

Open Door

A Publication of the Amherst Survival Center

1200 North Pleasant Street

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November 2007

The New ASC

With this newsletter we introduce the brand new logo you see in the corner to mark a fresh era at the Amherst Survival Center. Under new leadership, our talented staff, committed board members and dedicated volunteers are working hard to strengthen and expand services to meet the diverse needs of our consumers. While we continue to provide food and clothing for people in need, we also now offer connections Mass Health Insurance through Health Care for the Homeless and provide counseling and housing advocacy weekly in conjunction with Eliot Homeless Services. Stay tuned in the next few months as we unveil a monthly health clinic, a program providing access to Food Stamps, an expanded Senior Nutrition project and other exciting developments!

A Thrifty Investment

You probably know that the Amherst Survival Center is a regional resource that provides food, clothing, and community for thousands of people each year. Consumers range from working parents to homeless individuals, from senior citizens to newborn infants, from old Amherst-area families to the most recent immigrants. All find at the Survival Center a safe and comfortable environment where their most basic needs can be met.

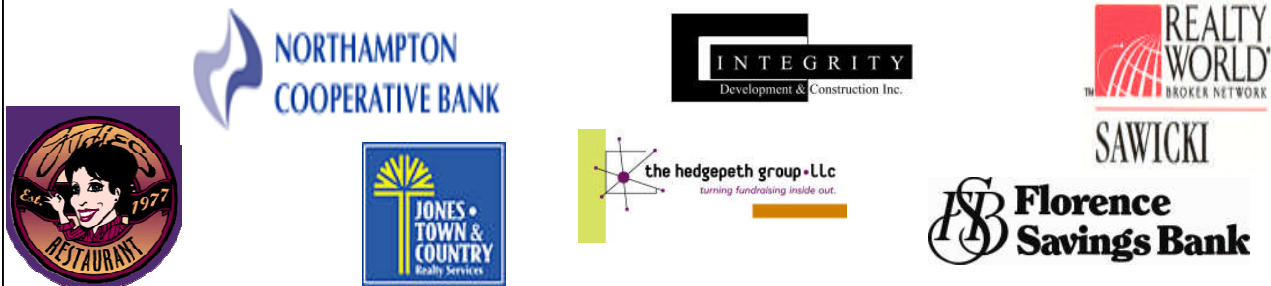
A less well-known fact about the Survival Center is what a good investment your donation can be. Our costs are low because we benefit from donated food from area grocers and bakers and low-cost food from the Food Bank. A donation of \$10 provides \$53.37 worth of groceries for nine meals for a family of four, that's over a 400% return on your investment!



Please consider stretching your donation dollars by donating to the Survival Center.

Thank You to our Trash-to-Treasures Sponsors

Our annual Trash-to-Treasures Furniture sale yielded over \$20,000 for our organization and was our most successful sale to date. A major reason for our success was our generous sponsors. We want to thank our sponsors and urge our readers to support these local businesses.



Thanks, too, to our generous food donors who help us to feed lunch to between 50-80 people each day: Trader Joes, Whole Foods, Atkins Farms, Panera Bread, Maple Farms, the Food Bank Farm, Henion Bakery, Antonio's Pizza, Simple Gifts Farm, and Riverland Farm.

Donations Recognizing Friends and Family

In Honor Of :

Cheryl Zoll by Tom Randall & Becky Miller
Cheryl Zoll by David Schnieder & Klara Moricz
Jan Eidelson by Ruth Wade
Brian O'Leary by Mary Anne O'Leary

In Memory Of:

Phillip Hasbrouck by Suewilla Woodfork
(former ASC Treasurer)
Harlan Paige by Phyllis Paige
Esther Gralinski by Stephen Hasbrouck
Esther Granlinski by Mary E. Wynne
Ulysses Brown by Guy & Betty Gosselin
Ulysses Brown by Richard D. Lemieux
Scott Sadoski by Muriel E. Paddock

VOTE FOR US AT FLORENCE SAVINGS BANK!

Florence Savings Bank will donate \$50,000 to local, non-profit organizations, and they're asking their customers to help them decide where the money will go.

You must be a customer to vote, and there's just one vote per person. If you are a customer, please go to your nearest branch and vote for us.

Any qualifying non-profit organization, which receives more than 1% of the total vote, will receive a proportional share of the funds.

Voting ends December 31, 2007, so please submit your vote for us today!

Survival Center Board Receives Training Grant

The Survival Center Board recently received a \$1000 training grant from the Human Service Forum in Springfield, MA, to conduct governance training for our Board of Directors. Two training sessions have been held, which focused on refining our core values and our mission statement. We have also clearly defined the roles, responsibilities, and operations of the Board, its officers, and members, as well as reformulated our committee structure. We were pleased to be the beneficiaries of this training grant and feel that our consumers will be the ultimate beneficiaries as we work to strengthen the governance of our organization.

Are We Good Enough?

Excerpted from an article written for *Grace Church Notes*, by Greg Kline, ASC Board Vice-President

An individual recently remarked to me, “I know this sounds terrible, but I have little interest in a charity such as the Amherst Survival Center.” She said that she had become “immune” to the plight of the type of individuals that we serve and no longer had sympathy for their “self-inflicted conditions.”

When asked if she had ever visited the Center or knew anyone at the Center, she admitted she did not. She also admitted that when she did give things to the Center, they weren’t her nicest things because she saved those for the Cancer Society and the Hospice Store, organizations that she deemed more “worthy.” Another listener queried, “Don’t you think low income people need or like good clothes?” She seemed surprised and replied, “I guess I simply assumed they had no need for good clothes.”

I tried to explain to her that the ASC clientele consisted primarily of individuals and families, struggling to get by. Some are trying to complete an education

while raising a family, while others are individuals who are between jobs or are unemployable, sometimes because they don’t speak English. Many of our consumers are working at minimum wage or poorly paid jobs and find that the Center allows them to pay their rent and heat bills because they can stretch their food and clothing money at the Center. And yes, some of our clients have emotional and psychological conditions and some are even homeless. We don’t discriminate, but we do know that all of our clients need assistance, and they all like good clothes!

While this woman described herself as a well-meaning liberal and a professional who regularly contributes to non-profit organizations, she somehow determined that some people in need are more worthy than others.

This interaction left me wondering how many other people are like this intelligent and decent woman? Is this attitude more about being afraid or intimidated by people who may live

in different circumstances from your own? Is this a form of subtle elitism and a well-meaning sense of superiority? How many of us harbor inner bias or prejudice, knowingly or unknowingly, toward low-income individuals? How many of us might be willing to make a financial donation but are hesitant to volunteer, to meet and see the face of poverty in person, or to donate our nicest things?

I encourage us all to honestly examine our prejudices and judgments. How can each of us stretch our particular boundaries and sense of psychological safety enough to reach out and physically touch poverty with our helping hands, in addition to our checkbooks? If you are interested in giving us your best by volunteering, serving on a committee, picking up food from local grocers, or just coming to lunch to learn more about our program, please call Tracey Levy, our Program Director, at 549-3968 X202.



Survival Center Wish List

The following items are needed at the Center. Please call us or drop by if you can donate any:

- Silverware, particularly forks
 - Newish computer for food stamp program
 - Sleeping bags (zero degrees)
 - Tents and warm blankets
 - Two-drawer file cabinet (lockable)
 - Desk and chair
 - Padded exam table
- (The above items are for the free medical clinic that we’ll launch in January!)



Amherst Survival Center
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PO Box 9629
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AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER, serving primarily Amherst, Belchertown, Hadley, Leverett, Pelham, Shutesbury, Sunderland, Whately, South Deerfield, and Deerfield.

STAFF

Cheryl Zoll, Executive Director
Tracey Levy, Program Director
Jennileen Joseph, Pantry Coord.
Linda Brooks, Cook
Blaire Robey, Operations Manager
Steve Smarz, Fiscal Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ruth Wade, President
Greg Kline, Vice President
Susan Wennemyr, Treasurer
Steve Ferrarone, Secretary
Edwina Askew
Cynthia Brubaker
Jan Eidelson
Kay Fite
Aron Goldman
Royster Hedgepeth
Lonce Sandy-Bailey

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday, Tuesday, Friday
11:00 AM-3:00 PM
Thursday 11:00AM-7:00 PM

LUNCH SERVED

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
and Friday
12:00-1:00 PM

SURVIVAL CENTER LAUNCHES NEW GIFT CATALOG

The Survival Center is launching a new program that will benefit our consumers AND provide a meaningful gift to those you love. Watch for the new Amherst Survival Center Gift Catalog, arriving in your mailbox soon. (Call the Center if you don't receive yours by November 23.)

You will be able to choose a gift that will benefit consumers at the Amherst Survival Center, and we will send you a gift card that can be mailed or given to family and friends. These catalog items are appropriate for everyone and can be given as a holiday, birthday, or "just because" gift at any time of the year. So, if you want to do all of your holiday shopping in one stop, help the Survival Center, receive a tax deduction, and provide a unique gift, our gift catalog is the perfect solution.

