



The Bangor Area Homeless Shelter

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Annual Report

September 23, 2014

Fiscal Year 2014



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Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Bangor Area Homeless Shelter to support and strengthen the community by providing emergency shelter and supportive services to people who are homeless, or at risk and to advocate for collaborative, locally driven solutions to end homelessness.

Vision Statement

It is the vision of the BAHS to be a leading partner in insuring that no person in the Grater Bangor area ever has to spend a night on the streets or in the woods because he or she cannot find or cannot afford safe housing. We believe in the principle that safe, affordable housing is a fundamental human right and our primary aim is to offer a stabilizing base and support for homeless men and women as they transition back into the community. We believe that services offered should actively involve those in need of assistance, be of high quality and be delivered with dignity and respect. Our concern is for both emergency care and the development of affordable housing for all.

President's Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2014

This year and every year, I am awed and deeply humbled by the generosity of both material and spirit that the greater Bangor community shows to the guests of the Bangor Area Homeless Shelter. It falls to me to be the one who has the honor and privilege of saying thank you to all those who give their time and treasure.

I am often struck by the contrasting realities of the Shelter. On the one hand, our guests are experiencing a daily reality that is sometimes difficult to imagine and sometimes all too near. On the other, our community consistently shows a degree of support and caring that never stops surprising.

The Shelter faced its share of triumph and tragedy this year. Funding is always a struggle, but we are fortunate to be fiscally sound thanks to consistently wise expense management and donations that exceed our expectations every year. Even though sadness accompanies the departure of a long-time staff member, new staff step into new opportunities. We have also been able to conduct some long-needed maintenance on the Shelter building, repairing some brickwork, replacing the awning, and improving the signage.

This year, the Board began a new strategic planning process. During a retreat earlier in the year, we revisited our mission and vision – which remain unchanged – and began looking at new ways we could advance our mission. We are beginning to anticipate that our long-time Executive Director, Dennis Marble, will retire at some point in the foreseeable future. As stewards of the Shelter, the Board will face a tremendously difficult task in replacing him and we will approach that task thoughtfully over the next few years. During a leadership transition, clarity and continuity of mission is the most important function the Board will provide.

I would like to thank each Board member for serving the Bangor Area Homeless Shelter and our community: David Casavant, JD Dougherty, Gail Kelly, Rob Kissinger, D'arcy Main-Boyington, Kelly Maltz, Kathie Moring, Randy Poulton, Megan Randlett, Bruce Reddy, Rita Steadman, and Chris Winstead. This group is always well prepared and contributes intellectually to each and every issue we face. The work representing the Shelter is time consuming, and I appreciate their willingness to continue to serve BAHS.

Lastly, the BAHS could not be successful without our excellent staff, ably led by Dennis Marble and Rowena Griffin. No matter the challenge, our staff has met it head on.

With Best Regards,
Scott Blake, President

Executive Director's Annual Report to the Corporation

Predictably, this past fiscal year brought high points and low, continuing challenges and some new ones. The Bangor Area Homeless Shelter continues to meet real needs experienced by very real people, and I believe we continue to learn from our experiences.

Threats to BAHS and its mission, and especially those we serve, continue to emanate from government at both the state and federal levels. Essentially, policies designed to help people living in poverty and with housing and health needs are not enacted and supported, and there is a lot of messaging blaming and attacking poor people from those on the far right. Examples of bad behavior are promoted in neon signage while very little light is shown on people who have to dedicate every waking moment to overcoming severe challenges and high odds. I count my blessings that I was not born into a life that included violence against me and my family followed by threats of deportation because I was 14 and not “legal.”

Policy work and belief sets have a way of trickling down to entities on the ground like BAHS. As a percent of cost, federal and state financial support is much less than 15 years ago. And expectations have risen geometrically about accounting for the support that we do receive. There are two major consequences resulting from being directed to acquire and utilize more hardware and expend more time and effort on data collection and reporting: an increasing percentage of the government support we receive is directed to activities that do not represent direct service to people in need, and we are incrementally and inexorably institutionalizing homeless providers. Last fall we set aside \$1,000 and spent it to place folks at risk whom we could not shelter into short term stays in area motels. We would like to devote more resources to affordable housing.

We continue to do our small part in promoting and providing affordable housing. In addition to on-going collaborative relationships with housing developers like Community Housing of Maine and Penquis Housing, we may be close to launching a new product created through a collaborative team including Bangor Housing, the City of Bangor and a retired architectural engineer. Stay tuned!

Past year initiatives included

- A clean up of “The Pines” along with United Way, PCHC/Hope House and the City
- Upgrades to our website and facebook page
- The launch of our blog (“The view from 263 Main”)
- Modest gardens (in a communal plot off Spring St. and next to the Shelter)

Finally, we note the passing of the Shelter's first Board President, Mary Hale, in February. She worked hard and translated her compassion and passion into this building and agency, which is now completing its 28th consecutive year of service. I know she would be proud of the staff and volunteers who take our mission and turn it into real, loving work.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dennis R. Marble, Executive Director