

Lazarus House Love Letter

Luke 16:19-31

WORKING TOGETHER TO OFFER HOPE AND A FUTURE

Spring 2008

Volume XI

Issue 1



Upcoming Events

- VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**
 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23
 9-10:30 A.M.
 LAZARUS HOUSE
- ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE**
 SATURDAY, MARCH 8
 KICK-OFF AT 2 P.M.
 MAIN STREET, ST. CHARLES
- 2008 ANNUAL LAZARUS HOUSE DINNER/AUCTION**
 SATURDAY, APRIL 19
 6 P.M.
 DUPAGE EXPO CENTER



Message from the Executive Director

It was below zero again last night. Tonight it's snowing steadily and I understand it's not supposed to stop until morning. As I write this one of our staff is doing intake with a new family while another staff puts fresh sheets on the last two beds available in the family room. Other staff are meeting the minute to minute needs of the men in the emergency shelter, the women and children at the women and children's center, and the men, women and children who reside in our Center for Transitional Living. As if this wasn't enough activity, our Outreach staff work late tonight so they can accommodate those who need rent, mortgage or utility assistance and aren't available to meet during the day because they are working. As our economy worsens, more and more people call to inquire about help to stay housed. We are grateful for the opportunity to help, but we are very pressed for space, especially for our Outreach staff.

On a night like this (and there have been many snowy, bitterly cold nights this winter), I often think about what would happen if we

weren't here. Let me tell you about an amazing situation that took place yesterday that makes us all even more grateful that we are here. It also is a wonderful reminder that God is at work in our world, and especially at Lazarus House.



"I've heard it said that a coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous. I like to call them *Godincidences*."



Yesterday morning one of our staff stopped by to see how things were going. It was an especially cold Sunday morning, and she wanted to see if any additional help was needed. That's not unusual for our staff; they often stop by when they aren't scheduled to be here because they care and are always ready to go above and beyond. On this particular morning, she passed up several perfectly good parking spaces and parked in a place that wasn't

the most convenient. As she walked from her car to our door, her attention was drawn to something across the street and she felt led to walk in that direction and take a closer look. Much to her amazement, she saw a figure rise up from a stairwell where she had been huddled. The woman was so cold she could barely speak. Our staff immediately brought her in the building, piled blankets on her, gave her warm liquids and called 911. Her fingers were *literally* frozen.

She was treated by the paramedics and her family was contacted. We called the family today to find out how she was doing and learned that yesterday she was transferred to a hospital to receive specialized care for very severe frostbite. They are hopeful she will recover as it was very touch and go.

Why did our staff person stop by yesterday? Why did she park in an inconvenient place? What made her look across the street and, when she did, what told her that something was wrong and she should investigate further? I'm sure there are some people who would put all this down
(Continued on Page 2)

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|---|
| A LOOK AT OUR EDUCATION PROGRAM | 2 |
| FIELD OF DREAMS: OUR 2008 DINNER/AUCTION * PLEASE FIND YOUR INVITATION INSERT INSIDE | 3 |
| UPCOMING EVENTS | 3 |
| URGENT NEEDS | 4 |

Look for your invitation to our Annual Auction/Dinner inside!





Luke 16:19-31



Expanding on education: a learning experience for everyone

In the past four and a half years since the opening of the Center for Transitional Living (CTL) and the formation of our Education Program, we have been blessed to see many changes.

We began with one half-time educator administering programs that centered primarily on employment and parenting. At that time, attendees came from the Emergency Shelter (ES) and CTL. Today, increased staff and professional volunteers allow for an expanded curriculum that focuses on a wide variety of determined needs. Those who live, or have lived, in the CTL or Emergency Shelter, as well as those receiving case management through the Outreach program, are welcome to participate in these learning experiences.

The following is a sampling of programs developed for (or in conjunction with) instructors by Pam Heil, our Education Coordinator:

- Boundary-setting for adults and for parents wishing to help their children set good boundaries
- Self-Esteem
- Computer class

- Conflict Resolution for adults and children
- Domestic Violence
- Healthy Relationships
- Homework assistance and tutoring
- Job Skills and Support for the unemployed/underemployed
- Life Skills
- Men's Group (Process Addictions)
- Money Management and no-cost tax preparation
- Relapse Prevention
- Women's Issues

Participation in our Education Program increased during the past fiscal year with a total of 1,802 attendees (duplicated) to various Lazarus House classes. As a result, we have witnessed some remarkable outcomes, not the least of which appeared in the form of guest enthusiasm and change in attitude and direction. We are pleased to present these educational opportunities to those who will benefit most in their quest for independent living.

(Message from the Executive Director continued from page 1)

to "coincidences." I've heard it said that a coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous. I like to call them "Godincidences" rather than coincidences, but we also call them miracles. At Lazarus House, we are used to seeing miracles, but I hope we never take them for granted and never take credit for the amazing things that happen here by God's grace.

We have many stories over the years that have made it clear that God is taking care of this community and using Lazarus House as one of the ways to do that. I remember a number of years ago stopping at an all night grocery store on my way home around midnight and encountering a very disheveled man who I learned had been hanging around the store all evening. I began to talk to the man in an effort to find out where he came from and learned that he had been living in a sewer pipe at a nearby location. He had been living with his family in the community but that wasn't working out, so he left and found shelter the best way he could. I remember bringing the man back to Lazarus House around 1 a.m. and scurrying around to find clean clothes and shoes, as everything he was wearing had to be thrown away. I'm happy to tell you that we were able to connect that man with mental health services and he worked with the mental health provider to receive the care he needed. The last we heard he was living independently with help from the mental health provider and he was doing quite well. What a blessing to be part of the miracle!

One of my favorite Scripture passages is from Matthew 25: "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger

and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me."

We meet each Monday as a staff to pray together and ask God's blessing upon our week. Today one of our prayers was that we would see God's face in the face of each of those we serve, whether they are guests, others who come for help, or the volunteers that bless us while being blessed by their serving here.

What would have happened to that young woman yesterday if Lazarus House weren't here? I pray that we will never have to find out what would have happened without Lazarus House to the many neighbors God will send to our doors over the coming years, because I believe that we will be here for many years to come. I believe that because God is so faithful to us; He established us, He blesses us, and He continues to call us to care. I also believe that because of the incredible kindness and generosity I have seen from this community over the years. You truly care about your neighbors in need and you want to help make a difference in their lives. You may not be physically at Lazarus House tonight on this below zero night in a snowstorm, but please know that each person who has provided food, volunteered their time, or sent a donation is here serving with us every day, and especially tonight. I thank God for each of you and thank God for the opportunities He gives us to serve, especially when there's a snowstorm and it's below zero.

Serving Him with you,

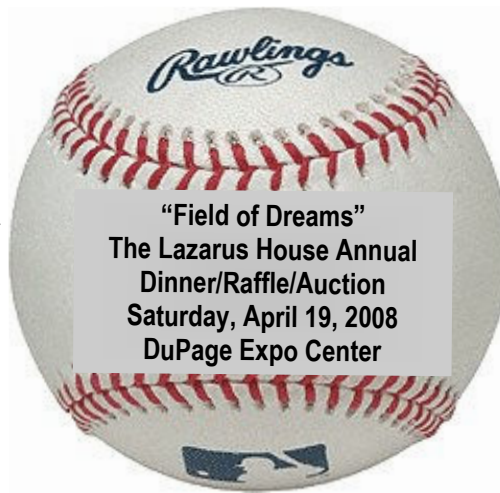
Darlene Marcussen

2008 Annual Dinner/Auction/Raffle Building a 'Field of Dreams'

Just as Ray Kinsella (Kevin Costner) took a leap of faith and built the baseball field for those to come and pursue their dreams, Lazarus House too was built on a leap of faith for our neighbors in need to come and pursue their dreams! We've come a long way together since those early years, serving more people and changing more lives in a positive direction while enabling many to pursue their dreams. With your endless help and generosity, we've moved well beyond providing just emergency shelter. Our wide range of services now includes case management, job training skills, transitional living services, rental and utility assistance and much more.

We invite all of you who have taken this leap of faith, as well as those who would like to begin the journey, to join us at our annual dinner, which will

include a "Mystery Bags Raffle" and Auction. The event promises to be fun, entertaining and inspiring as we look toward taking the next steps in building our Field of Dreams.



Batter up!

Please join us at 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 19th at the DuPage Expo Center. Step onto the field for a night of new and mysterious events. Be a homerun hitter for Lazarus House and join us in your favorite baseball team's shirt, cap, or casual dress.

To help the team:

We are accepting donations of items or cash donations to help purchase items for our "Mystery Bags Raffle" and the Live and

Silent Auctions. If you are able to help or would like more information about our event, please call Donna Bauer at 630-587-2144

Lazarus House receives awards

Lazarus House was the honored recipient of two awards at the February 1 Charlemagne Awards ceremony by the St. Charles Chamber of Commerce. The agency received a 2007 Civic Image Award for its Community Rental Subsidy Program. Through this program, managed by Liz Eakins, many dozens of households annually are able to remain independent who otherwise would be homeless.

Lazarus House also received a Community Development Award for the new Women and Children's Day Center. Since the facility was opened in October 2006, the number of children served at Lazarus House has increased dramatically (a 73% increase from the prior fiscal year!) The building provides a homey environment for children to play, do homework, attend support groups and for women to build life skills and receive case management.

Want to help?
We've got a place for you!

Volunteer Orientation
Saturday, February 23
9-10:30 a.m.
Lazarus House

For all those interested in volunteering at Lazarus House, a volunteer orientation will be held on Saturday, February, 23. Please join us on a tour of the shelter to become familiar with what we do. Listen to a short discussion of the different areas in which to volunteer and, have your questions on volunteering answered. For more information or to register contact Donna Bauer at 630-587-2144.

Non Profit
Permit #206
U.S. Postage
Paid
St. Charles, IL

Lazarus House
214 Walnut Street
St. Charles, IL 60174



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Visit our
Website at:



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Please help with these urgent needs

With the onset of the cold and snowy winter weather many of our supplies are being readily depleted. We need your help. For several weeks we have had an urgent need for the following supplies:

- Coffee
- Powdered coffee creamer
- Milk
- Powdered drink mixes, sweetened
- Paper towels
- 13-gallon trash bags
- Orange Juice

If you can, please help us by purchasing and dropping off any of these supplies. You can drop off supplies Monday - Saturday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. We are grateful for your support!

NEWS FLASH – BUILDING PURCHASED FEB. 15, 2008

You would think that at Lazarus House we would be used to miracles by now because we've had so many. I could spend the next several hours filling pages with all the truly miraculous things that have happened here. In fact when I retire some day, I hope to do just that. So, you'd think that we'd get used to God blessing us in big ways, but what He did just recently is so amazing I absolutely have to share it with everyone.

We are very blessed to have a strong rental assistance program. We have both one-time emergency money for those who are behind with their rent, mortgage and utilities temporarily, and an ongoing rental subsidy program for those whose limited income will not be improving. We currently have 24 households in our ongoing subsidy program (11 of which are households whose only income is Social Security Disability). Last year, we assisted 68 households with one time emergency funds so they did not lose their housing.

Folks come in and meet with our staff, who explain not only how our programs work but also tell those applying what other services may be available in the community. It isn't always possible to help everyone (the grantors send rules with the grant money that we must abide by), but it is our hope that everyone who comes here will learn of some resource or additional help so their situation can improve.

We get many calls each week and lots of folks come in to meet with our staff, and we are most grateful. If you know of someone from our community who might benefit from these programs, please have them call our outreach department at 630-587-5872. While we are blessed by all of this, we have also been challenged. We've had to add two staff to handle the extra workload and are in need of space for not only these two staff to occupy, but also space for the many visitors that come to inquire about these programs, often bringing their families along as well, either for support or because they didn't have child care. While all are welcome, we have rapidly gone from "cozy" to downright crowded. We've carved some space out in our present facility by putting up some temporary walls, but clearly this is far from ideal.

Last fall, the building that housed a bicycle shop around the corner from our main facility went on the market. Some of our staff mentioned this to me and I told them that I too had seen the "For Sale" sign, but I was not sure if this is what God wanted us to do. To be honest, I was of two minds about this house. We just recently finished buying and renovating our Women and Children's Day Center, and while we have been incredibly blessed by this additional space, it was a great deal of work to get it ready. On the other hand, WE NEED SPACE for our outreach/rental subsidy programs. We are dedicated to doing all we can to help people stay in their housing if possible, or return them to housing in a way that will help them stay housed long term. Our ability to be as effective as possible in this area is impacted by space issues.

Since my sense about what to do was both pro and con, I told God that I would do nothing. I told Him that if He wanted us to have this house, He would have to give it to us. Christmas came and went and my husband and I took some time away to visit our daughter who lives in Florida. While there I got a call from staff who told me that a very kind person from the community called to say that they were feeling led to give us a house. They didn't have a particular property in mind and wondered how we could best work together on this. *"I know the plans I have for you" says the Lord, "Plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope"* (Jeremiah 29:11). It would appear that in the case of Lazarus House, those plans sometimes include actual plats of survey! What a blessing to have God so clear and so generous. It is my prayer that this space will bless our entire community for many years to come, as people who are in need will have a welcoming, accessible place to come for help and information. I pray that the donor is blessed as well, knowing that they have been part of God's plan to serve and care for His people in our community through the years.

In conversation with the donor, it became clear that the best way to proceed was for the donor to put the down payment on the home and turn it over to Lazarus House, who would assume title and responsibility for the rest of the purchase price, renovations, and ongoing expenses. As a 501 c 3 not-for-profit organization, we are able to solicit donations and write grants for capital expenses, something private donors cannot do. We closed on the house February 15th and already have promises for the renovation work. We do have a \$100,000 loan, and would gladly welcome any relief we can get for this expense. If you would like to give us a gift, either to help with our ongoing expenses or the purchase of the house, be invited to do so either via the enclosed envelope or through Pay Pal on our website (www.LazarusHouseOnline.com). God continues to bless us and uses us to bless the community. Thank you for being part of that blessing. To God be the glory!