



FIRST LIGHT

A Center for Homeless Women and Children

the LIGHT

Fall 2006

Mayor Kincaid Visits First Light!



Mayor Bernard Kincaid, Ruth Crosby and Rachel Cabaniss
Photo courtesy of Carolyn Johnson

According to a recent study, an alarming percentage of Birmingham's homeless population is chronically homeless. Chronic homelessness is defined as being disabled and having been homeless for a continuous year or four times in the past three years. Nationally, 10-20% of the homeless population fits this description. In Birmingham, that number jumps to a whopping 30%.

In an effort to address this problem, Mayor Bernard Kincaid has established the Mayor's Commission to End Chronic Homelessness. The purpose of the commission is to develop a strategic plan for ending chronic homelessness in Birmingham. Rachel Cabaniss, First Light's former Development Director, served on the commission and persuaded Mayor Kincaid to pay First Light a visit! He was welcomed with open arms and given a tour of the shelter. He even purchased one of the cross necklaces made by the guests of First Light in the art therapy program!



Light the Night with Holiday Lights!

Give the gift of light to brighten the lives of homeless women and children at First Light! You can give a unique and meaningful gift to your loved ones while brightening the lives of homeless women and children. Lights will shine from the First Light building in honor or remembrance of someone special through your donation to First Light. First Light will mail a hand-addressed holiday card to the recipient of your gift. The lights will shine throughout the holiday season.

Red Light = \$10 Green Light = \$20 Blue Light = \$30
Gold Light = \$50
String of Lights = \$100

A Holiday Lights brochure will be arriving in your mailbox in mid-November! Online ordering will also be available at www.firstlightshelter.org



A FOND FAREWELL

Things are really changing here at First Light! We recently said goodbye to our Development Director, Rachel Cabaniss. Rachel began working at First Light in August of 2000 and occupied many roles during her six years here! She put her whole heart into everything that she did for the women and children at First Light and we will miss her conviction and enthusiasm. Rachel has moved back to her hometown of Florence, Alabama to serve as the Executive Director of Safe Place, a domestic violence shelter established in 1978. We are sad to see her go, but know that she is continuing to make a difference in the lives of women and children. Farewell and good luck Rachel!

Welcome New First Light Staff



We are pleased to announce that we have a wonderful new receptionist! April Graham joined the First Light staff in April of this year and has since made herself at home! The guests of First Light love having April around to make them smile and the staff loves having her around because of her great attitude and eagerness to pitch in and

help. April says that she has learned an important lesson since coming to work at First Light: "I've learned not to take any little thing for granted anymore." We couldn't agree more. Welcome to the First Light family April!

Shelter Stories

A previous First Light guest recently began volunteering overnight. This is what she had to say about her experience: "Thank you for the opportunity to give back what was so freely given to me. It wasn't too long ago I was a resident here. I am very grateful. These are a great group of ladies- very respectful and quiet. I'm looking forward to coming back." -Grateful former First Light guest

Volunteer of the Month

April 2006– Pauline Fiorella
St. Paul's Cathedral

May 2006– Patt and Kent Lytle
St. Mark Catholic Church

June 2006– The Devos Family
Independent Presbyterian Church

July 2006– Sara Coleman
Bellsouth Pioneers and BWNA

August 2006– Kristin Johnson
St. Stephen's Catholic Church, Southside

September 2006– Terri and Jon

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 was signed by President Bush in August. It allows certain individuals to make charitable contributions directly from their IRA's. There are several limitations including that: the rollover must occur before December 31, 2007; the donor must be over the age of 70 1/2 when the rollover is made; the maximum amount is \$100,000 per year; and the rollover must go directly to a charity. Donors between the ages of 59 1/2 and 70 1/2 may withdraw money from their IRA and give it to a charity without paying the 10% early withdrawal penalty. If you are interested in making a contribution to First Light from your IRA, please consult your tax advisor or your IRA custodian.

2007 First Light Gala

Fine Art, Fine Wine and Great Getaways!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! THE 9TH ANNUAL FIRST LIGHT GALA HAS BEEN SET FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 13TH, 2007 AT 6PM AT THE CAHABA GRAND CONFERENCE CENTER. THIS YEAR'S GALA IS BEING HELD IN HONOR OF REV. SUSAN CLAYTON AND CAROLYN KING FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO AND SUPPORT OF FIRST LIGHT. LYNNE ROGERS WILL BE HONORED AS THE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR FOR THE COUNTLESS HOURS SHE HAS DEDICATED TO FIRST LIGHT. THE EVENING WILL FEATURE A SILENT AUCTION AND A FINE ART, FINE WINE AND GREAT GETAWAYS LIVE AUCTION BY KEN JACKSON.

THIS IS FIRST LIGHT'S MOST IMPORTANT FUNDRAISER OF THE YEAR! PLEASE JOIN US FOR A LOVELY EVENING WHILE SUPPORTING THE HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY! TICKETS ARE \$125 EACH AND INCLUDE THE SILENT AND LIVE AUCTIONS, A SEATED DINNER AND AN OPEN BAR FEATURING BEER, WINE, SODA AND WATER. A CASH BAR WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR MIXED DRINKS. EVENT AND TABLE SPONSORSHIPS ARE ALSO



Hats Off To the First Light Club!



The First Light Club at Pizitz Middle School was formed midway through the school year 2005-2006 with the goals of educating students about the issue of homelessness and providing assistance to the guests of First Light. During one of their first meetings, the students watched the First Light video and received a tour of the shelter after school. Students met on Fridays throughout the school year during their study period, as well as after school. They made posters to encourage the donation of toothbrushes and toothpaste and then collected and delivered the items. They worked together to create a colorful spring bulletin board to decorate the dining room at First Light. This year, the Pizitz First Light club plans to continue to collect needed supplies, to learn and educate others about the issue of homelessness and to create another bulletin board. In addition, the "First Lighters" have made the commitment to serve Thanksgiving dinner to the shelter guests. Students have been busy planning the menu and grocery shopping lists, contacting businesses to make donations, and raising money to purchase the food. These students are generous and dedicated young people who are inspiring the student body of Pizitz Middle School to participate in their community through volunteerism. The "First Lighters" are shining their light to make their world a better place.

back row: William Reinhardt, Seneethia Freeman, Tiara Redwine, Bobbi Laurie-Card
 third row: Megan McCaw, Madeline Ricketts, Stephanie Ray, Austin Locke
 second row: Mary Catherine Fahr, Hannah Schelonka, Lucy Phillips, Sarah Rehnert
 first row: Taylor Edwards, Historian; Alexa Shuler, President; Janee' Davis, Vice President; Olivia Bowser, Secretary
 not pictured: Andrew Wisner, Laney Anthony and Giovanni Gregol

Will You Help?

YOU can make a difference in the lives of Birmingham's homeless women and children.

YOU can provide shelter from a life on the streets where there is no place to go when it is raining and cold, except for a business building's overhang, under a bridge, the public library or a cardboard house made from boxes rescued from a dumpster.

YOU can make a sanctuary available to women and children 24 hours a day with social and counseling services. Because First Light exists, no woman or her children has to sleep on the street, in a car or stay in an unhealthy situation.

YOU can help provide specialized programs geared to chronically mentally ill women, those who cannot complete traditional day programs.

No one plans on being homeless, abused, mentally ill or addicted to drugs or alcohol.

No one deserves to be homeless.

Will you help provide shelter and essential services to homeless women and children in a place of hope and love with a sense of home and family?

If you don't, who will?

I (we) give the following gift, offering a physical example of commitment, care and concern for the homeless women and children in our community.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------|
| \$10,000 or more | Benefactor |
| \$5,000 to \$9,999 | Patron |
| \$1,000-\$4,999 | Investor |
| \$500-\$999 | Sponsor |
| \$250-\$499 | Sustainer |
| \$100-\$249 | Advocate |
| \$1-\$99 | Friend |

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

This contribution is made: Name: _____

In memory of: Address: _____

In honor of: City/State/Zip: _____

This is an anonymous gift. Your name will not be included in our annual report.