



Housing and Hope

St. Stephen Housing Association
Winter 2009

Families and Hope in 2008

The nation's economic crisis has created a downward rippling effect toward thousands of families, nonprofit agencies, churches and businesses. The number of homeless families has increased dramatically in the past three years.

According to a United Way survey, on any given night there are approximately 8,300 people homeless in King County. Who are these homeless? According to United Way statistics, 40 percent of these are women, 27 percent are children under age 18.

In Washington state, fair market rent has increased to \$829/month for a two-bedroom apartment and there seems to be no end to job layoffs and housing foreclosures. It is impossible for a homeless family with an income at or near the poverty level to afford an apartment.

Striving to meet this crisis are hundreds of individuals, churches and agencies like SSHA, who work nonstop to find temporary shelters, room and beds for the growing number of homeless families. The need for our services is greater than ever as we work to help homeless families help themselves.

*What we would like to do is
change the world—make it a little
simpler for people to feed, clothe,
and shelter themselves as God
intended for them to do.*

— Dorothy Day

Helping Families Make a Fresh Start

Any time one of our SSHA families successfully moves on into permanent housing, it is a cause for celebration. In these days when so much of the news is dire, it is especially encouraging to be able to report on these families' success.

New life after a family crisis

Alice's sister-in-law called us in desperation. Alice and her five boys had been staying with the elderly relatives for nine months since Alice's husband had left them and moved out of state. Alice was about to start school but the situation with her relatives had deteriorated. SSHA was able to move the family into a newly vacant unit. The family's situation immediately began to stabilize. Alice started her schooling, and her kids were able to stay in their original schools, thanks to a government program designed to help keep homeless kids stabilized. After about a year, Alice found a job at a large company here in the area, and soon after, received her Section 8 voucher. Alice and her family are now settled in permanent housing and doing well.



Family's hard work pays off

The Sawyer family is a profound example of just how important a stable home is for a family. This family with five children became homeless when Dad lost his job. They lived in their car and camped in the state park through the summer, but as the weather cooled, they knew they needed to find a place to live. They were finally able to get into shelter, which then referred the family to SSHA. They stayed with us for about 18 months. During that time, Dad found a stable job, Mom home-schooled the children, and three of the older children got after-school jobs. The family paid off several debts and saved enough money to pay for the deposit and first month's rent at a permanent housing program.

Seeing these families succeed is so rewarding. We applaud the hard work done by these families, and thank all the generous donors whose support makes our work possible!

Our Mission: *To address the needs of homeless families with children by providing affordable housing with support services to enable families to move toward economic stability and self-sufficiency.*

St. Stephen Housing Association

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Perspectives on Poverty in Two Cultures

SSHA deals every day with the effects of poverty in in our American culture. SSHA supporter Patrick Moran offers a personal and contrasting perspective on poverty in a very different part of the world.

By Patrick Moran

I recently had the opportunity to spend the better part of a year abroad in Asia. Feeling the spirit of adventure and wanderlust, I set off to volunteer in the Katmandu Valley in Nepal.

Knowing very little about the country except for its political turmoil and mystic mountain ranges, I chose to work as a teacher in a Buddhist monastery school and a boys' orphanage. Having volunteered all my life with various degrees of poverty, I felt as if I was prepared to deal with the economic situation that Nepal presented.

It is no secret that the effects of poverty have crippled much of Asia. I was not prepared to see what a beautiful attitude the people have. Katmandu is composed of a seemingly endless sprawl of people, dilapidated homes, tourists, temples and spirituality. It is an incredibly overwhelming city, where things move at a frenzied pace and the culture is so rich you can taste it in the air. Everywhere you turn there is the harsh reality of poverty: women stooped with the burdens of time begging on every corner, thousands of homeless families with young children. It's a jaw-dropping sight that changes everyone who sees it.

My work gave me an intimate look at the true nature of poverty in Asia. Although poverty is debilitating and rampant, the impoverished communities don't seem to

Youth group offers Christmas cheer

Many thanks to the 7th and 8th grade Jr. High teen group of St. Stephen's Parish, who volunteered to "adopt" an SSHA family for Christmas 2008.

The group was assigned a family of 10 for their gift-giving mission, and the teens really came through. They held a bowling event to raise funds. About 30 teens participated, and they raised an amazing \$1,000 from their families and friends. Members of the teen group helped shop for presents. They were able to fulfill their family's

entire modest wish list and provide a few extras as well. The teens also wrapped and delivered the gifts. Great job!



notice how poor they are. They have been taught that life is as it should be. With a caste system firmly rooted in all facets of society, the Nepali way of life is pure acceptance. The Nepali people have little yet share everything they have with their friends and family.

Yet there is very little hope or sense of betterment. In America, we work hard to spread a message of hope and inspiration to overcome hardships. Our society looks down on being poor and in turn brings a sense of despair to those who are in situations of extreme poverty. What might happen if we could teach a blending between the Nepali and American views, with hope and change coupled with acceptance, peace and sharing?

My experience in the foothills of Nepal brought me within a stone's throw of the Himalayan Mountains, and face-to-face with the reality of extreme poverty. It has shaped my views on what true happiness is and I am forever changed.



In Memoriam

Phil McEachern accomplished so much in his 73 years. His many endeavors in church, education, homelessness and politics enriched and touched so many lives. Some of his volunteer achievements were:

- Board member of St. Stephen Housing Association
- Active member of the Peace and Justice group of St. Francis of Assisi Parish
- Board member of the YMCA
- President, Highline Education Association
- Member, Democratic Precinct Committee

Phil McEachern made a generous donation to St. Stephen Housing Association, which was used for the playground equipment and park benches at St. Stephen Housing's City Park townhouses in Auburn. St. Stephen Housing owes a debt of gratitude to this great man.



Phil McEachern
1935-2008

From the President's Desk

The volunteer head of maintenance at our Auburn City Park townhouses startled me when he said, "some of our siding is starting to fall," referring to the 12-unit wooden buildings SSHA uses as transitional housing for small families. I felt a little like I was in Chicken Little's "sky is falling" story from kindergarten days. I had no idea what he was talking about. After a simple explanation, I finally got the message that the siding was over the hill.

Our board thought it prudent that we protect our investment and felt we needed to install vinyl siding. With board member involvement, we did receive a reasonable price and timeline. We are very pleased with the final results. We are also deeply grateful for the contribution of a dozen faithful volunteers. Their efforts in replacing needed exterior lighting, replacing some vinyl flooring, removing the ground cover gravel and hand-laying brick in its stead, is much more aesthetically pleasing.

I would be remiss in not mentioning the contribution and involvement of our dedicated board along with our many other volunteers who keep SSHA running smoothly.

Without the ongoing financial support of our loyal contributors, our transitional program would not be possible.

Wishing you all a wonderful 2009,

Joan Mladineo
 President, St. Stephen Housing Association



**St. Stephen Housing Association
 2008 Budget (FY ending 09/30/2008)**

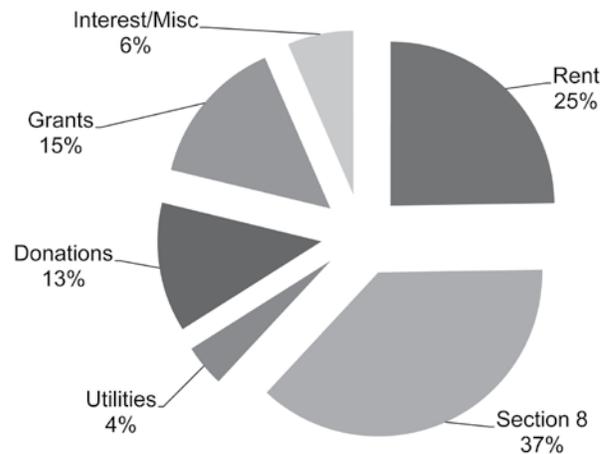
REVENUE

Rent	\$51,446
Section 8	\$77,229
Utilities	\$8,588
Donations	\$26,502
Grants	\$30,510
Interest/Misc	\$13,573
Total Revenue	\$207,848

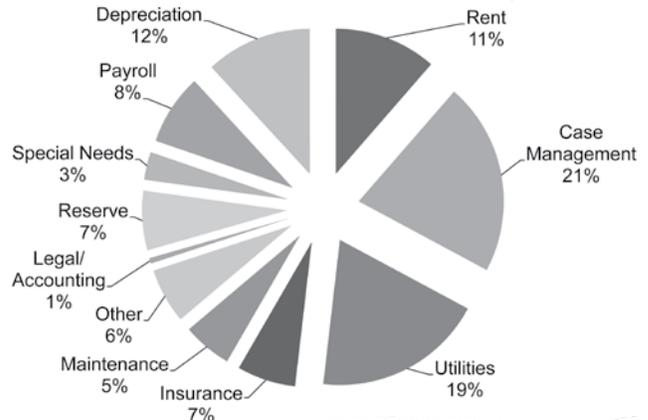
DISBURSEMENTS

Rent	\$20,715
Case Management	\$38,994
Utilities	\$34,567
Insurance	\$11,864
Maintenance	\$9,948
Other	\$11,146
Legal/Accounting	\$1,104
Reserve	\$12,000
Special Needs	\$5,661
Payroll	\$14,313
Depreciation	\$21,549
Total Disbursements	\$181,861

Revenue FY 2008: \$207,848



Disbursements FY 2008: \$181,861



Note: All expenses are allocated to program services because all general and administrative functions are performed by volunteer staff.



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Helping Families with Children in Crisis

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Dawn Smith, Office Manager

Elva Deacy, Office Support

Mary Marler, Office Support

The need for our services is greater than ever, and so St. Stephen Housing Association needs you!



- Join us as a volunteer or intern.
- Make a financial contribution.
- Donate in memory of a loved one.
- Designate SSHA to receive your United Way Donor Designated gift.
- Increase the value of your gift through an employer match. SSHA participates in the gift-matching programs of King County Employees, Microsoft, Costco, Boeing, BP and more.