



BRETHREN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

219 Hummel Street Harrisburg, Pa. 17104

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BRETHREN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

# FOUNDATIONS *for success*

*Share love,  
give hope,  
change  
lives.*



*BHA Participant Tori and her newborn baby, Jacob.*

*SPRING — A time to celebrate  
new life and growth*

**SPRING  
2008**



# FOUNDATIONS *for success*

SPRING  
2008

## Class Helps BHA Moms Grow Together as Parents

*By Jennifer Rash, Bagwashi Coordinator*

“Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing up is like shoveling the walk before it stops snowing.” — Phyllis Diller

**P**lain and simple – parenting is hard work. As Phyllis Diller suggests, parenting is a job that is constantly changing. It can change based on your mood, the moon, or whether your teenage daughter is having a good hair day. Joelle, a participant at BHA, recently said to me: “Parenting doesn’t come with a manual.” For single parents with significant stressors, like unemployment, insufficient income or few supportive relationships, well, parenting becomes even more challenging.

In our Transitional Housing Program, we have increased our focus on helping participants “Develop and Practice Quality Parenting Approaches and Practices.” We have known for some time that we needed to help our moms work on parenting skills, but HOW? The answer came when we received a call, out of the blue, from Pam Haddad.

Pam and her mother, Jean Heigel, had designed a parent education curriculum originally used by COBYS Family Services for Lancaster County Children and Youth. Wanting to branch

off on their own, they developed Samara: The Center for Individual and Family Growth.

Several months after that call, nine moms, along with BHA Case Manager Chris Patrick and I, each opened a black binder filled with 16 lessons. The lessons included topics like Age-Stage Development, Basic Needs, Anger Management and Active Listening. This was a lot of work, and the women were not enthusiastic at the start. Pam said to me, “The challenge [of these classes] is to earn the trust  
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*Linde Stern-Courtney engages BHA children while their moms are in parenting class.*

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### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

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3. The BHA Family is Growing
4. Mother’s Day Events
5. BHA’s excellent women

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## GROWING TOGETHER AS PARENTS

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and respect of the participants so that they feel safe within the group. The safety allows each group member to share openly and think independently about the type of parent she would like to be."

Pam and Jean rose to the challenge. Several weeks into the class, in an exercise about encouraging our kids, each of us was given a pom-pom that we used to "pelt" each other with praise. We each gave and received encouragement, and you could feel the difference that it made in bringing us closer together and affirming us as individuals.

In the following weeks, we began to pay more attention to how we parent. We shared about new techniques we had tried, reflected upon how we had been parented, and often gave each other suggestions. One mom shared her response when she discovered that her child had stolen something, while another talked about feeling overwhelmed by her son's tantrums. We discovered together that parenting is hard work and there are no easy solutions. Pam and Jean encouraged us that we can improve our relationships with our kids; we just need to keep trying out new techniques until we find what works for us.

We want to thank everyone who made the class possible. Pam and Jean taught freely out of the goodness of their hearts. They provided us with instruction and encouragement; brought volunteers, including Childcare Teacher Linde Stern-Courney, who engaged our children with literature, crafts and creative play. They also provided a healthy meal at each class, followed by Pam's oatmeal chocolate chip cookies for dessert.

The class was an answer to prayer. Please keep our moms in prayer as they continue to strive to develop and practice quality parenting approaches and practices.

## *Moving into the Future*

On March 13, the BHA community (staff, participants, family and friends) all gathered for a special celebration — Sonya Dates' graduation from our Transitional Housing program. You may remember from our last newsletter that Sonya quickly completed her GED and got a full-time job with benefits while in the program. She also completed the parenting curriculum and began working intensively on issues with her four daughters. We are sad to see Sonya go, but we are proud of all that she accomplished during her time at BHA. Join us in wishing Sonya well in the next phase of her journey, and keep her and her family in your prayers.



**Above:** Sonya says goodbye to her BHA friends at her graduation ceremony. Pictured left to right, BHA participant Joelle, Bagwashi Coordinator Jennifer Rash, Sonya, Case Manager Chris Patrick, and BHA participant Megan.

### *(more) reasons to celebrate*

- Deidre has a full-time job and moved into her own apartment
- Alisha found full-time employment
- The BHA family is expanding! (see page 3)
- We recently welcomed Edna and Diana to the program
- For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, we needed to raise \$260,000 from all our charitable sources, and we exceeded that goal by more than \$10,000 thanks to your help and support!

## NEW LIFE AND GROWTH

# The BHA Family is Growing

**S**PRING IS NOT JUST ABOUT cleaning out the old dust and cobwebs...it is also about new life and growth. This spring, the BHA family has grown.

### It's a Boy!

The newest BHA program participant is also the youngest. Jacob Antonio Breban was born to program participant Tori on April 7, 2008, weighing in at a healthy 6 lb. 8 oz. Mom and baby are doing great.

### It's Two Boys!!

BHA Executive Director Steve Schwartz and his wife Elizabeth are proud to announce that they have finalized the adoptions of their two sons, John-Luis and Carlos. On February 19, 2008, more than two years after Steve and Elizabeth became foster parents to John-Luis and Carlos, they all appeared in Dauphin County Court (along with 45 of their closest friends and relatives) to become a forever family. Congratulations Schwartz family!



*Elizabeth and Steve Schwartz with newly adopted sons Carlos Emmanuel Steven Schwartz (left) John-Luis Glenn Schwartz.*

### It's a ... Development Coordinator!!!

**By Steve Schwartz, Executive Director**

**T**he newest addition to the BHA staff family is Heather Kelly, our first full-time Development Coordinator. Our vision at BHA is to expand our transitional housing program so that we can help more homeless families move toward stability and self-sufficiency. However, in order to grow, we need more funding.



*Heather Kelly: excited to help BHA grow.*

Enter two special partners in ministry. The first is a local couple whose commitment to BHA's growth is so great that they offered \$15,000 in seed money to hire a staff member focused entirely on deepening our support base. The second partner is the United Service Foundation, which awarded BHA a generous grant beyond the seed money to fully fund the Development Coordinator position over the next three years.

We were blessed with a number of well-qualified applicants. Ultimately we hired Heather because of her passion

for serving the poor, her connection to the city of Harrisburg, and her capacity to build relationships and develop resources.

As an undergraduate student at Eastern University, Heather worked summers for a Christian community development organization in Pittsburgh. She then attended the University of Pittsburgh School of Law where she focused her studies on providing legal services to the poor. She planned to pursue public interest legal work right after law school, but God's timing was slightly different.

Heather came to the Harrisburg area in 2000 for a two-year federal clerkship. She then spent five years practicing law at the Harrisburg firm of Rhoads & Sinon LLP. During that time, she served as a board member for a nonprofit organization, and never lost the desire to work in full-time urban ministry. In 2006, Heather and her husband John moved into Harrisburg where they were already attending church. John and Heather, along with their two young children Tim and Sara, live about a mile from BHA.

Heather understands the importance of resource development to the growth of BHA's ministry. She is anxious to

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# CELEBRATING MOTHERHOOD

*(continued from page 3)*  
connect with BHA's individual, church and corporate supporters in the coming weeks and months, and she is excited about working with our dedicated Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and grant sources.

BHA Vice President Paul Wessell worked with Heather at Rhoads &

Sinon. While characteristically low-key, Paul sent me an e-mail expressing his affirmation that Heather was a great choice for the position followed by no less than seven exclamation points! Over the past few weeks, as Heather has become immersed in the BHA community, God has confirmed for us all that Heather is part of his plan to

expand BHA's ministry to families in crisis.

I'm thrilled that Heather has joined the BHA team for all of the reasons mentioned above ... and on top of all that, she has a great sense of humor!



## Welcome to Mama's Diner

### 1. SIXTH ANNUAL BHA Golf Tournament

Friday, May 9 . . . . . \$70 to golf  
or \$280 for a team  
Sponsorships up to \$3,000

THIS year we're serving it up on a Friday ... Scramble format tournament starting at 12:30 p.m. at Parline Golf Course in Elizabethtown.

**Questions?** Contact Josh Stroup, event coordinator, at (717) 545-1472 or [jstroup3@comcast.net](mailto:jstroup3@comcast.net).

### 2. FOURTH ANNUAL Spring Thaw Bike Tour

Saturday, May 10 . . . . . Free  
(if you raise sponsors) or \$100

A treat for the senses — enjoy the sights and sounds (and smells!) of the Pennsylvania countryside. For individual riders or teams, featuring loops of 25 miles, 50 miles, or 100 kilometers starting and ending in Palmyra, Pa.

**Questions?** Contact Darrel Reinford, event coordinator, at (717) 213-9316 or [kirstendarrel@pa.net](mailto:kirstendarrel@pa.net).

### 3. MAKE A GIFT In Honor of a Special Woman

..... Market Price\*

How about this palatable option: Honor the special lady or ladies in your life with a unique present this Mother's Day — a donation to BHA in her honor to bless homeless women and children on their journey of healing.



### How to make a gift in honor or memory of a special lady.

1. Send your donation along with the name and mailing address of each honoree. Donations can be mailed to BHA, 219 Hummel Street, Harrisburg, PA 17104, or made through our website's donation page.
2. We will mail post cards to all honorees before Mother's Day telling them of your gift (the amount will not be shared).
3. For all honor/memorial gifts received by Mother's Day, we will list your name and the names of those special women in our next newsletter.

## WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE

### *BHA's Christine Patrick Honored as a YWCA Woman of Excellence*

**O**n March 25, BHA staff, Board members, and friends gathered for the 2008 YWCA Tribute to Women of Excellence banquet at the Hershey Lodge. Our own Christine Patrick, BHA case manager, was named as one of this year's Women of Excellence at the event.

According to the YWCA, Women of Excellence include women from diverse professional backgrounds who "have taken on the challenge of leadership, excelled in their efforts, and encouraged and inspired others in the community."

Here at BHA, we strive to empower all of our participants to become women of excellence, and we agree that "Miss Chris" truly exemplifies this. Having herself been a homeless single mom who graduated from a transition-

al housing program, Chris went on to become a case manager helping other women. She has a unique perspective and understanding of the challenges faced by BHA's program participants. Chris provides endless love, support and accountability to the women in our program. Join us in congratulating Chris on being named one of the YWCA's 2008 Women of Excellence!



*Chris Patrick — truly a woman of excellence.*

## MINISTRY CELEBRATION BANQUET — SEPTEMBER 18, 2008

### *Save the Date to Celebrate*

Please join us for an evening of fellowship and inspiration at BHA's 2008 Ministry Celebration Banquet on September 18, 2008. We will share ministry updates, testimonies and a wonderful meal. This year's guest speaker, the Reverend Saleem Ghubril, is the founder and Executive Director of The Pittsburgh Project, a Christian community development organization that has been serving the physical and spiritual needs of the urban poor for over 20 years. Watch our website and future newsletter for more details!

## Special Thanks

- To recent work groups from **Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren, Messiah College, Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren, Elizabethtown College** and **Kraybill Mennonite School**.
- To those who made parenting class possible — **Pam, Jean, Linde**, and others.
- To **Habitat for Humanity of the Greater Harrisburg Area** for partnering with us to renovate a kitchen in one of our apartments used for transitional housing.
- To regular property volunteers **Jerry Stouffer** and **Ed Good** for all the work you do at BHA, including your hard work to build a new office for Heather Kelly.

## *Prayer Requests & Praises*

The need for transitional housing is great. We get calls daily from families looking for a program like BHA's. We can't meet all the needs due to the capacity limits of our program. Pray that these families find the love and support they need. Pray for BHA's Board of Directors as we make plans to expand our program so we can assist more families.

Thank God with us for the generous support of the United Service Foundation and a local couple for providing complete funding for our Development Coordinator position for three years to assist with program expansion.

Praise God for the support many volunteers are giving to several of our families through Bagwashi Circles. We're still working toward having each family in our program matched with a Bagwashi Circle, so please pray for more volunteers from local churches to meet this need.

We're very busy at BHA right now ... in a good way. After a year of working with consultants to enhance our program and review our strategic planning, there is a lot to implement. Pray for strength for the staff and board during this busy time.