

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
ASC's 30th Anniversary Celebration
Saturday, October 21 Watch local papers for details.

The Open Door

"I WAS THERE WHEN THE AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER WAS BORN!"

From a Conversation with Diana Souza by Herschel Shohan, Volunteer

This is the 30th year that the Amherst Survival Center – the first one established in our region – has been in existence. I mentioned to Diana how remarkable that it had been in the business of helping those in need for so long, and I wondered how it might have come into being. Diana told me that she had actually been at Town Meeting the evening the warrant article was presented to establish the Center. The following is a recap of her story:

She was a soft-spoken woman in her fifties wearing a simple print dress and with brunette hair to her shoulders. I was acquainted with her and knew of her humanitarian bent. Her name was Jane Holappa. She had been called on in the May, 1976 Amherst Town Meeting to present a warrant article calling for money to fund the start of a center for the homeless and the down-and-out.

Jane explained how it was not a crime to be poor or to have a family in need. She outlined the different circumstances that might make a person or a family require assistance in the form of food or clothing even in affluent Amherst. There was no place, she said, where our neighbors having a tough time making ends meet could go for the food, clothing and other necessities that could see them through their bad patch. She spoke with a quiet passion about increasing homelessness and decreasing government support. She described the single mothers she knew, families living in cars and the immigrant families who found themselves in Amherst without friends or family, with no one to turn to, no one to welcome them, no one to help them make their way. Town Meeting members listened respectfully. Jane's address lasted just a few minutes. She concluded with a statement, "Through sharing there is enough for everyone."

**"Through sharing
there is enough
for everyone."**

And that has certainly been the spirit that has carried on at the Center throughout the years, through all the changes in populations, funding, and needs.

Jane sat down.

The North Amherst School had been decommissioned some years before and its re-use was now discussed. It seemed a perfect fit – a new community use for an old community building. I had never heard of a "survival center," but having raised a family myself, like Jane, I could relate to her proposal and sentiment. I wholeheartedly said "Aye," when the vote was called. It passed by an overwhelming majority. How could one argue against such an idea?

I didn't know it then, of course, but I was witnessing the moment of birth for the Amherst Survival Center. And little did I know that 30 years later I would become its Assistant Director and Volunteer Coordinator. Today I, for one, am working to help the Amherst Survival Center to continue representing Jane Holappa's original hopes. From the first, it has served as a vital resource for individuals

and families struggling to make ends meet. And from the first, the Center has relied on its local volunteers to serve as the drivers, chef's assistants, sorting room operators, desk receptionists and the like. In the spirit of our 30-year-old tradition, I invite you to visit and spend some time with us. It may be one of the best things you ever did!

We have a skilled, experienced and dedicated staff. But it is our volunteers that carry much of the burden. Their cheerfulness, reliability and hard work insure that every day the Jane Holappa speech that I was witness to continues to inspire us. Survival Center volunteers and staff endeavor each day we're open to improve the quality of our support for the people who come through our doors.

Sadly, Jane Holappa died several years later. I think, I hope, she would be proud of what she helped to bring about. I believe if she could see the Amherst Survival Center today she would nod her head in quiet approval and repeat, with a smile, "Through sharing there is enough for everyone."

Celebrate

a message from the Director
Evangeline "Vangie" Westcott

As the Survival Center approaches its 30th year celebration it seems appropriate to remember all the special people who worked so hard to make this very special center grow.



First there was Jane Holappa who conceived the idea of a "survival center" and asked her minister at the Unitarian Church, Arnold Westwood, to help her bring it to fruition. Jane and Arnold gathered all the clergy in town and presented the idea to the Amherst select board.

As many of you may already know the Center started in people's basements in town: furniture in one, clothing in another. Within six months Town Meeting approved the use of the old North Amherst school as a home for the fledgling center.

Let us celebrate the members of the Interfaith Council who for 30 years now have organized their members to collect food for the Center. A great big thanks to those ladies and gentlemen who stood in front of the supermarkets each month come rain, snow, or the heat of summer to make sure all of their neighbors would have a meal each day.

Celebrate: the late '70s with the arrival of a special volunteer, "Jano" Hanke, who helped to finally complete our legal incorporation allowing us to apply for funding. Jano continued to help working many hours each week for several years handling the bookkeeping and applications for funding. He also offered legal services, assisting many of the Center's consumers in applying for benefits they were entitled to.

Celebrate: local businesses also deserve a cheer of thanks as some have contributed daily – *some for as many as 25 years* – allowing us to pick up day-old bread and perishable fruits and vegetables to use in our soup kitchen with enough extra to share with 30 to 50 families besides.

Celebrate: the Food Bank of Western Mass who made it possible for large corporations to contribute food to small pantries like ours and who took a leadership role over the years in working with the Department of Agriculture, writing grants for needed refrigeration, and advocating for us with state representatives.

Celebrate: all who served on the Board of Directors setting policy and working to keep the Center funded. A special note of recognition goes to Stephanie O'Keefe who organized, edited, and wrote the first issue of our newsletter *The Open Door*.

Celebrate: last but not least, thank you to all the hundreds of volunteers who have made the Center's day-to-day operation possible. These volunteers who came from all walks of life worked together to make it happen. Many have come from our consumer group and have had the extra burden of mental, emotional, or physical challenges. Many came from immigrant groups from around the world first only speaking Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Chinese, Tahitian, Russian, Bosnian, or Portugese. Young people from public and private schools have contributed over the years from the elementary level right up to our local colleges. One thing is sure. Some came with needs, but all came with a need to give.

Thanks to all. It's time to Celebrate!

TRUCK FUND

In honor of
our 30th anniversary,
we have set up a special fund to raise
\$10,000 for
the purchase of a "new"
pre-owned truck
to replace a 15-year-old one
that we use to collect food
donated by our contributors.

Please donate a special gift
to enable us
to reach this most
important goal.

TRASH TO TREASURES USED FURNITURE SALE

September 8 & 9
Amherst Common

Go to our website or call us for details
on how to donate your tax-deductible
furniture and other items
or to volunteer.

For pickups: Blaire 549-3968 ext. 201
or 206; to volunteer, Diana
at ext. "0" or 205.

OUR WISH LIST

Here are some items we really
could use:

A digital camera to record events and
archive directly to the computer

A commercial-type laundry cart to
move donations around easily

A bell at our rear delivery
door to signal when donations arrive
Kitchen and floor-cleaning products.

Thank you for your donations of a
barbecue grill,
drill, and DVD player.

If you have any of our current
requested items,

please call 549-3968;

press "0" to page
Diana or Vangie or leave

a message
at extension 205 or 202.



Volunteers: the steam driving the ASC engine

by Diana Souza, Volunteer Coordinator

Without volunteers, the work of the Center would not get done. They include members of the faith community, youth and civic organizations, students, and year-round residents. The Survival Center has hundreds of volunteers throughout the year who do the bulk of the work: unloading and shelving Food Bank deliveries, receiving and sorting salvaged food from area stores and farms, holding food drives, cooking lunches four days a week and cleaning up afterwards, washing floors, fixing doors, sorting clothes, creating a bridge to families in need, and doing needed data entry. Much of the work is mundane; nothing is glamorous. But many volunteers report great satisfaction in simply helping fellow human beings. Our mission statement says "... all are welcome." This is how it is for volunteers also. Anyone who wants to may volunteer. Since we have so many opportunities in the Center, we can accommodate practically all abilities.

The colleges are great a source for volunteers. Amherst College's Community Outreach Office is a central resource for information about area service and social justice opportunities. Hampshire College was among the first liberal arts schools in the country with a community service requirement for all students through their Community Partnerships for Change Program. UMass stands out with their commitment, through the Commonwealth College and the Citizen Scholars Program, IMPACT!, Into Amherst, and other programs, in doing community service work at ASC. These programs/classes prepare students to "make a difference in an increasingly diverse world and in issues of social justice through direct engagement," according to its website.



Substitute staffer Cannon (left) and volunteer Derek seem to enjoy their work

Last fall about 30 students helped with unloading, packaging, distributing, preparing and serving food. In spring many followed up with further work at ASC. Some continued with previous tasks; others worked on new projects. One woman researched expanding ASC's outreach of potential Center customers to "hidden pockets." Another improved communication by jazzing up our bulletin board and adding interesting, diverse articles. One student created invitations for our Culture/Education Outings; others helped us get ready for Trash to Treasures by stenciling graphics onto scores of aprons and T-shirts. An Into Amherst student cleaned our refrigerators inside and out. Some offered to return to ASC this fall.

A group of four students taking a course in sociology made a video of the Center's activities because, they said, they were so impressed with the Center's functions. They took it upon themselves to seek us out and spent several weeks, not only taping, but doing some of the demanding work of unloading deliveries, and the day-to-day cleaning and sorting clothing and housewares. We hope to have a copy of the video available for showing in the fall.

Our annual Thanksgiving dinner usually has a great volunteer turnout. We appreciate all the good work, from Girl Scout troops to entire families. I would like to tell you that the rest of the year follows along just as nicely, but that would be misleading. Summers and any college break leaves us scrambling to get our work done.

The Survival Center is a great place to come, meet people, and help out for a few hours a week. We have openings in the kitchen, sorting room and at the reception desk. Simply call or email. I can be reached at the Center most weekdays at 549-3968 ext. "0" or 205, or Email: survivalcenter@verizon.net

GET YOUR STOP & SHOP GIFT CARDS from ASC

5% of your shopping expenses – at no extra cost to you – puts food on the tables of hungry families every time you purchase S&S Gift Cards directly from the Amherst Survival Center! Make it routine.

Know whenever you sit down to eat you have given someone in need a meal.

Send me the following Stop& Shop Gift Cards to be used just like a debit card when I shop:

___ x \$10 ___ x \$20 ___ x \$50 ___ x \$100 Total: \$ ___ (Number of free cardholders you would like: ___)

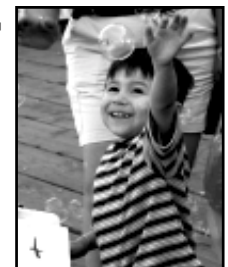
Send Gift Cards for the full amount of my check to me at: Phone _____

Name _____ E-mail _____

Street _____ Town, State, Zip _____

Questions? Call 549-3968 ext. 207 or E-mail: survivalcenter@verizon.net

Date received _____ Date dispensed _____



PLEASE WRITE CHECK TO:
AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER
Send to:
PO Box 9629
North Amherst, MA 01059-9629



Amherst Survival Center
 PO Box 9629
 1200 North Pleasant Street
 North Amherst, MA 01059-9629

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Amherst, MA
 Permit No. 311

Amherst Survival Center
 primarily supports people
 from:

- Amherst**
- Belchertown**
- Hadley**
- Leverett**
- Pelham**
- Shutesbury**
- South Deerfield**
- Sunderland**

Celebrating our 30th year!



The Center is a participating agency of
 the Hampshire County United Way

STAFF

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 Deborah Brennan
 Linda Brooks
 Caroline Ealy
 Blaire Robey
 Steve Smarz
 Diana Souza

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The Open Door

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VOLUNTEER NEEDS

*****Can YOU Help?*****

***Urgent!** We need 4 reliable volunteers each Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (16 people) so we can continue the distribution of fruits, vegetables and bread. We're looking for a commitment to one specific day a week from 9:30 - 11 or 11:30. Can you help us keep this vital program going?

****** People to make senior food boxes on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 9 - 12

******* Drivers to deliver the senior food boxes

******** People to help with publicity, furniture placement and polishing, sales reception and more for Trash to Treasures

********* People to write thank you's to our valued supporters

********* A tradesman to install a doorbell for our proposed rear door deliveries

********* Help to sort bread and produce

********* Sorters to separate clothing and other donations

********* "Free Store" assistants

********* Someone to adopt an area and to restore weekly its beauty and order

********* Individuals to do data entry three times a year



413-549-3968

survivalcenter@verizon.net

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Monday/Tuesday/Friday
 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Thursday
 11:00 am - 7:00 pm

LUNCH SERVED

Monday/Tuesday/
 Thursday/Friday
 12 noon - 1:00 pm

ADMINISTRATIVE HOURS

Monday/Tuesday
 Wednesday/Friday
 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Thursday
 9:00 am - 7:00 pm