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Submitted 2/8/01  
Denna Lawson



**I'd Like to Help.**

- I'd like to volunteer at my own church/synagogue \_\_\_\_\_ Please call me.
- I'd like to discuss my church/synagogue \_\_\_\_\_, becoming a part of IHN.

Please call me.

- I'd like to discuss other ways of volunteering.

Please call me.

- I'd like to make a donation
- \$10.00     \$ 25.00     \$50.00
- \$75.00     \$100.00     \$250.00
- \$500.00     \$1000.00     Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

*Is not this the fast that I choose?...*  
*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,*  
*and bring the homeless poor into your house;*  
*when you see the naked, to cover him;*  
*and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?*

(Isaiah 58:6)

**Host Congregations**

- First Baptist Church
- First Christian Disciples Of Christ
- First Church of the Nazarene
- First Presbyterian Church
- First United Methodist Church
- Highlands Presbyterian Church
- Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
- Pentecostals of Gainesville
- Trinity United Methodist Church
- United Church of Gainesville
- Westminster Presbyterian Church

**Support Congregations**

- Bartley Temple United Methodist Church
- Community Praise Center
- Flemington Baptist
- Grace United Methodist
- Greater Bethel AME
- Kanapaha Presbyterian Church
- First Lutheran Church
- Northwest Baptist Church
- Presbyterian Student Center
- Phai Or Jewish Renewal
- Queen of Peace Catholic Church
- St. Michael's Episcopal Church
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

**Host and Support Churches and Synagogues needed**



*IHN of Greater Gainesville is a 501(c)(3), Nonprofit Corporation*

# Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Gainesville

*A Community Response for  
Homeless Families*



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## Homelessness

Two trends are responsible for the rise in homelessness in America, the growing lack of affordable housing and the rise in poverty. Persons who experience poverty are more likely to experience homelessness. The number of homeless families with children has increased significantly over the past decade causing families with children to be among the fastest growing segments of the homeless population. It is estimated that families with children constitute approximately 40% of people who become homeless. These proportions are likely to be higher in rural areas. Additionally, research indicates that families, single mothers, and children make up the largest group of people who are homeless in rural areas. Stagnating wages and changes in welfare programs account for increasing poverty among families.



The Alachua County Homeless Coalition recently estimated that there are 900 homeless individuals in the Greater Gainesville area each day. They estimate that 28%, or 252 of these people, are homeless members of families, including 16% - or 144 - homeless children.



*But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

*Go, and do thou likewise*

*(Luke 10:33, 34, 37).*

## Interfaith Hospitality Network

The Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) was created to provide shelter, meals, and comprehensive support to families without homes. IHN unites communities of faith in a collaborative effort to assist homeless families. "Host" churches and synagogues provide accommodations and meals for three to five families (up to 14 people), for one or two weeks every two to three months, on a rotating schedule.



Participating congregations furnish sleeping accommodations and a "hospitality room" where guests relax, socialize, do homework, or watch television. Guests arrive at the host congregation at approximately 5:30 each evening and remain overnight. The host congregation provides the evening meal, breakfast, and a bag lunch. In the morning, children go to school and adult guests go to work or look for housing. Families are provided with the services of a professional case manager to help them with their quest for employment and housing, and future stability.

Volunteers in the IHN program provide homeless families with basic human needs of shelter, safety, and sustenance, with a spirit of warmth and hospitality. Congregations become temporary homes in which families are treated as guests and individuals are accepted as they are. In this environment, guests are able to maintain their dignity. The kindness of hosts helps to diminish the hurt of homelessness, and both volunteers and guests grow and learn from each other.



## How You Can Help

The Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) is a tangible way many have joined together to provide real help and compassion to homeless families, working together toward permanent solutions. You can help by:

- Encouraging your church or synagogue to become a host or support church
- Volunteering your time to an existing host congregation, to provide meals, transportation, or overnight supervision
- Becoming a "Mentor" to a Guest family
- Providing employment opportunities to Guest adults
- Sponsoring a fund raising event
- Donating items on the IHN "Wish List"
- Making a direct financial contribution to IHN

