



Our Place News

A DAYTIME SHELTER SERVING UP FOOD & COMMUNITY TO THE GREATER ROCKINGHAM AREA

Hello from Our Interim Director, Susan Shea



As the new Interim Director, here is a bit of my background.

Over my 25 years in the field of Human Services I have worn a variety of hats — as Director of both a respite care center and a day-care center, as a Family Services & Community Outreach Specialist, and as a Supervisor of custody visits between parents and children.

For the past three years, many have known me in the role of the Food Services Director/Cook & Volunteer Coordinator at Our Place Drop-In Center. In that regard, I am not a new face at Our Place. I have come to know the cliental that frequent the center and use it's services. While I will not continue doing the day-to-day cooking at Our Place, I will continue to be responsible for supervising, planning and

directing the Nutrition Based Food Program, Coordinate Volunteers and Community Outreach.

When I am not at Our Place, I enjoy gardening, kayaking, camping, music events, being walked by my Hound dog, and other small adventures that keep me outside!

As Interim Director, I am familiar with many aspects of the job and

there will be increased responsibilities and challenges to take on. I look forward to your continued support of Our Place Drop-In Center. If you have been to Our Place, please continue to stop in and if you have not visited, I invite you to stop in and say hi.

Thanks again for all your encouragement and support.



Board members Joan Campbell, Sue Cota, Dan Davis, Louise Luring, and Laurie Noyes and new Interim Director Susan Shea celebrate outgoing Executive Director Cynthia Hellmann's tenure. Cynthia will assume the position of Development Director for Our Place.

Our Place Host Open House in September

Hunger Action Month is an opportunity to engage in the fight against domestic hunger. America's Second Harvest (soon-to-be named *Feeding America*) and its 205 member

**HUNGER
ACTION**
MONTH
**RAISE OUR VOICES
AGAINST HUNGER**

food banks will host events across the United States that directly benefit our hunger-relief efforts. From food drives to concerts, volunteer outings to advocacy work, there's something everyone can do to be a part of Feeding America. Please join us on September 11 to tour Our Place, meet our staff and board, enjoy refreshments, and learn how you can combat hunger in your community!

Our Place
Drop-In Center
Open House!

September 11
4pm – 6pm

*In recognition of
Hunger Action Month*



OUR PLACE

4 Island Street
Post Office Box 852
Bellows Falls, VT 05101
802-463-2217
ourplace@sover.net

STAFF

Susan Shea
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Cynthia Hellmann
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Amy Kingsbury
FOOD-SHELF MANAGER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joan Campbell & Sue Cota
CO-PRESIDENTS

Louise Luring
SECRETARY

Jim Reagan
TREASURER

Myra Ashcroft

John Bohannon

Dan Davis

David Hume

Ruth Keefe

Patricia Mark

James McAuliffe

Laurie Noyes

Terry Obuchowski

Margaret Stevens

Bill Therrien

Susan Tomberg

Mon / Tue / Thurs
9:00 – 4:00

Friday: 9:00 – 3:00

Mon / Tues / Thurs / Fri
Breakfast: 9:00 – 10:30
Lunch: 11:30 – 12:30
(closed Wednesday)

Mon / Tues / Thurs
9:30 – 3:30

Friday: 9:30 – 2:30

The mission of Our Place is
to connect people to food
and to each other.

NEWSLETTER DESIGN: MARY LYNCH

News from the Kitchen by Susan Shea

The kitchen has been a busy place the last several weeks. Local gardeners have been bringing in a variety of fresh produce ranging from red leaf lettuce, kale, chard, cucumbers and carrots. These donations have been a wonderful addition to the meals. I recently cooked up onions, garlic and kale and was asked: "What was that?" Several people let me know that it was very tasty and asked how to cook kale or chard. This is the beauty of having people watch me cook because I can explain what I am preparing & how. When people realize just how simple greens are to prepare they are willing to try new vegetables.

Our Place recently received a \$500.00 grant from the Northeast Organic Food Organization of Vermont (NOFA). This offsets our costs for the two shares we purchase through the CSA program. This grant helps us to acquire fresh local produce from Akaogi Farm in Putney. We receive a wonderful variety of Asian greens as well as spinach, asparagus, beans and peas. Every Tuesday evening I pick up our CSA shares in Brattleboro. As the summer continues, we will continue to get different vegetables from the farm, which are then incorporated into salad or cooked in the main dish.

In May, I attended an Open Farm Day at Akaogi Farm and it was great to see

where and how our produce is grown. Ogi and Linda are currently experimenting with several varieties of rice to see if there is a hearty variety that will grow in Vermont. They received several grants to help them design and dig 2 new rice paddies. We ended the tour in Linda's kitchen cooking up a few greens and making tasty sauces for us to try.

We are also collaborating with HCRS on a community garden. In mid-May the soil was tilled; tomatoes, squash, and herbs were planted in June. Just prior to the fencing being put up the garden was visited by the local woodchuck family and they nearly cleaned it out. Despite the late night raid, the garden was not totally destroyed and came back full tilt! We now have it fenced in and the woodchucks have found the clover patch to snack on!

Each month when we place our order with the Vermont Food Bank, we have the opportunity to purchase additional fresh produce. Some of this produce is gleaned from farms in central Vermont in collaboration with the Food Works at Two Rivers Center. The harvest this year will include: beets, red & green cabbage, carrots, melon, tomatoes and additional root vegetables. We do our best to get these fresh vegetables out to seniors who receive monthly home deliveries as well as those who use the food pantry.



Curves Food Drive

Visitors to Curves in Bellows Falls "put on the pounds" during the month of March — pounds of food, that is! — that they had accumulated in a pile in the middle of their exercise room. Owner Janice Berube says this was the fourth annual Curves food drive to benefit local food shelves, and her second as owner of the facility that caters exclusively to women. "We collected 700 pounds last year and are up to about 600 this year," she explained. Thank you, Curves, for your generous food donations!

Food Donations: Where Do They Come From?

by Susan Shea

I would like to thank all of those who bring in donations for the food shelf. Local schools, churches and individuals have been wonderful when it comes to keeping the shelves filled. When schools close for the summer there are fewer donations we can count on. The community has been great, when we have empty shelves they answer our call to help stock the shelves. Our biggest needs are personal care items, diapers, pasta and fruit.

As donations come in, we check the dates to be certain food is not outdated and we abide by the Vermont Food Bank Guidelines: We

cannot accept items that are more than a year old. This ensures the food is safe and avoids any food borne illness. Several times throughout the month it is not unusual to receive Food Recall notices from the Food Bank informing us of recalls.

The remainder of our donations come our farming neighbors who continue to donate local produce that can't be beat. Most of this ends up as part of the meal and what we don't use are put out for people to take home. For the past 3 years, my goal has been to educate and increase the use of fresh fruit and vegetables into people's daily diet.



Digital camera
Cereal
Shampoo
Toothpaste
Tuna
Peanut butter

SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

Since our Winter 2008 newsletter, we have had 11 volunteers that have donated 735 hours at Our Place. Some of the volunteers come by for a couple of hours, a few days or weeks. They can be seen helping Amy stocking the food shelves, prepping with Susan in the kitchen, mowing & weed whacking, moping & sweeping the floors to sorting fruits & vegetables and helping unload the Food Bank truck. On behalf of the Our Place staff I would like to thank: Charlotte, Tony, Phillip, Marianne, Ethel, Cecile, Rachel, Kristie, Bob C., Charlie, Bob D. and Peter. We appreciate all you do to keeping us looking great!

Stamp Out Hunger Delivers

by Louise Luring, Board Secretary

The post office came through again May 10 when it delivered 688 bags and 14 boxes of food to Our Place Drop-in Center as part of its Stamp Out Hunger food drive.

Carriers fanned out from the Bellows Falls post office to pick up bags they had left along their Rockingham routes a few days before, and their customers responded generously with about a ton of non-perishable groceries and personal care items.

"The drive is especially important to us at this time of year as schools let out and children don't have access to subsidized school lunch programs," said OP food services director Susan Shea. "In addition, we've seen a big increase in the number of meals we serve, up almost 400 in the first four months of the year over last year."



She also said there have been 134 more families picking up groceries at Our Place, including 82 new families and 210 people who receive home deliveries.

Stamp Out Hunger is a program of the National Association of Letter Carriers and is the largest one-day food drive in the nation. Since it started in 1993, it has collected almost 800 million pounds of food.

I want to help Our Place!

Enclosed is my gift of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$ _____

I prefer to remain anonymous. (Please do not thank me by name on the contributor list.)

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

TOWN / STATE / ZIP _____

Thank you for your generous support.

Our Place Drop-In Center 802 463 2217
PO Box 852 / 4 Island St., Bellows Falls, VT 05101
Our Place is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

50/50 RAFFLE

It's time for our 50/50 raffle fundraiser!

The 50/50 raffle is a fun and easy way for you to win some cash and to raise \$2,500 for Our Place! Tickets are \$20 and there are 5 chances to win!

The First Prize is \$1000. There are two 2nd prizes of \$500 each and two 3rd prizes of \$250!!

Tickets can be purchased from board members and at Our Place. And, on a date-to-be-announced, tickets will be available at the following locations: Walpole Post Office & Thunderbird in Bellows Falls.

The drawing will occur when all 250 tickets are sold, most likely in mid or late September.

ANNUAL APPEAL

Our Place Drop-In Center Receives Grants

Our Place Drop-In Center in Bellows Falls, VT, is the grateful recent recipient of grant funding from several supporting organizations. Firstly, Our Place received a \$13,000 grant from the United Way of Windham County to sustain their general operations. They also received a \$7,500 grant from the State of Vermont Department of Children Families to maintain their day shelter and support their homeless prevention efforts. Finally, Our Place received a \$500 grant from the Northeast Organic Food Organization of Vermont for the purchase of vegetables from a local farm to include in meals served in their kitchen. The free grocery, meal, shelter, and referral services that Our Place offers would not be possible without the very generous support from these and other organizations, individuals, and businesses, for which Our Place is extremely grateful!

Our Place Featured in Vermont Foodbank Newsletter & Website! "The only problem with Our Place Drop-In Center is that there aren't a dozen or so more of them throughout Vermont or New England for that matter. If you are looking for a model food shelf & meal site, you'll have to stop in and see what's going on at Our Place Drop-In Center on Island Street in Bellows Falls. Executive Director, Cynthia Hellmann continues to push Our Place forward, making it one of the Foodbank's most progressive Network Partners."

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OUR PLACE



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
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BELLOWS FALLS, VT 05101