

Wellspring connection



The Newsletter of Wellspring House, Inc., Gloucester, Massachusetts
VOL. 28, NO. 1 SPRING 2009

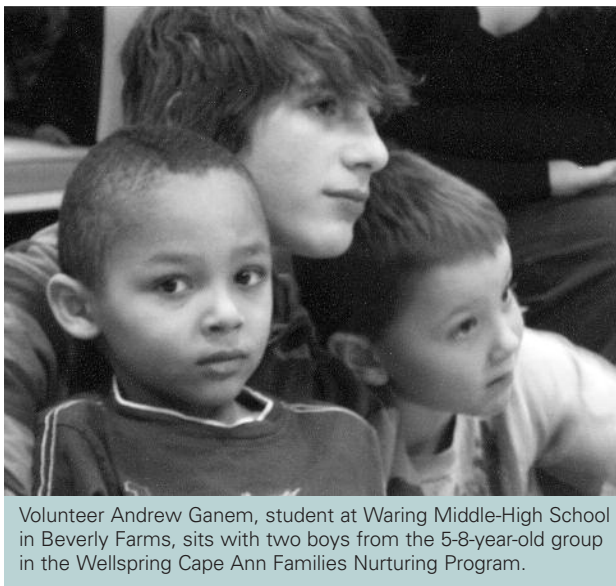
An Open Door, An Open Heart, An Open Mind

*“What is to give light
must endure burning...”*

VIKTOR FRANKL

Ever since the founding of Wellspring House, hospitality has been at the core of our mission. Our commitment to hospitality has guided our work with every individual we have served and helped to shape the development of our services. Hospitality has meant staying open to the new and unknown, whether that is a stranger, a new idea, or a different way of doing things. There is also a very practical aspect of hospitality, which has to do with using the resources that are at hand, both material and otherwise, wisely.

Like households everywhere, Wellspring House has had to make strategic decisions about how to use limited resources. The needs of the families we serve have become greater in number and more urgent. Today's economic realities have required Wellspring to make some changes. It can be fairly easy to change things that are clearly not working. It is another matter entirely to make changes in situations when it is obvious that good is present. Yet when we asked the question, “How can we best use our resources?” and considered what the people we are serving were asking of us, several significant changes emerged in two areas.



Stacy Randell

Volunteer Andrew Ganem, student at Waring Middle-High School in Beverly Farms, sits with two boys from the 5-8-year-old group in the Wellspring Cape Ann Families Nurturing Program.

very much wish to keep this exchange alive. The Board of Directors is actively engaged in a discernment process about the best uses of this property as we imagine the future during our strategic planning process. In the meantime, 302 Essex Avenue remains our “home” and continues to be a gathering place and center of hospitality and education which liberates hearts and minds.

HOUSING HOMELESS FAMILIES

For many years Wellspring's emergency shelter has housed homeless families at both 302 Essex Avenue and our Washington Street apartment building. On February 1st we made our Washington Street residence “home” for all the families we shelter, up to five at a time. This move enables us to staff more efficiently while continuing to provide the excellent services for which Wellspring is known. At Washington Street, each family lives in an individual unit with independent cooking facilities, which is more like the permanent housing they are seeking. Staff members can work with families on any potential tenancy issues and life skills such as education/job training, budgeting, or parenting, which will help them to sustain permanent housing.

The sharing of communal space and meals at 302 Essex Avenue allowed for a valuable exchange between families, volunteers, staff and visitors, and we

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Twelve years ago, Wellspring intentionally created a transformative education program for women, which became known as our Foundations program. One impact of this economic crisis is that low-income families are urgently looking for ways to better support their families. Education and

An Open Door continues on page 2

Wellspring is a community of faith, aware that each life touches every other life. Our work and our decisions are therefore guided by the vision of a just society, in which we must care for the earth and her people by using our resources, property, and land in a spirit of hospitality. In this spirit we work to meet basic human needs, and participate in social change through the provision of shelter, affordable housing, local economic opportunity and education rooted in community needs.

Please Join Us for
Wellspring's 11th Annual
Women Honoring Women
Luncheon on May 4th.
See Page 5.



THANK YOU!

Wellspring extends a heartfelt thank-you to Rich Hornby of Voice Data Incorporated in Franklin. Rich has been a steadfast friend to Wellspring over the years, seeing us through many telephone system emergencies.

When it became clear last year that our current system was failing, Rich solicited the donation of a replacement. Some months later, a donation came through from Cooley Manion Jones LLP in Boston.

When it came time to install the new system in January, Rich put in



more than twenty hours of his time. Despite working until midnight on the day of the installation, he rose at dawn the next day to finish the job and train staff on the new system. Through the long hours, he kept a smile on his face.

The estimated cost of purchasing and installing such a system is \$30,000. We are grateful to Cooley Manion Jones for their generous donation of the phone system and to Rich Hornby for the priceless gifts of his time, skills, and spirit. ■

An Open Door *continues from page 1*

job training are essential for helping these families maximize their income. In February, Wellspring launched a new program called the Adult Learning Initiative (ALI). This program is available to women and men and offers remedial education in math and English, computer skills, and career develop-

ment courses. Participants can work towards a GED, prepare for college, or improve their on-the-job skills. The need for this new program was affirmed when in a two-week period 29 applications were received for twelve spots.

One of the difficult choices financial constraints caused us to make was to close the Foundations program. Over the years, this program graduated more than 200 women, all of them beneficiaries of an experience that engaged the whole person: the mind acquired information and developed analytical skills, while the heart was nourished with caring and supportive teachers and tutors and the kind of creative engagement that encourages the soul. The Wellspring community has learned a great deal over the years from these courageous students and generous teachers. It is our intention and passion to honor them and continue this kind of transformative education.

The most vulnerable among us call forth the best from us. As the economic crisis deepens, we are being called on to live with courage — that is — to live with heart. This can feel very risky. Some of our most deeply held beliefs and assumptions are being challenged. Old ways of doing things are giving way. Individually and collectively, we find ourselves journeying in a strange land. It is easy to collude, unwittingly,

CREATING THE FUTURE, TOGETHER

On February 28th, Wellspring staff, Board members, community members, program participants, and other stakeholders gathered for an invigorating discussion about how Wellspring can best help families on Cape Ann break through the bonds of poverty. While low-income families in our community face tremendous difficulty accessing housing, adult education, and support services, it is clear that, together, we share an ability and passion for positive change and that Wellspring House plays a critical role in this effort. This Community Listening Day was a crucial component of Wellspring's strategic planning process and engendered many creative responses to the challenges we face. Your voice is important to this process. To learn more, please visit our website: www.wellspringhouse.org.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Do you want to help Wellspring but are pressed for time? If so, you might want to consider joining our "Angel List," our email update of in-kind needs. We get many such requests, ranging from toiletries to tables. This list is a "blind cc," or private list, which means your name will never be shared. Please email our Volunteer Coordinator to be included.

And whether you have a few hours a week to spare or just a few hours a year, Wellspring can always use your time and talents. This spring, we have two pressing needs:



- Gardening help on our grounds at 302 Essex Ave.
- Computer tutor for our MediClerk program in Salem.

As always, we can use your help in our adult learning programs, shelter, family support and education programs, and in our administrative office. Bring a friend, family member, or co-workers, if you like. Whether your forte is with kids, adults, plants, computers, or even pots and pans, we have a job for you!

To celebrate National Volunteer Week, Wellspring House is hosting a thank-you tea to celebrate all our dedicated volunteers on Thursday, April 24th from 3 PM-5 PM at 302 Essex Avenue. Please see Page 6 for more Volunteer-related events.

Thank you for all you do. You make what we do possible!

For more information on volunteering, please contact Sarah Grow at sgrow@wellspringhouse.org or 978-281-3558 x303

with the tornado of fear, easy to hunker down and draw an ever smaller circle around one's own life and family. Yet Wellspring's commitment to hospitality challenges us to live expansively, even in these times. One gift that hospitality brings us is a feeling of expansiveness, the trust that Life will give us what we need.

We face each day buoyed by faith and trust, committed to serve those among us who are suffering. We are all on this journey together. Thank you for your help in whatever form it comes. You make the difference; you make the work possible. ■

Kay O'Rourke, Executive Director

FINDING THE ROAD HOME

Although she is only 24, Julie* has experienced much upheaval in her life. She says, with characteristic understatement, that her ex-partner, “had issues,” which led to several years of bouncing from friends’ apartments to shelters to motels with her two children.

When Julie moved into Wellspring’s family shelter last July, she felt at first like a fish out of water. She struggled at first with Wellspring’s many rules.

“All I did was complain,” she admits, but she soon came to see that Wellspring also offered structure and support, which nudged her toward a new beginning. She worked with her housing counselor to line up a permanent situation and appreciated the help Wellspring offers with parenting skills.

“Sometimes I would hit a wall that was almost like a firewall. But I got help knocking it down.”

Housing and parenting skills are two legs of the stool that Wellspring offers to help families achieve stability. The third leg is job skills, and this piece was crucial to Julie’s success.

One of her counselors at the family shelter recommended that Julie consider applying for Wellspring’s MediClerk program, which trains students for steady and better-paid work in hospitals and doctors’ offices. Julie already had solid computer skills from her previous job in collections, which she held for

two years. What MediClerk taught her was “how to speak and write properly” and how to relate effectively to supervisors and colleagues. The program was rigorous in the classroom and out, requiring a daily odyssey, which started before daybreak, via public transportation from the shelter to her children’s daycares to MediClerk’s Salem classroom and back again.

“It was a *long* 13 weeks,” Julie says of her experience, “but I really learned a lot.”

Sandy Sabo, MediClerk’s Program Coordinator and Julie’s instructor, recalls a motivated young woman who came to class with a professional attitude. “Julie always sat in the back of the room. She knew exactly what was going on. She was my star student.”

The push Julie got from Wellspring has paid off in many ways. Julie and her children, now ages 5 and almost 1, moved into their own apartment in February. She recently accepted a part-time job at North Shore Medical Center and began helping Sandy in the program that set her on her new, more hopeful course. Her journey to self-sufficiency is so inspiring she was invited to share it at Wellspring’s Community Listening Day on February 28th.

“Wellspring really made me and my kids feel at home,” she told the packed room. “Wellspring House taught me how to love myself again.” ■

**For security, we have given Julie a fictional name.*



WHAT’S NEW: EDUCATION

Adult Learning Initiative (ALI)

The ten students in the last Foundations class celebrated their graduation in January 2009. Sue Todd, Executive Director of Pathways for Children, was Keynote Speaker. Foundations Program Coordinator Susan Hershey received a special recognition for her years of dedication to the program and its students.

Three students from the class were



Nancy Gilmore, Computer Skills Instructor in Wellspring’s ALI program, gives a thumbs-up to a student during class.

awarded scholarships from the Robert Clarke Rogers Educational Fund to continue their training or higher education. Two former program graduates received second grant awards.

The new eight-week ALI program launched its first class on February 24th. Thirteen students will follow a fast-paced schedule to strengthen their basic academic, computer, and job-search skills. Reflective of the need for this training, several applications have already been accepted for the next session, which begins in April.

Mediclerk

The MediClerk program graduated eleven students in February. The Spring class, begun on March 9th, received a record 55 applications for twelve spaces. Applications are currently being accepted for the summer session, which begins in July.

The program was delighted to receive a \$5,000 grant from the Meridian

Foundation to upgrade the program’s technology. The grant award allowed Wellspring to purchase five complete state-of-the-art computer systems and ten additional flat-screen monitors and peripherals.

Committee For A Just Society

The Committee for a Just Society will hold its 2009 Legislative Breakfast on Friday, April 17th, 7:30 AM-9:30 AM at 28 Emerson Ave. Housing policy and homelessness prevention will be the timely focus of this breakfast. Wellspring House executive director Kay O’Rourke will discuss the work of the North Shore Housing Action Group. Robert Pulster, Executive Director of the Governor’s Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness, will speak about state initiatives to support the development of affordable housing. U.S. Representative John Tierney will provide a federal overview. All are welcome.

REMEMBERING FOUR MEN WHO NURTURED WELLSPRING

In the last few months, four wonderful men died, all of whom touched and were touched by Wellspring.

Father Paul Moritz died on November 23rd, age 96. He was Pastor at St. Ann's Church in Peabody, where Wellspring founders Nancy Schwoyer, Marygrace McCullough, and Mary Jane Veronese worked and with his generous and wise support, developed the systems of adult education, empowerment, and community decision-making that flowered at Wellspring.

Dick Provenzano, one of Father Paul's parishioners, died on December 7th. A historian and compulsive book-lover, Dick was, with his wife, Carol, in at the beginning of Wellspring. Dick and Carol's young daughter, Mary, had died of leukemia a year before Wellspring's founding. In her short life, Mary had inspired many. When the founders were preparing to take the risk of this new project, Dick told them, "If you are serious about this, I'll talk to my daughter about it." He did, and Wellspring flourished. Through his life, Dick cherished and supported the organization.

On December 23rd, Wellspring suffered a deep loss with the death of Bob Rogers, whose warmth, enthusiasm, and deep compassion brought much joy to Wellspring over the years. With his partner, Frank Robinson, he gave love, time, and skills. Bob's greatest passion was education for disadvantaged people. He formed and raised funds for the Robert Clarke Rogers Education Opportunity Fund, which provides small grants for graduates of our education program to help them further their higher education.

William Saltonstall, a close friend of Bob, died on January 31st. "Salty" came from a distinguished political family and was a State Senator with many philanthropic interests. Salty's wife, Jane, a volunteer teacher in the Foundations program, introduced him to Wellspring. He quickly began to share her enthusiasm. Both generously supported Wellspring, personally and through their family foundation. Salty and Jane received a Human Spirit Award at our 2004 Under One Roof event to

acknowledge their years of support—so much more than financial—for Wellspring's work. We will remember Salty as a man whose political integrity was matched only by his love for his family—and for sailing.

We grieve the loss of these four good men, all linked in the web of relationships that is Wellspring, but their legacy of love and wisdom continues. ■

*Rosemary Haughton,
Wellspring Co-Founder*

WHAT'S NEW: WELLSPRING CAPE ANN FAMILIES

PROGRAMS BURSTING AT THE SEAMS

Wellspring Cape Ann Families has seen unprecedented enrollment in many of its programs, especially the Nurturing Program, which builds parenting and family-communication skills, and the Teen Mentor Program, which trains high school students to mentor a child in need.

In January, a record-number fifteen teen mentors completed a rigorous twelve weeks of training and are now matched with children. They are Amy Carpenter, Frankie Passalacqua, SooHwa Ono, McKayla Catto, Alyssa Cusick, Molly Notine, Teagan Phinney, Alison McCarthy, Miha Watanabe, Grace Kelley, Katelyn Oliver, and Kaylie McTiernan from Gloucester, and Ryan Brewster, Darcey Babikian, and Dana Bach from Manchester. Returning for a second year of volunteering are Natasha Ingersoll and Alyssa Ingersoll, sisters from Gloucester.

FEBRUARY VACATION PROGRAMS

Eighty-nine children and parents participated in free vacation-week programs, sponsored by WCAF, in February. The varied offerings included "Do Something Really Big," featuring Giant Pick-Up Sticks, Dominos, and Get Knotted; a day of nature crafts, pizza lunch, and outdoor storytelling; and for older kids, a Dance Revolution and Guitar Hero Tournament.

HOME ALONE

Based on the popularity and positive feedback from last year's program, WCAF will once again offer "Home Alone" on Tuesday, April 21st. The program is designed for parents and children ages 10-14, to help youth in that age group be at home safely without parental supervision. This program offers crucial safety tips and fun activities to jump-start effective family communication.



A full house. Fifteen of WCAF's 17 teen mentors.

WELLSPRING WILL HONOR WOMEN WHO LIGHT OUR WAY

On Monday, May 4th, Wellspring will host its 11th annual Woman Honoring Women Luncheon from 11:30 AM-2:00 PM at the Sheraton Ferncroft in Danvers. We anticipate over 800 women will join together to discover how women help women gain access to housing, jobs, education, and family support.

This luncheon grew from humble beginnings to become Wellspring's major fundraising event and forum for celebrating our partners in the community. With women and their children continuing to shoulder disproportionately the burdens of poverty, Wellspring is more committed than ever to finding effective solutions to ending family poverty.

Each year, Wellspring House honors women whose work reflects Wellspring's core belief that "each life touches every other life." This year's honorees are two local, longtime friends of Wellspring: Susan Hershey and Mary Zwiercan. Between them, Susan and Mary have guided hundreds of women toward new beginnings.

A resident of Rockport, Susan Hershey coordinated Wellspring's Foundations program for eight years. Foundations prepared 235 women for better job prospects and higher education. Much more than a job skills program, the program empowered students to understand their own lives against a larger canvas of women's history. Susan is also an advocate



Tsai Fedorsky

Sigrid Olsen, of Gloucester, the renowned artist and designer, accepts a light-house-birdhouse from Wellspring's Executive Director, Kay O'Rourke. Sigrid and 79 other artists are decorating lighthouses to be auctioned off at the Women Honoring Women Luncheon on May 4th.

for social justice and a gifted potter.

Mary Zwiercan of Hamilton, Director of Human Resources at North Shore Medical Center, has been an unflagging supporter of Wellspring's MediClerk program and has mentored many women over the years.

Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley will give the keynote address. The first woman to fill this role in the Commonwealth's history, Attorney General Coakley has focused on a variety of issues affecting Massachusetts citizens, including cyber crime, identity theft, home foreclosures, access to affordable health care, and environmental protection.

In keeping with the program's theme of "Lighting the Way Home" eighty artists, hailing from the North Shore to Cape Cod, have created original, one-of-a-kind lighthouse-shaped birdhouses. These will be auctioned off to benefit Wellspring House. We will host an auction preview on Thursday, April 30th, from 2:30 PM to 7:30 PM at 302 Essex Avenue.

With prospects darkening further for the most vulnerable families among us, we depend, more than ever, on one another to provide the light that guides us to a safer shore. For so many of Wellspring's program participants, our faith, support, and assistance have made all the difference in their ability to navigate a fog of hardships and reach goals

they never thought possible.

"This luncheon celebrates what Wellspring House is truly about," says Mimi Reeves, Wellspring's Director of Development. "Women helping women in a uniquely personal and concrete way. It brings together many of the most caring and creative people on the North Shore. We cannot say thank you enough to the tireless and resourceful Women's Luncheon Committee and all the sponsors, volunteers, table hostesses, and artists who 'light the way home' by giving so generously of their time, talents, and resources." ■

We invite you to join the celebration!

For ticket information, please contact Diane Mulcahy at dmulcahy@wellspringhouse.org or 978.281.3558 x301. Tickets can also be purchased online at www.wellspringhouse.org.

Wellspring House would like to acknowledge Jon Gray, President, and J. Barrett & Company for their generous support of the luncheon. J. Barrett & Company underwrote the materials costs for the birdhouses auctioned off last year and helped us cover the costs of printing our first calendar. The calendars beautifully showcased the birdhouses and helped raise additional funds for Wellspring.

WOMEN'S LUNCHEON COMMITTEE

EVENT CO-CHAIRS

Cathy Edgerly
Jeannie Leibovitz
Christine Lundberg

EVENT COMMITTEE

Rebecca Booma
Stori Cadigan
Lauren Gudonis
Polly Knowles
Jackie Littlefield
Debby Nelson
Jane Porter
Leslee Shlopak
Catherine Steinhoff
Ellen Stone
Penny Ward

Wellspring House, Inc.
302 Essex Avenue
Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930

www.wellspringhouse.org

Wellspring Connection Editor: Laura Miller Layout and design: Debbie Hird Printed on recycled paper by The Cricket Press.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars!

April 17, 2009

Legislative Breakfast

7:30 AM-9:30 AM
28 Emerson Ave.

U.S. Representative John Tierney and Robert Pulster, Executive Director of the Governor's Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness, will speak. See Page 3.

April 24, 2009

Thank-you Volunteer Tea

3:00 PM-5:00 PM
302 Essex Avenue

In honor of National Volunteer Week, all are welcome to come and celebrate the many volunteers who are central to Wellspring's mission.



April 30, 2009

Lighthouse Auction Preview

2:30 PM-7:30 PM
302 Essex Ave.

Preview the lighthouse-birdhouses created by area artists for the Women Honoring Women Luncheon.

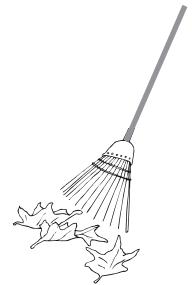


May 2, 2009 (Rain date May 3)

Spring Clean Up

9:00 AM-12:00 PM
302 Essex Ave.

For more information, please contact Sarah Grow at sgrow@wellspringhouse.org or 978-281-3558 X303



May 4, 2009

Women Honoring Women Annual Wellspring Luncheon

11:30 AM-2:00 PM
Sheraton Ferncroft, Danvers
see www.wellspringhouse.org



August 9, 2009

Gloucester Triathlon

Wellspring House will be one of three organizations benefitting.

For more information, please visit www.gloucestertri.com

