—by afternoon, our truck was filled to the gills!

⇒ **"Mitzvah Day"** on **Sunday, November 11th** (see calendar, page 2) will be another great **drop-off opportunity. All are invited to come** - let's see if we can fill the truck again!

⇒ Or, you could copy **Calvary Methodist Church in Latham** and hold a month-long **kitchen shower** to benefit Elsie's Room clients. They cheerfully delivered 12+ large boxes of extremely useful "stuff" to us! Any type **shower** or time frame would help: **bathroom shower**(towels, shower curtains, etc.) or **linens shower** (curtains, sheets, etc.), for example. You get the idea!

⇒ We also happily come to your church or group, with or without truck, to explain the HFP and its services. **Call us at 346-2444 to arrange it.**

From the Nominating Committee

We are actively engaged in a search for new board members to fill vacancies for the 2013 thru 2014 years. Our board members commit to a two year membership with the option of extending to a 4 year membership. Our goal is to find service minded people who wish to continue the Home Furnishings service to our clients and community. We will share the names of our new members In our next newsletter.

Naomi Agans

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- Find a list of Furnishings we accept
- Learn about volunteering for HFP

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We invite you to send us an email with your comments and suggestions to:

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