

Wellspring connection



The Newsletter of Wellspring House, Inc., Gloucester, Massachusetts
VOL. 35, NO. 2 FALL 2016

Homelessness Intervention & Prevention

Dear Wellspring Friends,

As we move into the holiday season I want to pause and mark an important transition in the lives of families who are facing homelessness, and the way that Wellspring House is working on their behalf.

Since 2012 Wellspring House has provided case management to nearly 100 families who live in a state funded hotel/shelter in Danvers. Our goal in this work is to help families stabilize from the initial shock of being homeless, get re-established with the daily tasks of school and work, and find a new, permanent place to live.

The phenomenon of placing families in hotels first began in Massachusetts in the mid 1980's when the state's family shelter system became over-taxed. Hotel placement was intended to be a short-term, emergency fix. Yet,



Vilma and her three year old son have just moved into their new apartment.

the short-term plan became a "way of doing business". Now, I am relieved to report, the practice of families living in hotels is coming to a close.

This is one of those ideal moments when government policy, funding, and skilled non-profit organizations are lining up together to achieve success, thanks to a homelessness prevention initiative called "Front Door Diversion" launched in 2015 by the state Department of Housing and Community Development. Wellspring and our partners at Lynn Housing and Neighborhood Development are responsible for "Diversion" on the North Shore, helping families to resolve housing crises without going to shelter.

Families who are experiencing housing crises are granted Emergency Assistance by the regional Department of Transitional Assistance office and are then offered the opportunity to meet with a Diversion Case Worker. In fiscal year 2016, 536 families were approved for Emergency Assistance by our regional DTA. Of these, 371, or 69%, were prevented from entering the shelter system. This is truly extraordinary! The state's goal for Diversion is 30%.

The Danvers hotel/shelter will come to a close in early 2017. Since July 2016, the number of families living at the hotel site has decreased from 60 to 15. Wellspring's team has been working incredibly hard to help families find permanent housing.

Now comes the steady work of helping families to stay safely housed. Before the end of 2016, Wellspring will launch a Homelessness Prevention and



Melissa Dimond

Stabilization Team to work one-on-one with families who have faced homelessness. Some families will have been homeless, lived in shelter, and then moved on; others will have averted shelter through Front Door Diversion.

By this time next year, I expect that Wellspring will be fully up-and-running supporting 75-100 families at a time over the course of 12 months to stay housed in their communities, avoid crisis, and put the building blocks in place for long term stability.

As a member of the Wellspring House community, I ask for you to stay connected with our work. I very much look forward to sharing more news with you about families moving forward, thanks to their own resilience and all of us at Wellspring.

Thank you!

Melissa Dimond
President and Executive Director

HOMES • JOBS • EDUCATION

Double Your Gift!

Wellspring helped over 1200 families facing crisis last year. With your support we can continue improving lives.

Ralph Bates has agreed to match again this year. Dollar for dollar up to \$100,000.



To make a gift use the enclosed envelope or visit www.wellspringhouse.org

Wellspring Alumni at North Shore Community College

Jill Brown graduated from NSCC in May with an Associate's degree in Health Science. In September she matriculated into the first class of the Health Professions Bachelor's program at Salem State University. The former small business owner, widow and single mother of three is sponsored by Wellspring House as a One Family Scholar — a college scholarship program that covers the cost of college for low-income single parents.

Roger LeBlanc graduated from NSCC in May with an Associate's degree in Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation. He is currently enrolled at Springfield College in Boston to work toward a Bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation and Disability Studies. An ALI1 graduate, Roger is also a student of Wellspring's new WERC *Seeking Bachelor's Degree* program.

Fatoumata N'diaye began studies at NSCC in Culinary Arts and Food Service in September. Fatima, as she is known by Wellspring staff and volunteers, first came to Wellspring House in 2012 to enroll in the English Language Learning program and ALI 1. She then returned in 2016 with her sights set on NSCC's Culinary Arts and Food Service certificate program. In May Fatima completed ALI 2 Math and passed the HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) — a requirement for enrollment at NSCC.

Judy Panzini earned a Substance Abuse Counseling certificate from NSCC in May. Judy, who was the participant speaker at Wellspring's 2015 Women Honoring Women luncheon, is a graduate of ALI 1 and was one of the first students to enroll in Wellspring's new WERC *Seeking New Jobs* program.



Wellspring's new parking lot was officially unveiled on September 13th with a ribbon cutting ceremony. We are so grateful to Beth and Linzee Coolidge, and Vicki and Jon DeSimone for making this project possible. With their generosity, students enrolled in Wellspring's expanded education programs will find a safe, well-lit and welcoming place to discover their next steps.

WELLSPRING WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Faith Emerson lives in Manchester with her husband and their two teenage sons. Committed to making a difference, she currently serves on the North Shore United Way Local Council, the Community Impact Council for the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, the Town of Manchester's Waste Reduction Committee, the Brookwood School Parents' Association, having served as President for two years as well as in a variety of other officer, class leadership and committee chair roles. She has also served on the Beverly Bootstraps Capital Campaign Steering Committee, the Board of the North Shore United Way and for 20 years as a member of their allocations committee. In the town of Manchester, Faith has served as the chair and as a member on the Masconomo Park Committee, and as a board member of the Manchester Community Center.



Wellspring's newest board members: Faith Emerson and Allison Mueller

Allison Mueller lives in Rockport with her husband and three children. She grew up in Gloucester and went to college at Marquette University, graduating with degrees in Psychology and Sociology. After marrying her husband and moving to Brookline, MA, Allison received her Master's Degree in Teaching at Simmons College and worked in the Brookline Public School system as a sixth-grade teacher. Once she started her family, they decided to move back to Cape Ann. Over the years, Allison has volunteered in a range of roles at her children's schools and at many other organizations, such as the Cape Ann Museum, Cape Ann Art Haven, Pathways for Children, the Awesome Gloucester Foundation, and Wellspring.

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Our Work HOMES • JOBS • EDUCATION FY'16

OUR VISION

Wellspring is guided by the vision of a society where all are welcomed and everyone has the opportunity to live a full and positive life. Believing that each life touches every other life, we work toward this vision of caring for the earth and her people by sharing our resources in a spirit of hospitality.

OUR MISSION

Wellspring House empowers individuals and families to live more secure lives through basic needs assistance, education and job training.

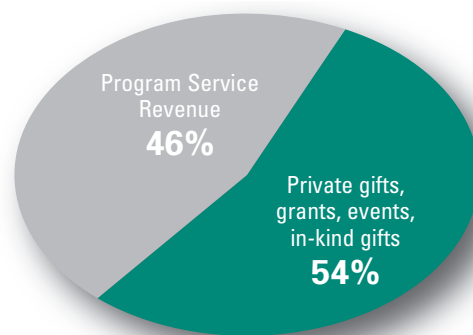
EDUCATION & JOB TRAINING

- 233 students participated in our education programs: the Adult Learning Initiative, English Language Learning, MediClerk job training, and our new Wellspring Education Resource Center (WERC)
- 6 students received grant awards totaling \$7,595 from the Robert Clarke Rogers Educational Opportunity Fund.
- 1 student was sponsored by Wellspring to participate in the One Family Scholars program.
- 9 adults living at the motel were tutored to improve their ability to speak and understand English.

BASIC NEEDS WORK

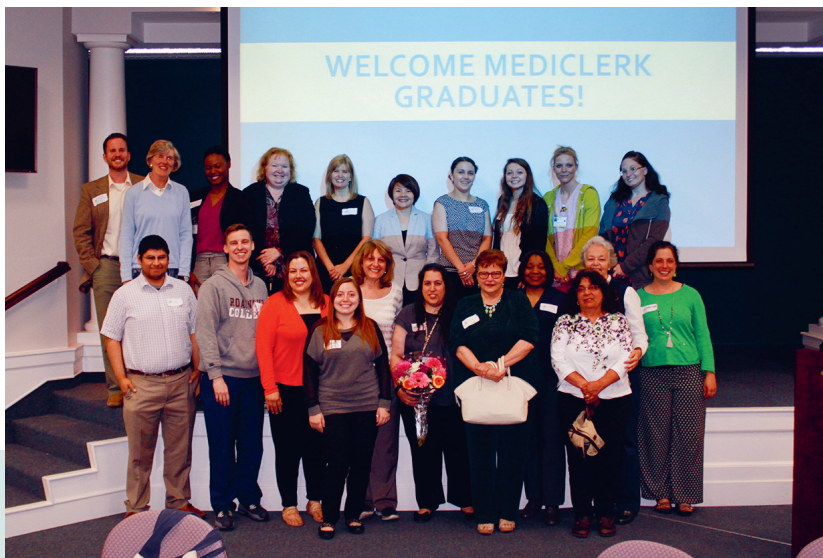
- 17 homeless families were housed in Wellspring's Family Shelter.
- 30 homeless families living at the motel shelter were placed in permanent housing.
- 41 children living at the motel shelter took part in Wellspring's after school Homework Club.
- 224 homeless families living in motel shelter received housing search services.
- 3 formerly homeless families received follow-up care after moving into their new homes.
- 217 callers to our Homeless Prevention Hotline received referrals and assistance.
- 13 families received grants totaling \$15,409 from Small Can Be Big to keep their homes.
- 79 children received back to school backpacks and supplies
- 801 children from 396 families were served by our Holiday Store
- 14 low-income single adults lived in our lodging house – their permanent home.

**Thank you –
You make our work possible!**



**Total Families Served: 1,283 –
Total Individuals Served: 2,302 –
444 volunteers provided
4,196 hours of service**

MediClerk, Wellspring's medical administrative job training program celebrated its first ever reunion with twenty alumni in attendance



WELLSPRING DONORS

Below is a list of individuals, corporations, foundations and community groups who generously supported Wellspring House during FY2016 (7/1/2015 – 6/30/2016). We are indeed grateful to these donors as this continued support makes our work possible. Our sincere thanks for the significant impact you have made in the lives of our families and neighbors.

We have worked hard to make this list accurate. Please inform us of any omissions or mistakes by calling (978) 281-3558 ext. 302.

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LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

Wellspring House has joined the Little Free Library movement, thanks to Ben Wildrick, Lower School Science Teacher at Brookwood School, and his students. Little Free Libraries are wooden boxes often styled to look like a small house. Their purpose is to inspire people to read more by sharing books.

"The small, front yard book exchanges number 36,000 around the world in 70 countries — from Iceland to Tasmania to Pakistan... Each year, nearly 10 million books are shared in Little Free Libraries." — littlefreelibrary.org

Located by the parking lot entrance to the Veronese Education Center at 302 Essex Avenue, Wellspring's Little Free Library will offer reading material to students embarking on new endeavors in Wellspring's adult learning programs, as well as anyone else who might be interested in picking up or dropping off a good read.

Mr. Wildrick is an enthusiastic member of the Maker Movement: the resurgence in the interest in craftsmanship. "I'm a major tinkerer. [Specifically] carpentry and blacksmithing."

He created a summer program called "Build It" in which students entering 4th, 5th and 6th grade would choose a project to serve a community function. The decision to create a Little Free Library for Wellspring's location was born out of Brookwood's longstanding relationship with Wellspring.

"Six intrepid campers learned to saw, pre-drill, screw, how to use clamp and they designed structure. [We spent] one day at the forge learning basic blacksmithing," said Mr. Wildrick. "Students heated up bolts from the hardware store and smashed them flat on the anvil. These became sign elements on the door and the latch."

The result is a beautiful structure. Thank you to Mr. Wildrick and his students for this beautiful gift to our students and all who visit Wellspring.



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

www.wellspringhouse.org



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars for Wellspring's upcoming events!

**Saturday, December 10th &
Sunday, December 11th 2016**

20th Annual Holiday Store

Wellspring House, 302 Essex Avenue,
Gloucester

Thursday, January 12, 2017

Former Board Member Gathering

5:30 pm

Wellspring House, 302 Essex Avenue,
Gloucester

Monday, May 2, 2016

19th Annual Women Honoring Women Luncheon

11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

DoubleTree By Hilton,

50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA



20th ANNUAL HOLIDAY STORE

Wellspring's 20th Annual Holiday Store takes place on Saturday, December 10th & Sunday, December 11th.

The donor-driven Holiday Store makes it possible for families in our community to provide gifts for their children at a nominal expense: \$2 buys three toys and one book per child. In order to make this program possible, Wellspring relies heavily on community toy drives.

For low-income families, the holidays present a dilemma for parents: choosing between buying gifts for their children or falling behind on their bills. Support from Wellspring's Holiday Store eases this stress and financial strain. Last year Wellspring's Holiday Store provided toys for 801 children from 396 homeless and low-income families.

New, unwrapped and non-violent gifts may be dropped off at 302 Essex Avenue, Gloucester from November 26 to December 8, 2016 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Arrangements can also be made for pick-ups.

For information contact Wellspring's Development Associate, Mary Zivkovic at mzivkovic@wellspring-house.org or call 978-281-3558, ext 301.



An Evening of Celebration: #CeleSong

Wellspring House celebrated its 35th anniversary with a benefit concert at The Essex Room at Woodman's, with Nashville songwriters Jason Matthews (left) and Tony Arata (far right), pictured with Wayne Lawrence, and board member, Louisa Attenborough (center). Many thanks to our corporate sponsor WS Development/MarketStreet Lynnfield.