Cutbacks Threaten Interfaith Community Homeless Shelter
By Sarah Consoli, Agency Outreach Intern

The Interfaith Community Homeless Shelter has been in operation for 5+ years. Its mission is to provide overnight shelter for 20 Hampshire County homeless individuals each night during the 6 coldest months of the year. The shelter is a cooperative effort among the City of Northampton, ServiceNet and the volunteers of Friends of Hampshire County Homeless Individuals, Inc.

The shelter depends on dedicated volunteers to provide hot meals for the guests every night. The guests at the shelter are not only provided a hot meal, but they also receive a warm bed, a hot shower, breakfast, and case management assistance. The laundry is done by the House of Correction. Volunteers provide and serve the meals and donations from the community support the shelter.

The shelter also relies on volunteers to be at the shelter with a staff member to spend time with the guests and to perform light duties such as shelving laundry and answering the phone. Some Smith students are involved in this aspect of supporting the shelter. Quincy Clowe 06’ states in a message to Yvonne Freccero, the shelter fundraiser, “I volunteered on Wednesday night at the shelter and I just wanted to tell you it was an eye-opening experience. Everyone was very kind. I would love to continue volunteering, to listen and try to understand, to encourage them and for them to teach me as well.” This type of experience has proven to reward volunteers with a new understanding of the reality of homelessness.

S.O.S. is delighted to support the relationship between the Smith community and the shelter. Students have found this volunteer opportunity to be a rewarding experience and S.O.S. hopes that more students and faculty become involved and are willing to support the effort. Most recently, the shelter has asked for a monthly cleaning crew to arrive at the shelter on Saturday mornings to clean the shelter. The cleaning takes roughly 2 1/2 hours. Several faculty members have signed up, as well as LBTA, a student organization.

Volunteers make all the difference in these tough times.

March 2003
Sarah Consoli, Editor

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March/April Upcoming Events:
- April 8th, 12-1 pm ~ Community Ed Lunch (Children’s Aid and Family Service. (Wright Common Rm.)
- April 15th, 5:00-7:00 ~ Volunteer Recognition Dinner (College Club.)
- March 29th-April 6th ~ The First Annual Smith College Week of Service (Various locations at Smith College and other community service sites, see posters around campus and at the S.O.S. Office for event meetings and times.)
A Day of Service
By Susan Chun, Community Outreach Intern

For many years SOS has focused on encouraging student involvement in community service activities through house projects, short-term projects, long-term placement opportunities, and specialized internships. Due to an idea proposed by a Smith employee, the college will now offer a program that invites all Smith employees to actively volunteer in their communities. This “Day of Service” program, piloted on January 1, 2003, will give each Smith employee seven hours of paid time to engage in community service. Smith College President Carol Christ says, “I believe that we should all be active and responsible citizens of our communities. By giving employees a day of paid leave for community service, I hope not only to provide help to local organizations where they need it but to make a substantive commitment to the ideal of serving our communities.”

The SOS website, www.smith.edu/sos, has long been a source for students to find information about upcoming projects or events. In order to promote Smith College’s engagement with neighboring communities, SOS recently launched a new web page specifically geared towards employees. Check it out at www.smith.edu/sos, go to Get Involved and click Employees.

SOS Cross Cultural Collaborative Project
By Sarah Consoli, Agency Outreach Intern

Jennifer Walters, Dean of Religious Life recently announced that Smith College, via S.O.S. has been invited to visit Hefei, P.R. China this spring to work on a cross-cultural project assisting Anhui Agricultural University with the development of their new undergraduate social work program, and to discuss the establishment of community-service internships for AAU social work students and for Smith students in China. In addition, meetings will be held in Hefei, Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanjing to discuss the development of additional community service internships for Smith students.

Tiertza-Leah Schwartz, Director of Voluntary Services at Smith College, will chair this project. This is Schwartz’s second cross-cultural collaborative initiative with her colleagues in China with whom she has been working for six years. Schwartz will combine her extensive knowledge of creating and supporting internships for Smith students with her understanding of Chinese culture.

A primary focus of this initiative is to present a theoretical framework on community-service internships, basic counseling theory, the structure and services provided by college counseling programs, and to discuss how to adapt these models to fit Chinese cultural and political settings.

Dr. Ay Ling Han, psychologist at the Smith Counseling Services is also collaborating on the project. Her specialized expertise in cross-cultural work with Asian communities, and her extensive knowledge of college counseling are assets in the project’s success.

Prayers For People in the Smith Community

In times of anxiety and uncertainty, prayer is a powerful act of hope. The Smith College Chaplains and the Director of Voluntary Services invite members of the Smith community to send names of people for whom you’d like us to pray. Every Wednesday at 1:00, the chapel bells will ring. Names will be read on the chapel steps along with prayers from different religious traditions. Prayers will also be offered for them at all of the religious services. In addition, a book listing all of the Smith Community’s requests will be at the chapel. Members of the community are welcome to join us as well. Please email your prayer requests to the Dean of Religious Life, Jennifer Walters, at jwalters@smith.edu.

Check Out Our New Agencies!

South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) – Assists homeless individuals with job readiness. One important focus is teaching basic computer skills. Contact Celia Miller (413) 587-0429

Beit Ahava – Tutors Hebrew and the Torah to young children. Contact Judi Wisch (413) 587-3770

Casa Latina – Committed to promoting Latino empowerment and cultural pride. Contact Lillian Torres (413) 586-1569

Interfaith Community Homeless Shelter – Provides financial and volunteer support for the Hampshire County Interfaith Shelter for homeless individuals and associated programs. Contact Yvonne Freccero (413) 586-2354
Spring Community Service Fair A Success!
By Emily Gerstein, Long-term Chair

The S.O.S. Volunteer Community Service Fair, held in Davis Ballroom on February 4th, was a huge success this year! Many students and over 30 agencies attended the fair. The purpose of the fair is to make it easier for students and agencies to connect, letting students talk to many representatives at different agencies in order for them to have a better understanding of agency goals and to connect one-on-one with agency reps. Alexis Cohen ’05 exclaimed that, “There were so many different agencies that I could speak with at the fair. Talking to them helped me to figure out where I wanted to volunteer, and also made me more committed to the idea of volunteering.”

Agencies were also happy with the turnout. There were many different types of agencies represented, including retirement homes, homeless and animal shelters, school and ESL tutors, housing programs, mentoring and childcare. Since the recent budget cuts, agencies are struggling more than ever to stay afloat and volunteers are crucial. Agency representatives said they were pleased with the number of students and said they were much needed.

Additionally, students took the time to make Valentine’s Day cards for the elderly at Sunbridge Nursing Home. To find out more about S.O.S. visit us online or email Emily Gerstein, the long term volunteer chair, at egerstein@smith.edu Smith employees are always welcome to join us at the fair as well.

Where Does the Blood Go?
By Anna Graseck, Blood Drive Chair

On February 26th and 27th you did the right thing; you rolled up your sleeve and donated blood. Where is that blood now? Is it in a laboratory somewhere, sitting in a refrigerator, or sustaining the life of a cancer patient? As a donor, I know what happens to my blood at the blood drive. And as a former hospital candy-striper, I know how it gets distributed to patients. But what happens in the middle? I went to the Red Cross to find out.

While you are sipping your orange juice and eating cookies at the canteen table, Red Cross staff members are already preparing your blood. It is weighed and packed into coolers for refrigeration. Next, it’s sent out into the Red Cross laboratories elsewhere in Massachusetts. The blood is separated into its components: red blood cells, to help patients with anemia or blood loss; platelets, essential for cancer patients and those recovering from an organ transplant; and plasma, the fluid component of blood, needed by those with liver disease or severe burns. As all you biology majors should know, one type of blood cell has been left out: white blood cells, the cells used by your immune system. To my surprise, these cells are discarded because they often cause complications after the blood transfusion.

After separation, the blood undergoes twelve tests; one test determines your blood’s type, while others look for blood-borne diseases, including HIV, hepatitis, and syphilis. This ensures that the blood supply is safe for everyone. If your blood passes the tests, it is labeled by type and refrigerated.

Now that your blood has its stamp of approval, it is ready to be sent to hospitals around the country. Though there are several states without Red Cross blood donation services, the Red Cross transports its blood wherever it is needed. Perhaps your blood is in Kentucky – or maybe it’s only traveled to Springfield.

Most hospitals have a special blood bank, a laboratory where the blood is stored until it is needed. When a doctor orders blood for a patient, whether a victim of a car accident or a pediatric cancer patient, the staff of the blood bank carefully make sure it is the right match. A staff member or volunteer (that’s where I came in as a candy-striper!) brings it to the nursing staff, and soon your blood is aiding someone who needs it. What an amazing journey!


Are You Interested in the Community Service Internship Program (CSIP), being a First Link Team Leader, having an on-campus internship (OCIP) or becoming an S.O.S. board member next year? These opportunities and more are available through S.O.S.

Applications as well as more detailed information is available on the S.O.S. website at www.smith.edu/sos/ Check out our current Community Service Directory online for a list of local agencies.

Brave blood drive volunteers!
Every week Lindsay Smith (’05) takes time out of her busy and stressful schedule to relax, go roller-skating, make Valentine’s Day cards, or drink milkshakes. In other words, she gets to become a kid again. What makes her so lucky? The answer is the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. Lindsay has a “little,” (slang for little sister) G, who is 10 years old and lives in Southampton. G, like other children participants in the program, comes from a big family where she may not get enough individual attention. Lindsay acts as her mentor, friend, and companion every week, giving G something special in her life, as well as for Lindsay herself. Lindsay says that she hopes she can make a difference in G’s life, but also says that the program has had a huge impact on her own life. Lindsay said, “I think every person can remember someone in her/his early life who made an impression or served as a mentor and I hope that I can make that kind of difference in the life of a child”.

Next year, when Lindsay goes abroad, the friendship will continue. The two plan on corresponding through email and will definitely see each other again in the future. According to Lindsay, G says she already plans to be a member of the Smith class of 2014.