

Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network Committee 2018 Annual report to CHF

Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting has worked with the Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network (PIHN) for over 20 years to help end homelessness for families in Philadelphia. This report summarizes the 2017/2018 activities of the Meeting's PIHN Committee whose members organize our support activities. This year, Nancy Cox, Tricia Walmsley, Tee Bushnell and Jan Collins joined the committee. Carla White clerked.

In brief: There was plenty of work, there were some glitches, but we had a lot of help from meeting members, PIHN staff and others. One guest wrote in thanks:

"Thank you for feeding the hungry and the homeless with such delicious food. Thank all of you, for being a Light in the darkness"

Our report:

Throughout the year, CHF members help PIHN by participating in their annual fall fundraiser, The Empty Bowl Dinner, and by generously collecting, wrapping and delivering gifts for a PIHN family. We ask Friends if someone would like to coordinate this winter's gift collection

Our members spent the winter and spring preparing to host what turned out to be four families with 6 adults and 9 children for the month of July. Our tireless clerk, Carla White, was in constant touch with Keyonee Thalia, the PIHN coordinator. PIHN found us buddy congregations. We reached out to other Quaker meetings which, though sympathetic, felt overwhelmed by their own volunteer commitments.

Storm and Dan Evans led the effort to fix the second floor shower so it would not flood the bathroom floor. Thanks to both.

Barbara Buonocore reviewed our safety procedures.

Our members prepared sign up materials, updated our hosting manuals and assigned our members to oversee various weeks of the stay. We kicked into high gear with an after-worship pizza party on June 10 to introduce the program to CHF members. Tynasha Carter, a previous guest of the program who wrote a book about her remarkable life, was our inspiring speaker. We also honored Mickey Abraham for her years of PIHN service. Many Friends signed up that day to help cook, host and buy supplies.

The Religious Education Committee did a great job cleaning out the kids' rooms on the second floor and stowing their materials in the basement. Likewise, Hospitality Committee prepared the kitchen. Our members spent the Saturday morning before the guests arrived cleaning and organizing. Many members inside and outside the committee pitched in again at the end of July to get the rooms back in order. We are grateful to both of those committees for their solid support.

The guests arrived on Sunday, July 1 and Monday the second. Consequently we did not have our usual introductory gathering with all the families to thoroughly go over the meeting layout, safety procedures, house rules and cooking responsibilities. We have made note that this is a necessary meeting for future hosting. Clean-up was an ongoing issue. In addition, we had to have the social room completely cleaned and cleared twice a week for the next morning's yoga class. It was a heavy lift for the evening hosts who often ended up mopping the floor.

While there were, as always, issues among the guests and with the meeting, this year the problems were overshadowed by the strong, positive participation from meeting members who spent time with

the children. We hosted two fun birthday parties and members came to read with the kids, do science experiments and arts and crafts among other activities. Thank you to all who helped. It made a big difference.

This year PIHN could not find another congregation to host the families during the month of August so made alternative arrangements. Two of the families found accommodations on their own. One family could not. The children went with relatives while the mom stayed in the meetinghouse on the second floor. PIHN has a chronic problem finding August hosts. Our committee is mulling ways we might step in.

We are also working on clarifying our financial responsibilities to the meeting budget. Our requests to the Meeting:

-Please approve hosting the families next July

-Please consider and advise: Would extending their stay for two weeks in August inconvenience the meeting and impact our rental income?

-Please consider and advise: How does the meeting feel about leaving our guests without overnight hosts

-Is there a Meeting member not on the PIHN Committee who would like to organize the Christmas gift collection for a PIHN family?

- We need more members to adequately cover the hosting duties.
- Carla White is stepping down so we will need a new clerk. Volunteers welcome!

Lastly, thank you to all who volunteered. And, a particular thank you to those who were displaced by the program, particularly Phil Jones but also the First Day School and Hospitality Committees. We could not have pulled this off without you.

While we had our glitches, we also received this note from one of our guests:

"Thank you for feeding the hungry and the homeless with such delicious food. Thank all of you, for being a Light in the darkness"

Submitted by: Carla White, Evangeline Bragitikos, Barbara Buonocore, Toni "Tee" Bushnell, Signe Wilkinson, Catherine Ezzo, Tricia Walmsley, Nancy Cox and Jan Collins.