

First Light's 2014 Volunteer Appreciation Pancake Breakfast



First Light will honor Cheri Amos, First Light's Volunteer of the Year, and all the volunteers who make First Light shine.

Saturday, November 1, 2014

8:30 to 11:00 a.m.

**The Clubhouse on Highland
2908 Highland Avenue South
Birmingham, Alabama 35205**

Each year more than 1,000 volunteers cook and serve meals, serve on special committees, spend the night, and entertain and educate our guests. First Light volunteers donated more than 10,000 hours last year—contributions valued at over \$175,000. But their value is really immeasurable because each moment a volunteer shares with a First Light guest lets her know she is part of a caring community.

There will be delicious pancakes, bacon, sausage, juice, coffee, adult beverages and prizes. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children (there will be tip jars to reward outstanding service.) Get your tickets at the door or at www.firstlightshelter.org. For information about sponsoring The Pancake Breakfast contact iani.powell@firstlightshelter.org.



Honor Someone or Say Happy Birthday with Our New Greeting Cards



When you want to honor a friend or business associate or wish them happy birthday in a way that carries deeper significance, you might consider our Happy Birthday or General Greeting card.

Typically, if someone sends a contribution to First Light in honor of someone, we have sent a letter notifying that person that a gift was given in

their honor. We've decided to offer something NEW by creating the two greeting cards pictured here.

You can go to the Donate Now section of the website and indicate that you would like for us to send a BIRTHDAY CARD or a general HONOR OF card. (For those of you who are familiar with our Holiday Lights program – it works the same way. You simply make the contribution and indicate which greeting card you prefer and we take it from there.) Tell us who is being honored and give us their address. We will mail the greeting card to your honoree and confirm to you that it has been sent.

Obviously, this is a fund raising measure for us AND it offers a nice way to acknowledge someone important to you. It also provides another way to support the shelter throughout the year. We hope you will introduce lots of people to our mission using this option for giving.





FIRST LIGHT

A Center for Homeless Women and Children

2014 Volunteer of the Year

When times got tough for Cheri Amos, some of her friends thought she wouldn't be able to help out at First Light any more. But she knew better. Cheri has been active with First Light since she moved to Birmingham in 1986 and it was the Women's Hospitality Shelter in the basement of the First Presbyterian Church. She loved helping out at that small, makeshift shelter and remembers fondly how peaceful it was to share meals there with the guests "as a family."



Cheri was inspired by friends she admires to become an advocate for women and children and she has donated many hours to the Junior League, the YWCA, and First Light. She tries to "think outside the box" and keeps a keen eye out for practical things to collect that she keeps in storage until she donates them where they will be most useful. Cheri works full time in medical sales but finds time to serve breakfast at

First Light one Sunday a month.

Cheri's favorite time at First Light is Christmas. She loves to gather her friends, her children, and their friends to enjoy Christmas Day at First Light. Her twins, Caroline and Schaefer, are 20 years old now and she is proud they share her conviction that Christmas is about sharing hope and peace and not about gifts or money. She raised them to know "that we have to give and to give back." They cook Christmas Eve, arrive very early on Christmas morning, and share the holiday with the women and children of First Light.

Cheri believes that all her life experiences, good times and bad, led her to serve women and children. Her story could have been much more difficult. She was born into a very sad situation but she was fortunate to have been adopted into a good family. A few years ago, she faced tragedy financially and emotionally. She lost a great deal and continues to struggle to rebuild her life. Cheri was moved by her experiences to battle for legislative changes that might protect others, and she believes her challenges give her a special understanding of and compassion for the guests at First Light. She finds comfort in her faith and in doing what she can for others.

People like Cheri Amos make First Light shine.

We like to focus that light back onto a volunteer who makes the world a better place. Congratulations, Cheri, you are our 2014 Volunteer of the Year!

Announcing our NEW website design: www.firstlightshelter.org

We've been working with our website service provider for months to create a new design. They have also revamped the functionality for us to edit and update things with greater ease. Starting in mid September, the new design is ready for our friends and supporters to view and use.

We are excited about the new look and have also improved the online donation function to be a safe and secure process that does NOT leave the site in order for you to complete the donation process.



Special Holiday Plans for 2014!



FIRST LIGHT

A Center for Homeless Women and Children

Holiday Lights

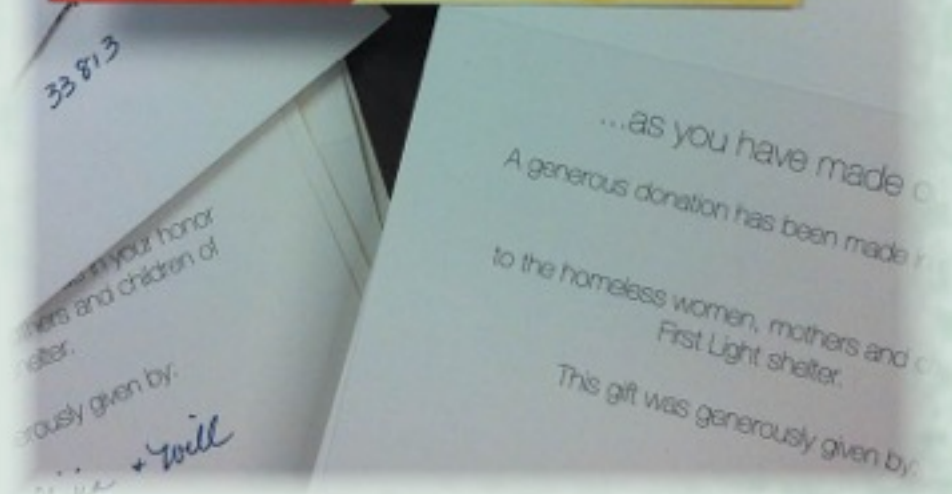
Holiday Greetings With A Purpose

Our annual holiday fundraiser is known as Holiday Lights. This offers you an attractive means for sending holiday greetings to friends, business associates, family members, and community associates.

There are two cards in the program. One expresses holiday greetings in honor of the recipient. The other card announces that a contribution has been made in memory of your recipient's loved one.

This project is one of First Light's efforts to raise funds for operation of the shelter. The greeting cards express a sentiment that honors people and sometimes, introduces them to our mission for the first time. We feel it gives a deeper meaning to such a gesture. To give this a more personal touch, we hand address and affix a postage stamp to the envelope.

Send us your Christmas or Hannukah mailing list. This is a lovely way to send personal or business holiday greetings and brighten days at the shelter.



ACTION STEP:

We will be mailing the Holiday Lights order forms to you in October. Simply complete the order form with names and addresses and enclose your donation or credit card information.

Another option is to go to the First Light website and click the Holiday Lights link. Your donation can be made online once you complete the order form portion.

Shopping Day

New Toys and Games

Many of our guests in the shelter and in our housing programs cannot afford to buy gifts for the children in their lives.

Generosity from the community has allowed us to create an event we now call "Shopping Day." After receiving toys and games for children of all ages (infants through high school) we sort the items according to age and gender. The Program Room is turned into a mini toy store. We invite our ladies to come to "Shopping Day" to select 1-3 items (depending on how many items we have) for each of their children or grandchildren.

After the ladies make their selections we have 7-8 volunteers waiting across the hall who will wrap the gifts to make it really special for them and their loved ones.

Every Fall we go into this project uncertain of how many toys and games we might receive.

ACTION STEP:

If you and your group or associates are interested in supplying NEW & UNWRAPPED gift items for kids of all ages, please contact
Deb Everson at 323-4277.

ACTION STEP:

Let Deb know if you would like to be a volunteer gift wrapper for Shopping Day!

ACTION STEP:

Donate wrapping paper, tape and bows!



Wish Lists

For Women In Apartments

Deepen your experience of Christmas and holiday giving by taking a two item Wish List from a woman in one of our housing programs and supply those items as wrapped gifts. We currently have approximately 50 women and ten children in our supportive housing programs, so there are both singles and a few families to choose from. A typical list for a woman might be: blue jacket size XL + "bed in a bag" (a matching set of bed coverings.) For some having a matching comforter and shams is a real luxury. For the children there may be a specific doll and game or such.

Doing this can be great fun. Consider getting a friend or a group to participate with you.

ACTION STEP:

To request a WISH LIST you can call/email
Deb Everson: volunteer@firstlightshelter.org



Staff Updates

Camilla Jones became our receptionist in October, 2013. She is a vibrant addition to the staff and clearly loves life. She welcomes every task with glee. Really! If you call the shelter or come in to volunteer make sure you introduce yourself. She is definitely a pleasure to have on our team.



Camilla Jones



Sheri Sanders

Sheri Sanders joined our social services staff last Winter. She is a licensed BSW who studied at UAB. Sheri is married to Blake Sanders. They have two children: a son, Jailan, and daughter, Blakely. She is clearly a team player and complements a great staff of social workers. Sheri replaces the position held by Kelsey Wenger, who left last Fall to move closer to family in Illinois.

Christmas Morning Gift Bags

For Emergency Shelter Guests

Each year we try to give the ladies in the shelter a nice Christmas morning. Cheri Amos will be here with friends and family to provide a lovely and bountiful breakfast. While the ladies are having their morning feast, Santa's elves (volunteers) come to place the gift bags on each bed and at the door of the women living on 4th floor. We also give bags to all our overflow guests.

A list of 20-25 items is created with the plan to acquire 65-70 of every item. We place one of every item in each of the bags so that we end up with all the bags containing exactly the same things.

To make this happen we invite groups, families or individuals to supply 70 of an item. Typical items going into the bag would be journals, pens, socks, sweat shirts, pajamas, lotion, etc. We like to give the ladies gift items they don't receive on a day-to-day basis here at the shelter since these are "gifts."



Deb Everson has created the suggested list of items to be included. In some cases, if an item is a little more costly, two different groups may split the project.

ACTION STEP:

If you or your group wish to contribute 70 of one item for the gift bags, please call or email Deb at volunteer@firstlightshelter.org to learn which items are still needed.



Planned Giving

Make the connection.

Does your financial advisor really know your passions and your dreams for the future? A recent study suggests that financial advisors may not be learning what they need to know to help their clients reach financial goals that really reflect their values. The U. S. Trust Study of the Philanthropic Conversation conducted in partnership with The Philanthropic Initiative discovered that the vast majority (88%) of financial advisors believe that discussions about an individual's philanthropic activities and plans are important, and most of them (89%) reported discussing philanthropy with their clients. One-third of advisors surveyed said they initiate these discussions. But only 55% of individuals surveyed said they discussed philanthropy with their advisors, and about half said they are typically the ones to initiate these conversations.

Your desire to have a positive impact on our community and the world, your commitment to give back in gratitude for your good fortune, and the legacy you want to leave are too important to be neglected. Make sure those you depend on to guide you in your financial planning know that for you it's not just about money. They can introduce you to tools and giving vehicles that you may not have thought of—and they really meant to ask you.

Make sustaining connections with tomorrow. Please advise us if First Light is included in your planned giving. For more information contact lani.powell@firstlightshelter.org.



NEWS FLASH

Online Contributions Safer and Easier

First Light has revised and enhanced its online payment section of the website. Donors can now make online contributions safely and securely without ever leaving the site. You do not have to have another account with an online credit processor. Your credit card information is all that is needed.

NEWS FLASH #2

You can arrange for automatic monthly contributions!

Simply go to the Give Hope/Donate Now section of our website www.firstlightshelter.org



FIRST LIGHT

A CENTER FOR HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

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