Become a Shalom Sustaining Supporter!

Shalom could not accomplish all that we do by ourselves. We rely heavily on financial support from individuals such as you. Why not consider becoming a monthly donor* and help provide Shalom with a steady and reliable stream of income that allows us to plan for a sustainable future.

For as little as $8/month, you can increase the power of your gift and put more of your dollars into Shalom programs such as Friend’s House, Rapid Rehousing, guest daily personal services, Hunger Relief, effective case management, and so much more.

Contact Dorothy Granger at (812) 334-5734 to discuss ways to increase the power of your gift.

You may also make a gift with your credit card, online at: shalomcommunitycenter.org.

or mail a check to: Shalom Community Center
PO Box 451
Bloomington, IN 47402-0451

*Please note that automatic, ongoing monthly contributions can change or stop at any time that you say.

DIGNITY
The Newsletter of Shalom Community Center
Summer 2017

A Story of Success—Karen Jessie

Without Shalom I would still be out on the streets. I’d still be living on my food stamps. I’d still be squatting woods to woods or couch to couch... taking baths in ponds or creek, sometimes having to drink pond water.

There was no hope. There was just nothing. There was no way for me to get up on my feet without other people helping me and guiding me to start to learn how to live like a “normal” society person, to be able to get my feet grounded.

Out there on the streets [I felt like] I was crossing a creek of stones and I didn’t have a stone to step on and if I took that step I was going to drown again... With Shalom’s support, I was able to take that step and grab a hold of that stone with my foot and they helped me get my balance. And I could step to the next stone and I made my way across that creek. And I now have a job. I have a home. I have a cat. I have a boyfriend. I have peace. I have a life again. Six years later, I have a life.

Shalom is a place that keeps people alive where there’s no hope for them left out on the streets... Shalom is a place that needs to be in every city. It saves people’s lives.

Out on the Streets

I did something crazy.

I traveled to San Francisco to the Tenderloin, part of the city known for its poverty, and lived on the streets for a week.

I joined six other people to take part in a street retreat, with the goal of bearing witness to all that was around us and more importantly, our own response to all that we witnessed and experienced—fear, joy, exhaustion, anger, kindness, grief, all of it.

I think it’s important to mention that what I did was not homelessness. I’ve never been homeless and hopefully never will be. The trip was a gift of my own privilege, and without proper intent, could have been some strange form of adventure voyeurism.

Instead, it was an opportunity for personal transformation. I, of course, learned a lot.

(continued on page 2)
Brain Injury in People Experiencing Homelessness

Brain injury is often considered the “invisible disability.” Unless it affects a person’s ability to move or to speak, most people “look fine” after their brain injury. People are often diagnosed with a concussion or maybe don’t even seek medical attention after an injury, not realizing they have experienced an actual brain injury.

So what is a brain injury and how do you know if you have had one? A brain injury is any event that has caused some level of physical and physiological damage to the brain tissue to a degree that it alters consciousness, even just briefly (feeling dazed, having brief memory loss, or brief or extended unconsciousness). The damage can be in the form of death of brain cells or the ripping apart of some of the connections between the brain cells. Our brains operate by passing messages from one brain cell to the next, so if any of those connections are broken our brain cannot work as smoothly and as quickly.

One category of brain injury is “traumatic brain injury,” caused by an external force such as a car or bike crash, a fall, a blow to the head (accidental or from an assault), repeated shaking of the head/neck (e.g. shake baby syndrome, which can also happen to kids and adults), and blast injuries. Another category includes all those injuries that are NOT related to an outside force—stroke, a loss of oxygen from drowning, heart attack, drug overdose, a disease such as meningitis or multiple sclerosis, electrocution, a brain tumor, or exposure to a toxic chemical such as lead, some drugs, or industrial chemicals.

Whatever the cause of the brain injury, the effects can be profound. Thinking can be affected, leaving a person with problems concentrat-

“Out on the Streets
(cont. from pg. 1)

I learned what it’s like to not have access to a bathroom. One day, I spent more than an hour walking to find an open and working bathroom. I eventually had to rely on the kindness of a church to deal with this essential and sometimes urgent need that we seek medical attention after an injury, not realizing they have experienced an actual brain injury.

Social Worker, Jean Capler

I also learned again how important it is simply to be there—without judgment, without fear: the teenage boys dealing crack in front of a butterfly mural that read, “Be the change you want to see in the world,” an aimless, older woman, walking around wearing a ragged winter coat on an 85° day, the human urine running down the sidewalk from a fire alarm pole, the older man who offered me strawberries, calling them cherries, a mentally ill woman screaming in agony. It is in that witnessing that something else emerged: an immediate awareness of our connections. The retreat reminded me that, before judgments or programs or solutions or anything, it’s essential to remember that our common humanity must always come first.

“Phil at the 2016 Nancy Saunders Almost Awesome Tennis Tournament”

Phil Saunders was one such volunteer of the importance of giving to those who are in need and serving through deeds and not words. He was an icon of persistence, dedication, and hope for the mission of Shalom since its earliest days. He is absolutely irreplaceable. There are just, of course, no words sufficient to honor him.

He was an active member of the First United Methodist Church, an avid golfer, and a great friend to many. Phil had the greatest passion for and commitment to Shalom — bar none. He was an example of the importance of giving to those who are in need and serving through deeds and not words. He was an icon of persistence, dedication, and hope for the mission of Shalom since its earliest days. He is absolutely irreplaceable. There are just, of course, no words sufficient to honor him.

His passing reminds us that there is never enough time.

IN MEMORY

PHIL SAUNDERS

Saving Society with the Sun

Shalom cares about people AND the environment and now get to do BOTH at the same time.

With half of our utility costs dedicated to electricity, we decided that going solar is one way to make the organization both more friendly to the environment and more impactful with people in need. The less we spend on utilities, the more we have for direct ways to help.

With solar, we will cut our electric costs by a third to a half, operation both more friendly to the environment and more impactful with people in need. The less we spend on utilities, the more we have for direct ways to help.

Shalom will offer a one-day “street retreat,” for our community, this summer. Keep your eyes open for additional information.

Ten Gifts You Can Give to Support Our Guests

10. Laundry Soap
9. Toilet Paper
8. Tents
7. Diapers, Sizes 3-5
6. Coffee
5. Razors
4. Sneakers & Flip flops
3. Backpacks
2. Deodorant
1. Rain gear (umbrellas, rain coats, ponchos, tarps)

To make a monetary donation, see the information on the page 4.