



FIRST LIGHT

A Center for Homeless Women and Children

Hope • Opportunity • Dignity • Safety • Community • Hospitality

the LIGHT

Winter 2008

Birmingham Students Make a Difference at First Light

Through classes and clubs, students from all over Birmingham have been helping out at First Light in unique and meaningful ways.

Family Life Education students from Samford University recently conducted two sessions of Life Skills classes for First Light guests. One group spoke to the ladies about conflict resolution, while the other group led a class on health. Both groups used skits, games and visual aids to present their topics—there was even candy involved! These fun and interactive classes were the biggest part of the students' grade for a course taught by Jonathan Davis at Samford.

Pizitz Middle School students involved in the First Light Club also stopped by First Light to deliver much needed winter supplies to guests. This was the latest in a series of visits over the past three years, during which the club members have collected and donated countless toiletries, linens and more! The First Light Club is made up of sixth through eighth graders and led by Kathy Rogers.

Thanks so much to all the wonderful students helping the ladies at First Light!



The Samford students were a huge hit!



The Pizitz Middle School First Light Club



Health Class with Samford students

Food for Thought

Many people ask me what I have learned from all of the experiences in my life, and I say unhesitatingly: People are wonderful. It is true. People really are wonderful.

-Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Things are abuzz here at First Light, to say the least. We have been gathering donations from Birmingham's fine community of artists; we have solicited support from the corporate community; we have asked for Board members' and other volunteers' time and talents to prepare for the TENTH ANNUAL First Light GALA!!!

While it is important to note that the GALA is our biggest fundraiser, I hope you know that this event is truly **a celebration of who we are and what we do**. The First Light staff is a dedicated group of women. They help women in need, and they require no fanfare or accolades to do so. Our staff knows no boundaries where job description or time is concerned—we are mutually supportive and not one of us is above grabbing a mop, a broom or the pots and pans in the kitchen when help is needed. My love and respect for each person on our staff grows daily...it is inspiring and humbling.

Meeting and working with our donors and volunteers deepens my own personal commitment to First Light. The front door swings open every day with people who prepare and serve meals or spend the night or bring donations. On any given day, Shannon or I may send a note out mentioning a need and people sometimes respond before 24 hours have passed!

The GALA is our big fundraiser, yes, but it is truly **a statement of your faith in the guests we serve** and their potential. You give witness to a mission which says that our guests have NOT been forgotten, that they deserve support which lifts them up and shows them their own inner strengths. You sustain an agency which does good work, and you help to make it just that....such good work.

The GALA is a **celebration of the goodness of all the volunteers** who come every night, every month, every year. It **recognizes the generosity of donors** who gave cash donations, who brought linens and supplies, who purchased new mattresses, or who gave furniture and microwaves for women receiving permanent supportive housing.

People are wonderful...if you need reassurance, come to First Light on any day to watch the women we serve trying to build new futures and watch all those providing the assistance needed to make sure this happens. The GALA celebrates every guest, every staff member, every donor, every volunteer...and how wonderful people really are.

~Deb Everson



Special Thanks



To the Following Supporters of First Light

Jefferson Affordable Housing Initiative

Natalie O'Neal

The UAB Benevolent Fund

The Herbert and Peggy Stockham Foundation

Burr & Forman, LLC

The Stephens Foundation

City of Birmingham

The McDonald Family Foundation

The C. Eugene Ireland Foundation

Regions Charity Classic Foundation

WELCOME

NEW FIRST LIGHT STAFF!

Yvonne Hardy, Weekend Supervisor

Therese O'Hara, Shelter Assistant

Deborah Jackson, Shelter Assistant

Chaquita Pendleton, BSW, Emergency Shelter Social Worker

Francis Crowder, MSW, M.Ed., Bessemer HUD & Overflow Social Worker

You are invited to

The 10th Annual First Light Gala

Honoring

Ken Jackson

Volunteer of the Year

Joy O'Neal

Saturday, February 9th

Cahaba Grand Conference Center

6:00 pm Silent Auction

7:00 pm Seated Dinner, Program
and Live Auction by Ken Jackson

Cocktail Attire

Reply Card Enclosed



FIRST LIGHT

A CENTER FOR HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Volunteers of the Month

August:

Mary Anne Little, St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

September:

Mildred & Charlie Smith, Hopewell Baptist Church

October:

Melissa Brisendine, Independent Presbyterian Church

November:

Dinah Toro

December:

Kimberly Hain, The Cathedral of St. Paul



First Light Art Shop Opens Its Doors



Throughout the years, the guests of First Light have benefited from Art Therapy with Mrs. Marilyn Gross. An amazingly simple art form, the decorative crosses handmade by the women of First Light have provided an additional source of revenue for First Light, which is returned to the guests in the form of shelter and services. Additionally, these crosses have provided inspiration for their wearers as proof positive that "with God, all things are possible", even overcoming the difficulties and roadblocks associated with experiencing homelessness. In an effort to share with our fellow community members the emotions and talents of the guests of First Light as they make their transition from the instability of homelessness to eventual permanent housing, the Board and staff of First Light have opened the doors of the First Light Art Shop.



On November 18, 2007, the Art Shop officially opened. As a tribute to the dedication of Mrs. Marilyn Gross to the guests of First Light, Board Member, Weesa Matthews presented her a beautiful representation of a First Light cross created and donated by artist Wendy LoVoy of Wendy LoVoy Galleries. We are very proud to have Mrs. Marilyn as a part of our team. The attention, inspiration, and encouragement that she provides our guests are integral to the complete package of care that all of our guests need to succeed.

Please come and enjoy the artwork created by the women of First Light! The Art Shop is open Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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**



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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 April M. Graham, Receptionist
 Osarieme Erhunmwunsee, Shelter Assistant
 Deborah Jackson, Shelter Assistant
 Therese O'Hara, Shelter Assistant
 Marilyn A. Gross, Art Therapy Coordinator
 Yvonne Hardy, Weekend Supervisor

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