



FIRST LIGHT

A Center for Homeless Women and Children

# the LIGHT

Fall 2007

## VOLUNTEERS RENOVATE THE FIRST LIGHT COURTYARD

The First Light courtyard got a beautiful makeover in June, when a group of adult and children volunteers from the *Jefferson County 4-H Jr. Leader Club* came to visit the shelter. Kelly Mosley, Co-Leader of the Riverview 4-H Club, had contacted First Light wanting to get the group involved in a project to benefit homeless women and children. When she came in to tour the shelter, she fell in love with the idea of sprucing up the courtyard.

Kelly began approaching Birmingham businesses to ask for supplies and funding, and they were far more generous than she expected! Thanks to community support, including generous donations from Lowe's, Kelly was able to obtain a brand new picnic table, paint, tons of beautiful flowers, a tomato plant, potting soil and top soil, and more! She and her fellow club members then came to First Light and spent a few days painting, assembling the picnic table, making decorations, planting the new flowers and pruning the existing plants.

The ladies absolutely love to spend time in the beautiful courtyard. Shortly after the renovations, they made use of the new table and updated surroundings during a Fourth of July cookout. New guests coming into the shelter especially appreciate the beauty of the courtyard and the feeling of safety it provides.

We cannot thank the members of the Jefferson County 4-H Jr. Leaders Club enough for their enthusiasm and dedication, and for bringing beauty into the lives of the women and children at First Light!



### Special Thanks to the Following for Their Generous Contributions

The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham

Carolyn King

First Presbyterian Church

### In This Issue

Food for Thought	2
FUMC Donations	2
Honors and Memorials	3
Cross Necklace Update	3
Make a Difference	3
Wish List	4

### Volunteers of the Month

<b>May:</b>	<b>Martine Craven</b> Digital Trends Corporation Professional Women's Sertoma Club
<b>June:</b>	<b>Gloria Albert &amp; Frances Williams</b> The Cathedral of Saint Paul
<b>July:</b>	<b>Mary Ann Murphy</b> Cathedral of the Cross

# Food for thought (by Deb)

## *The mattress project*



This past Spring Ruth and I were examining the mattresses in the Emergency Shelter. They were the original ones purchased when First Light opened its doors in 2000 and are fairly worn out. We discussed funding options for replacing them.

I asked if I could “try something.” I thought it could be a deeply meaningful experience for women in the community to help women in need by having them purchase a mattress, one at a time. Folks are always trying to think of ways to “make a difference” in their community and it seemed to me that this was a really personal connection that would speak to the heart. This felt like the right way to do this. And so it was.

The message went out via email and word of mouth. One by one, calls or responses came in, saying, “count me in,” or “I am sending you a check today.”

As of mid June, we had the money we needed to replace all 42 mattresses in the Emergency Shelter! I guess we could have asked an organization for one lump sum...but somehow, it seemed so appropriate to let women make connections in this way.

To all of you who participated...each night as you lay your head on your pillow...know that instead of sleeping on the street, a woman or child is sleeping on a mattress YOU provided. And here is a prayerful thought for all who participated in our mattress replacement project:

*O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen.*

*(Book of Common Prayer)*



## *Mattress Project Contributors*

Bluff Park Canterbury Class	Janice Johnson
BRESCO	Renee Johnson
Charlotte Woodson Antiques	Tami Johnson
Circle One, First United	Irene Ku
Methodist Church	Ruth Ann Lyman
Ferlisi Jolley Associates	Daniel & Susan Owen
Gardendale Presbyterian Women	Kathy Ranelli
Leeds Presbyterian Women	Nell Rush
Saint Peter's Catholic Church	John & Amy Sanders
Roger & Shelley Barlow	Joyce Sewell
Dwight & Melissa Brisendine	Carol Sosnin
Betsy Britain	Jefferson & Sumner Starling
Barney & Ruth Cook	Emma Taylor
Ann Crisler	Thomas & Kathy Thomson
Christopher & Katherine Foster	Dinah Toro
Kevin & Jayne Getsinger	Jackie Trimm
Catherine Heinzerling	Cathy Ward
William & Rebecca Hicks	Shirley Woodruff
Richard & Ann Hillhouse	



## FUMC Vacation Bible School Donations

This summer we received wonderful gifts from the First United Methodist Church in downtown Birmingham. The Vacation Bible School Program selected “fun with First Light” as their focus for donations throughout the term. The donations from FUMC fell into two categories: numerous kinds of art supplies and beads for our Art Therapy program; and games, puzzles, playing cards and the like for our Day Room.

Hannah Schock and her two children, Julianna and Josiah, (pictured above) delivered the items to FL two weeks later. Thirty minutes after they left, the women were at three different tables playing cards together! And the art therapy participants love the colored papers, glittery glues and many other kinds of supplies, including lots of beads for the beaded cross project.

We appreciate these contributions so much, and it is wonderful to be able to provide these things to our ladies. Thank you to FUMC—you have blessed many lives with your generosity.

# Honors and Memorials

## In honorarium

**Anita B. Hill**

Gift given by Craig Heyer

**Anna Donald**

Gifts given by Julian and Nancy Skinner and  
Robert and Martha Walthall

**Cameron Crowe**

Gift given by Robert and Martha Walthall

**Edward Quinn**

Gift given by Julian and Nancy Skinner

**Julie Stephens**

Gifts given by Julian and Nancy Skinner and  
Robert and Martha Walthall

**Kirke Cater**

Gift given by Julian and Nancy Skinner

**Nancy Skinner**

Gift given by Robert and Martha Walthall

**Ruth Crosby**

Gifts given by Valeri Cowart, Ilouise Hill and Mary Hodnette

## In memoriam

**Barbara Hullar**

Gift given by Michael Ward

**Lucille Cabaniss Krueger**

Gift given by Bill and Weesa Matthews

**Mae White**

Gift given by Julian and Nancy Skinner

**Jim Rimel**

Gift given by John and Jeanne Plaxco

**Rita Jean Baldone**

Gift given by J.C. and Kathy Ranelli

As so many of you know by now, the **beaded cross necklaces** made by the ladies in our Art Therapy program are a huge hit! The necklaces are made from old, donated jewelry and sold to benefit First Light. Not only have the crosses raised an astonishing \$34,000, but they are symbolic of the women we serve—thrown away and devalued by society, then transformed into something beautiful and useful when given care and attention. We would like to sincerely thank Marilyn Gross for her dedication to the project, as well as everyone who has donated beads and purchased crosses.

## YOU can make a difference

**Your donation to First Light will go directly toward serving the most needy members of our community—the homeless women and children of Birmingham.**

**Your gift will directly impact the lives of First Light guests by:**

- Making emergency shelter services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so that no woman or child has to sleep on the street or stay in an unhealthy situation
- Supplying nine units of permanent housing for women with serious mental illnesses
- Supporting one-on-one counseling for each guest and specialized counseling programs for guests with chronic mental illness who cannot participate in traditional day programs
- Funding Project Healthy Minds, which includes Life Skills classes, medication and transportation assistance, art therapy, movie therapy and group therapy
- **Providing a place of hope and love and a sense of family to the women and children who call First Light home**



Cross necklaces made by First Light guests

**Will you make a difference in the lives of Birmingham's homeless women and children by donating to First Light?**

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

- \$5,000
- \$1,000
- \$500
- \$250
- \$100
- \$50
- \$25
- Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**First Light accepts donations by check and credit card.**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card number (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date (mm/yy): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ **First Light accepts Visa and MasterCard**

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.

**First Light, Inc.**  
**2230 Fourth Avenue North**  
**Birmingham, AL 35203**

**205.323.4277**

**www.firstlightshelter.org**

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 Deborah Jackson, Shelter Assistant  
 Tameica Woods, Shelter Assistant  
 Marilyn A. Gross, Art Therapy Coordinator

**WISH LIST**

**Food**

(new, unopened packages only, please):

- Fruit
- Cereal and Cereal Bars
- Pop-tarts
- Instant grits and oatmeal (individual packets)
- Powdered drink mixes
- Paper or Styrofoam bowls and cups
- Plastic forks, spoons and knives
- Quart and gallon-size Ziploc bags
- Snacks for life skills programs

**Hygiene and Personal Items**

(new, unopened packages only, please):

- Cold, sinus, allergy and cough medications
- Children's over-the-counter medications
- Over-the-counter stomach medications
- Pain relief medications
- Pill boxes
- Feminine hygiene products
- Kleenex
- Lip balm
- Deodorant