

# INTERFAITH SOCIAL SERVICES NEWS

PROUDLY SERVING THE SOUTH SHORE SINCE 1947 | INTERFAITHSOCIALSERVICES.ORG | 617-773-6203 | FALL 2014

IN HER OWN WORDS:

## A food pantry client's story

**“I AM MARRIED AND HAVE TWO YOUNG DAUGHTERS, AGES 6 AND 10.** Several years ago, a stalker invaded our lives and nothing would ever be the same for us. Our home was broken into and we were robbed. My younger daughter was viciously attacked. As a result, I suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome and have had other difficulties since the attack on my daughter.

“I have not been able to work, I have received and continue to receive counseling. My daughter also has received counseling. On top of all this, my other daughter has had a serious heart condition since birth. We go back and forth to Children's Hospital in Boston at least once every six months. Major surgery is likely in her future. We are doing the best we can to cope financially. My husband worked full-time as a landscaper. Over the past few months he has been out of work due to a work-related injury to his knee. We are just are not able to make ends meet at this point in our lives.

“I wish that this story was about some other person. It's hard for me to say that this is my story. I wanna make a future story that is more of a happy one. However, I am lucky in many ways. I'm lucky because I woke up that night of the invasion. It could have been even more tragic than it has already been. I pray and thank God for that every day. I do try to stay as positive as I can. I feel like I moved a step forward just talking to Interfaith's volunteers and then writing my own story like this. That might sound strange, but getting it out has been so hard for me.

“Thank you. Interfaith is a wonderful organization and helped me and my family with food when we needed, it without questions. Thank you very much :)”

**Interfaith's Food Pantry volunteers provided this family with a variety of groceries to ease the family's burden during a period of financial hardship.** The family received a Thanksgiving package, complete with turkey, to celebrate the holiday together. Our volunteers registered the children with Interfaith's Help for the Holidays program to make sure that they would have some gifts to open on Christmas morning and we will continue to assist them in as many ways as we can as long as they need help. The path that brought this family to our food pantry is difficult; the struggles that they face are extreme, but they are not alone. Of the 18,000 clients who visit our food pantry annually, each one travels a different path that leads them to our door. Thanks to the support we receive from you, Interfaith Social Services is able to continue serving thousands of households through our food pantry every year, hundreds of clients through our counseling center, and hundreds more through our budget counseling and homelessness prevention program. *Thank you!*

**“I feel like I moved a step forward just talking to Interfaith's volunteers and then writing my own story like this.”**

**DONATIONS POUR IN FOR INTERFAITH'S THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE — THANK YOU EVERYONE!**



## INTERFAITH SOCIAL SERVICES

A 501(C)(3) NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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**MISSION:** Founded in 1947, Interfaith Social Services is dedicated to improving life for South Shore families and individuals in need. Our unique approach relies on a team of volunteers, donors and community partners to deliver compassionate, client-centered programs focused on hunger, mental health and emergency assistance.

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# Interfaith earns coveted four-star rating from Charity Navigator

**I**NTERFAITH SOCIAL SERVICES' sound fiscal management practices and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a four-star rating — the highest possible — from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator.

Since 2002, using data-driven analysis, Charity Navigator has awarded only the most fiscally responsible organizations a four-star rating. In 2011, Charity Navigator added a second dimension of Accountability and Transparency (A&T) to its rating methodology, and now reviews 17 governance and ethical practices as well as measures of openness, and provides information on its website for each of the charities it evaluates. The A&T metrics, which account for 50 percent of a charity's overall rating, reveal which charities have "best practices" that minimize the chance of unethical activities, and whether they freely share basic information about their organization with their donors and other stakeholders.

"Interfaith's coveted four-star rating puts it in a very select group of high-performing charities," according to Ken Berger, President and CEO, Charity Navigator. "Out of the thousands of nonprofits Charity Navigator evaluates, only one out of four earns four stars — a rating that now, with our new Accountability and Transparency metrics, demands even greater rigor, responsibility and commitment to openness. Interfaith's supporters should feel much more confident that their hard-earned dollars are being used efficiently and responsibly when it acquires such a high rating."

"In the current economic environment, it's important our donors trust that we're using our funding wisely to accomplish Interfaith's mission," said Interfaith's executive director Rick Doane. "Our four-star Charity Navigator rating demonstrates that we take our fiduciary and governance responsibilities very seriously."

*Interfaith's rating and other information about charitable giving are available free of charge on [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org).*



**VISIT THE NEW [WWW.INTERFAITHSOCIALSERVICES.ORG](http://WWW.INTERFAITHSOCIALSERVICES.ORG)**



This fall, with help from the wonderful team at Wicked Local Marketing, we redesigned our website to make it easier for clients to see how they can obtain assistance and to make it easier for the community to see all of the ways that they can get involved with our programs. Check it out and let us know what you think.

# South Shore volunteers inducted into Interfaith's Hall of Fame

**NINETEEN LOCAL VOLUNTEERS WERE RECENTLY INDUCTED** into Interfaith Social Services' **Matti Lang Volunteer Hall of Fame**. Over the past few years Interfaith has become a magnet for volunteering on the South Shore, with local residents providing over 19,000 hours of service at the center last year. Linden Ponds in Hingham, an Erickson Living community, hosted this year's Volunteer Appreciation Event. More than 100 volunteers turned out to enjoy a BBQ dinner donated by Linden Ponds.

From answering telephones to sorting clothes and stocking shelves, Interfaith's programs are staffed by more than 100 volunteers who fulfill weekly assignments. "We are very proud of our community-based service model," said Interfaith's executive director Rick Doane. "Interfaith has been serving this region for over six decades. It would be impossible to carry out our programs without an amazing team of people. Volunteers make it happen — they are the heart and soul of our organization."

Hundreds of additional volunteers from various community groups, schools, houses of worship and local businesses also volunteer each year. Some businesses, like Arbella Insurance, State Street, Signet Electrical and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, regularly send groups of volunteers to assist within Interfaith's various programs.

The Matti Lang Volunteer Hall of Fame is named after one of Interfaith's most dedicated volunteers who gave decades of his life selflessly serving Interfaith's clients. The honor of being inducted into the Hall of Fame is bestowed upon those volunteers who have been serving within the organization regularly for at least one year. These individuals, from the following towns, were honored at this year's induction ceremony: from **Braintree**, Chris Cho, Roe Salama and Stephanie Schwartz; from **Hingham**, Thomas Dinneen and Ralph Palmieri; from **Quincy**, Maureen Argento, Rita Buckmann, Susan Flaherty, Jim Grant, Corinne Kennedy, Maura McDonough, Anne McNeil, Maureen Mills, Patricia Norton, Susan Sullivan, Marcel Williams, Donna Chapman; and from **Weymouth**, Bettyanne Lang.

Anyone interested in volunteering with Interfaith Social Services is encouraged to contact volunteer coordinator Paula Daniels at 617-773-6203 ext. 28.



*Some of this year's Matti Lang Volunteer Hall of Fame inductees from left: Marcel Williams of Quincy, Interfaith's Executive Director Rick Doane of Randolph, Stephanie Schwartz of Braintree, Jim Grant of Quincy, Susan Flaherty of Quincy, Bettyanne Lang of Weymouth, Maureen Argento and Patricia Norton of Quincy.*

**YOUR  
FACE  
HERE**



## BECOME A VOLUNTEER AT INTERFAITH ►

Interested in being active, getting involved in the community and making friends? Your face could be here. Interfaith is one of the South Shore's most popular centers for volunteering and community engagement. We have many volunteer opportunities available. Contact [pdaniels@InterfaithSocialServices.org](mailto:pdaniels@InterfaithSocialServices.org) today for more information.

# Interfaith distributes hundreds of

BOO!



**E**VERY OCTOBER, FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS, Interfaith's volunteers have distributed Halloween costumes to the children of families served by our food pantry. "Giving kids a Halloween costume is just one of the ways that we have found to bring a little happiness to their lives," said Interfaith's executive director Rick Doane.

"In the past our supply of costumes was very limited. This year our Feed the Hungry Gala planning committee rallied to the cause. They asked friends and family members for donations. They canvassed social media and every other venue they could think of. The Gala planning committee and many other volunteers collected so many costumes that we were able to open up the distribution to the community."

Interfaith's various community partners stepped up to help with costume distribution on Saturday, October 25. Volunteers from Arbella Insurance sorted many of the costumes in preparation for distribution. Pot Belly Sandwiches of Braintree supplied sandwiches and cookies for all of the children who came in to select costumes. One local business even donated \$1,000 to purchase costumes, as well as to support Interfaith's Feed the Hungry Gala. "We are proud to help Interfaith in its mission of providing support for South Shore families in need," said Aaron Cutler, owner of Planter Hill Properties, a residential real estate brokerage located in Hingham. "We hope our donation will make it possible for many children and their parents to have a fun and memorable Halloween this year."



Many of the moms and dads had a hard time deciding which costume to select among all of the amazing baby and toddler outfits that were donated.



Renee's son William found exactly what he was looking for, a Ninja Turtles costume.



Interfaith volunteer Barbara Pyne and executive director Rick Doane really got into the spirit of the day.

BOO!



# Halloween costumes to local kids



Interfaith volunteers Mary Parker and Charlene Manning, along with Feed the Hungry Gala Committee members Amanda Kennedy, Allison Corbett, Maura O'Brien and their children, sort through the mountains of Halloween costumes that were donated.

## INTERFAITH COMES THROUGH FOR A FAMILY IN NEED ON HALLOWEEN EVE ▶



Lisa, Carla and Sophie had a very happy Halloween thanks to Interfaith's generous donors. Mom Lisa, a food pantry client, called Interfaith the day before Halloween, in turmoil. She couldn't make it to our office for the costume distribution we hosted on Saturday, October 25. The family had no money to buy a costume and 6-year-old Sophie desperately wanted to participate in her school's costume parade. "Is there any way that you could possibly help?" Lisa asked in desperation. We were more than happy to assist. When they arrived, Sophie was literally running in circles because she was so excited. The gratitude this family felt and the joy on little Sophie's face were indescribable.



Quincy residents Brielle, Braylon, Maiden and Kilda, with grandma Sheila, posed with the costumes that they found.

# oh, what a night!

## Interfaith celebrates its 17th Annual Feed the Hungry Gala



*Pictured here are many of this year's Feed the Hungry Gala Committee members. Seated, from left: Amanda Kennedy, Ally Donnelly, Greg Wallingford, Rick Doane and Allison Corbett. Standing, from left: Christina Weissensee, Alexandra Maurer, Sarah Shannon, Allison and Brian Joyce, Daniele Serafini, Kevin Clow, Charlotte Bodell, Kara Bianchi, Donna Mavromates, Heather Karlovits, Sandra McGunigle, Katie Catlender, Maura O'Brien, Beverly Tangvik and Jennifer E. Reale.*



*Interfaith Social Services 2014 Community Hero of The Year recipient Jenn Reale with husband Richard Reale (center), parents Daniel and Mary O'Neill (right) and brother Dan (third from left). At far left are Rick Doane, Interfaith's executive director and Beverly Tangvik, assistant vice president, director of charitable giving, Arbella Insurance Group.*

**O**H, WHAT A NIGHT! It's hard to believe another Gala has come and gone, but what a magical night it was. There were so many things that made it memorable — the chilled champagne and cocktails from Montello GrandTen Distilling as you entered the room, the jazz band and the live music...



The furious shucking of Islander's dazzling selection of silent auction items around with such wonderful treats and his team from Alma Nove, chef Greg Jordan from The Quarry Restaurant & Lounge, chef Brian crew from ORTA, chef Sarah Holmes and her team from Burrito and the entire crew from Montilio's Baking Company.

But what most stays with us is the spirit of giving in the form of a check. You could have said, "next year," when it came to our hand in a riotous live auction. You bid your best in the silent auction. You raised your paddle during Feed the Need. And the difference? The Gala raised \$214,000 — 64 percent more than last year! What a community that cares for everyone in it. Your generosity is what gives children in need winter coats, babies diapers, men and women the South Shore warmth in winter and dignity all the year long.

— Gala Co-Chairs



*From left, NECN political reporter Alison King, meteorologist Tim Kelley, reporter and Gala co-chair Ally Donnelly, CEO Corner production Mimi Segel, business editor Peter Howe, assignment editor Debbie K..., anchor and Gala emcee Latoyia Edwards, reporter Alysha Palumbo, reporter Justin Michaels and vice president of sales Annie Peters.*

**A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS AND COMMITTEE OF OUR ANNUAL GALA**

# ed the Hungry Gala

Feed the Hungry  
 magnificent evening it  
 the night memo-  
 Marsh's Liquors and  
 etBlue swag bags,

d Creek Oysters, the  
 items, the chefs' dine-  
 from Paul Wahlberg  
 Michael Aprea, chef  
 trett Williams and the  
 rtons Grill Hingham,



*Celebrity chef Paul Wahlberg of Alma Nove was one of seven chefs who whipped up mouthwatering treats for the 500-plus guests.*

the room. You could have stayed home. You could have just written  
 charitable giving, but you didn't. You showed up. You raised your  
 talent auction. You tried to win prizes in the carnival-style games.  
 erence you made is stunning. This year's sold-out, record-setting  
 at a spectacular accomplishment! We are so proud to be part of a  
 real and tangible. It will feed tens of thousands of people. It will  
 women interview suits, parents peace of mind and families across  
 through. Thank you.

ally Donnelly and Greg Wallingford and the Gala Committee



*Mimi Giammarino of Ste. Michelle Wine Estates serves a guest at one of the Gala's wine tasting tables. Marsh's Wine and Spirits and Ste. Michelle Wine Estates carefully paired just the right vino with each of the dishes served by the celebrity chefs, serving five different labels at the event.*

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Alma Nove

Burtons Grill

Catering by Michael Aprea

Island Creek Oysters

Montilio's Baking Company

ORTA

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**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Pierce Harman

**ENTERTAINMENT**

Comedy Illusionist Ben Pratt

The Mark Greel Band

## Thanksgiving = 2,253 people served

On Saturday, November 22, volunteers from the United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley distributed Thanksgiving meal packages to over 400 households through Interfaith's food pantry. Packages included a turkey, mashed potatoes, vegetables, stuffing, cranberry sauce and more. Then on Monday, November 24, 400 additional households received their Thanksgiving meal packages. Many more were served those few days before Thanksgiving as well. What an accomplishment! Over 800 households comprised of 2,253 people were able to sit down and enjoy a holiday meal.

This was only possible because of our caring donors and amazing volunteers! We had an incredible crew, as always, including Interfaith's long-standing volunteers, and teams from Arbella Insurance, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Quincy Interact Clubs and Thompson Reuters.

Hingham Congregational Church donated 90 turkeys and First Congregational Church of Braintree donated dozens and dozens of frozen birds. Many individuals, community groups and other houses of worship donated as well. To top it off, chef Paul Wahlberg of Alma Nove and Wahlburgers donated 200 Butterballs, along with all of the fixings for a meal.

On Sunday, November 23, we hosted our annual "Sunday before Thanksgiving Food Drive." Volunteers sorted hundreds of bags and boxes of food that were donated by individuals and many local houses of worship. Thankfully, our shelves are now fully stocked in preparation for all of the families that will need assistance in putting food on their tables this holiday season.

Thank you to everyone for making this a happy holiday season for hundreds of hungry local families!



*These United Way volunteers not only distributed Thanksgiving meal packages to over 400 households, they also brought in donuts and coffee for all of the clients as well.*

## Backpacks and diapers distributed again this summer

As schools opened again this September, 442 local kids started their first day on the right foot thanks to Interfaith Social Services. During the entire month of August when families collected food from Interfaith's food pantry they also received a backpack stuffed with school supplies for each school-age child in their home. Thanks to numerous donors, we had enough to serve all of the children who requested assistance! No one went away empty-handed.

"It was awesome to see so many caring individuals come through our doors with donations for this initiative," said Interfaith's executive director Rick Doane. "But it was the children that came in with backpacks full of donations which they had hand-selected that really touched my heart. Who knows, their new friend sitting next to them on the school bus this year might be the recipient of that very same backpack. This is what happens when we all chip in to help our neighbors in need."

This August, BMC HealthNet donated over 6,000 diapers to Interfaith's food pantry. The parents who received the diapers were overjoyed at this surprise when they received it along with groceries from the pantry. BMC HealthNet's donation also helped to raise awareness about the need that exists for diaper donations to emergency food programs. Every little bit counts, and diapers are a huge expense for families who are already struggling to make ends meet. In addition to your regular food donations to community food pantries, consider picking up a box of diapers to donate as well.



*Daniele Serafini with two backpacks full of school supplies which were hand-selected by her children for this year's backpack drive.*



*Nicole, with her children and nephew, was excited about the diapers she received courtesy of BMC HealthNet Plan. One child entered kindergarten this year, and received a backpack full of school supplies.*

# It was a tremendous turnout for our 40th South Shore Walk & 5K Run!



*Above, BMC HealthNet's mascot Sunny brightened an otherwise rainy day at this year's Walk & 5K Run. Here is Sunny with Quincy residents Katie and Meg Stirling, Taylor Craig and Alexander Lowery; Joaquin and Gabriel Cuba of Arlington and Bennett Cornwall of Duxbury. Below, Lisa Casserly of Braintree and Meredith Harward of Abington with her twin daughters Arden and Sydney were among the hundreds of participants who braved the rain. Photos by Marybeth Cornwall*

**I**nterfaith Social Services' 40th Annual South Shore Walk & 5K Run was held in Quincy's Squantum neighborhood on Saturday, April 26. Despite periodic downpours, hundreds of participants turned out to walk and run. They collected over \$20,000 in donations and pledges to benefit thousands of South Shore families in need of food, counseling and emergency assistance.

Julie Nations, Director of Community Relations and Outreach for Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan, a sponsor for this year's walk, helped to encourage walkers and runners as they got ready to leave. "Look to your left, now look to your right," said Nations. "All of these people that you see are your community. What a group! People who will walk in the rain to help feed hungry people, you are awesome!"

The Walk & 5K Run were only the beginning of the festivities on April 26. When participants returned to The Kennedy Center, they were greeted with lunch courtesy of Stars on Hingham Harbor, the Atria at Marina Bay and Ocean Spray. Everyone sampled frozen treats from New England Ice Cream Corporation as they enjoyed music, raffles, kids' games, a photo booth, face painting and complimentary massages from The Facilitated Healing Center.



# Harvest Helpers continues to grow, encouraging donations



*In the midst of a spring rain storm, volunteers Patti Hogan, Melissa Pond and Ben Pond planted this year's Food Pantry Garden at Interfaith's offices in Quincy.*

In partnership with Keohane Funeral Homes and The Weymouth Food Pantry, we are proud to report another successful season for the Harvest Helpers program. Each year this program continues to grow by encouraging the donation of fresh vegetables and fruits to local food pantries.

Our food pantry anxiously strives to serve more nutritious food to our clients. For the past five years we have planted a garden at our office in Quincy Center where we grow vegetables for our food pantry clients. Each spring, Keohane Funeral Homes distributes free seedlings to anyone in the community who is willing to grow them, harvest the fruits and donate them to local food pantries.



**This program hasn't ended just because the weather has turned cold.** If you are at the supermarket and see a good deal on apples, oranges, etc., buy an extra bag and donate it to our food pantry. Help us to not only feed but truly nourish the thousands of clients who turn to Interfaith for assistance every year.

## ▶ HOMESAFE PROGRAM: A SAFETY NET FOR SOUTH SHORE FAMILIES

**H**omeSafe is Interfaith Social Services' financial assistance and homelessness prevention program. It is called HomeSafe because every year it helps keep hundreds of local families and children "safe at home" rather than becoming homeless. Some of the services available to eligible clients include: budget counseling, information referral, financial assistance with overdue rent, utilities assistance and help with medical expenses not covered by Medicare and Medicaid, such as major dental work, hearing aids, etc. Here are a couple examples of the hundreds of people served by this program every year.

**Doris** is a 65 year old single woman who had to relocate to Massachusetts after her sister (also her roommate) sold her home in Florida. Although she receives Social Security Retirement income, Doris is falling behind on her rent. Her monthly budget shows she is in fact \$500 short every single month to meet her basic expenses. We were able to reduce her cell phone bill by \$90 by setting her up with the Assurance phone, increase her income by having her Medicare premium paid by the Mass Health Buy In program, and decrease her grocery expense by connecting her with several local food pantries. Although Doris is still struggling to make ends meet, she can now focus on searching for a part-time job rather than worry about being evicted.

**Gail** is a single woman in her mid-thirties who never thought she'd end up living in a rooming house, facing eviction. After 15 years of working in finance for the same company and making over \$40,000 per year, she was laid off. When her unemployment benefits and savings ran out a year and a half later, her landlord started eviction proceedings owing to past-due rent. Many of our clients who face eviction after unemployment are coping with a humbling reality shift when they realize survival requires taking that low paying job that is far below their education and skill level. By the time she called us for help, she had already come to terms with the fact she was not going to find a comparable job and had just begun working a minimum wage job at a local supermarket. We were able to help her avoid eviction and negotiate a payment plan based on her new, but meager, income.

# Building improvements made possible by Arbella Foundation

Last fall, The Arbella Insurance Foundation awarded a grant of \$50,000 to Interfaith as part of its “50 to 25” program. This funding allowed us to make some much-needed improvements to our offices at 105 Adams Street in Quincy. We repaired the heating system for half of the building and replaced all of the windows, and installed new flooring in the Bureau Drawer Thrift Shop.

The bulk of this grant, along with a donation from a generous anonymous donor, allowed us to repair and resurface the stucco exterior of the building.

Interfaith’s programs serve over 25,000 South Shore residents every year. This grant impacted every single one of them. The stucco repairs to the exterior have guaranteed our building’s constancy for another 50 years of use by families in need.

Counseling clients now have a comfortable heated environment for their sessions. Thrift Shop customers have been impressed with the improvements and are making more purchases, which all help fund our various programs. Our cost savings with more energy-efficient windows have allowed us to use that money to purchase food for pantry clients instead of paying for heating.

Arbella’s “50 to 25” was created in recognition of the Arbella Insurance Group’s 25th anniversary and the important role the Foundation plays in supporting the communities that Arbella serves. Arbella presented one-time grants of \$50,000 to 25 local charities.



*The Bureau Drawer Thrift Shop’s new flooring.*



*The before and after conditions of the building.*

## Annual Quincy Prayer Breakfast held in May

Coinciding with the National Day of Prayer, Quincy’s Prayer Breakfast was held on Thursday, May 1, 2014. Hundreds of attendees assembled at The Sons of Italy Hall to hear prayers from local religious leaders, musical numbers and speakers from the community who shared reflections about the importance of prayer in their lives. The event was sponsored by Quincy’s Mayor Thomas P. Koch.

“The Prayer Breakfast has really evolved since we first started,” said Mayor Koch. “The participation we see from various houses of worship comprises many faith traditions, and it is a wonderful expression of the rich diversity that exists in this great City.” Proceeds from the event benefited Interfaith Social Services, The Esther R. Sanger Center for Compassion/Quincy Crisis Center and The Salvation Army in Quincy.



*Dozens of religious leaders from local houses of worship participated in the 2014 Quincy Prayer Breakfast, sponsored by Mayor Thomas Koch.*

# Understanding Addiction

## A community education workshop

**T**HERAPISTS FROM INTERFAITH'S New Directions Counseling Center are stepping out of their offices and into the community as they try to educate the public about the issue of addiction.

What is addiction? What causes it? Why is it so prevalent? These questions are being asked across the Bay State as some communities experience 20 percent increases in drug-related overdose deaths. The issue is so critical in our state that it prompted Governor Deval Patrick to declare a public health emergency earlier this year in response to the problem.

This November, a team of therapists from New Directions presented a community education workshop at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital-Milton. Presenters included therapists Anne Donovan, Barbara Goodman, Claire Hagan, and Maureen Richardson. Titled "Understanding Addiction," the panel discussion focused on an overview of substance misuse, substance abuse, and addiction. Participants included hospital staff, healthcare professionals, individuals in recovery and many whose loved ones have been afflicted by this illness.

The evening's presentation outlined the use of prescribed medications and how they have become one of the most significant entry points for individuals into the world of addiction. Another discussion point was preventing vulnerability in children through increased self-esteem and self-concept. Presenters outlined the experiences children face when growing up in a home where addiction resides. The panel discussed the co-occurring issues that factor into addiction, like depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. They explained that these illnesses can create a strong desire to self-medicate, thus leading to addiction.

The community's desire to get a better understanding of this issue was clearly visible as workshop participants peppered the panel with questions. Interfaith's therapists explained why treatment must always address the underlying issues which they outlined. They gave participants a variety of tools and ideas to employ when dealing with individuals and family members of those afflicted by this illness. The therapists supplied information about local resources while reiterating the overall tone of the presentation, as stated by New Directions' Counseling Coordinator Claire Hagan: "No one needs to feel alone with this problem."

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO BRING THIS PRESENTATION TO YOUR OFFICE, SCHOOL OR HOUSE OF WORSHIP?**

Interfaith's New Directions therapists are looking for additional opportunities to educate the public about the critical and misunderstood issue of addiction. The panel discussion takes approximately one hour and focuses on the nature of drug abuse, addiction, how it develops, what symptoms to look for and why it can have such a powerful hold. If you would you like to bring this presentation to your office, school, house of worship or other venue please contact New Directions' Counseling Coordinator Claire Hagan at [chagan@InterfaithSocialServices.org](mailto:chagan@InterfaithSocialServices.org) or 617-773-6203 ext. 12.

## GROUP THERAPY SESSIONS HELP UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS ►



**T**his spring Interfaith Social Services and Maria Droste Counseling Services teamed up for a series of free support groups to help underserved populations. The latest group brought together women to explore and address some of life's many challenges, including self-esteem, family stress, relationships, grief and more. This safe and supportive environment provided the opportunity to learn healthy and effective coping skills while fostering personal growth and self-empowerment. Groups included coping with job loss as well as support in overcoming anxiety and depression. These groups were supported by funding from the Blue Hill's CHNA (Community Health Network Alliance), helping to improve the health of South Shore communities with an emphasis on mental health, access to care, substance abuse and chronic disease and wellness.

*At left: Interfaith's food pantry waiting room was transformed each week into a welcoming atmosphere for the clients who participated in the group sessions.*