



**Interfaith  
Hospitality  
Network®**

*an affiliate of Family Promise®*

# INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK NEWS *November 2010*

## 2010—A Year to Celebrate Our Families

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Early this year, renovation of IHN's four transitional housing units was completed and all are now occupied by formerly homeless families from our program. These families continue to receive help and support from the IHN Case Manager, and can stay in their apartments for up to 12 months. This means that during 2010, we have been working with eight families on a regular basis—four in transitional housing and four in the Network—double the number of previous years.



While we are thankful to have four transitional housing apartments, there have already been 24 families in the Network this year. IHN recently received a three year \$30,000 Community Development Block grant which we are using to help some of our families with rent, and rental and utility deposits.

As the recession tightens its grip on Billings, IHN families struggle to find and keep full time work, and

they struggle to find decent, affordable housing. Every time one of our families moves into their own home, we celebrate their success. Every family has their own story and their own unique challenges to overcome during the time they are with us.

Ron and Rhonda were both working and they and their four young children were living in their own home. Ron is a hard worker and hates to be idle, but a debilitating illness has left him requiring ongoing medical treatments. As a result, he lost his job. A couple of weeks later, Rhonda's hours were drastically cut, they fell behind on their rent and other bills, and finally their landlord reluctantly (they had been excellent tenants) asked them to leave. They spent two and one-half months in our program in 2010 putting the pieces of their lives back together.

Shortly after they came into the Network, Rhonda found a job where she has worked every since. Ron and Rhonda dote on their children, and they tried to keep the kids' lives as normal as possible even though they were homeless. They expect their children to be well behaved and they expect them to do well in school. Every day Ron brought the older kids "home" to the IHN Day Center from school, gave them a

*Celebrate continued on p. 2*

### The New Math of Homelessness

85,000	number of families homeless each night in US
30%	increase in homeless families the past 2 years in US
41%	increase in homeless students the past 2 years in US
80	number of Billings families homeless each night
458	number of homeless School Dist. 2 students last year
232	homeless Dist. 2 students so far this year (as of 11/1/10)
60%	percentage of IHN guests who are children
77%	IHN families who moved into their own homes last year

## Cardboard Box City

Even though Saturday, October 9<sup>th</sup> started out cold and rainy, it did not dampen the enthusiasm of our 272 Cardboard Box City participants and dozens of volunteers. There were fabulous boxes again this year, including castles, movie themed boxes, and engineering wonders! We thank you for raising pledges and sleeping outside on a cold night for those who are truly homeless. This year's Cardboard Box City raised over \$38,000 for IHN's families! There are lots of pictures at [www.billingsIHN.org](http://www.billingsIHN.org)

As is always the case at Interfaith Hospitality Network, many helped to make the event a success. Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor Little Horn State Bank and to our other generous sponsors: St. Vincent Healthcare, First Interstate Bank and First Interstate Foundation, the Planet, KULR 8, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Archie Cochrane Ford,



Billings Clinic, Dale & Jax Door & Glass, ExxonMobil, Freyenhagen Construction, Holiday Stationstores, Midland Printing, NorthWestern Energy, Sodexo, and Wesco Resources. We thank our Cardboard Box City Committee and co-chairs Laurie Stockman and Gary Aasheim, event volunteers, those who wrote checks to support the overnights, and the many others who contributed in so many different ways. We extend a very special thanks to Rocky Mountain College for hosting our event.



## Congratulations Little Horn State Bank!

Congratulations to Little Horn State Bank which received the Outstanding Corporate Philanthropist Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals in Billings at an Awards Ceremony on November 9<sup>th</sup>. This award is richly deserved. Little Horn State Bank, which has branches in Billings, Hardin, and Lockwood, has a long history of generosity to the people and the communities it serves. Over the last two years, Little Horn State Bank has been the Presenting Sponsor of Cardboard Box City, and Little Horn State Bank

gave an interest free, fee free loan to Interfaith Hospitality Network, which made it possible for IHN to purchase and renovate the two duplexes that now serve as transitional housing for IHN families. Andy Rio, Little Horn State Bank President and Interfaith Hospitality Network board member states, "Our little bank was founded 91 years ago for the express purpose of helping the community. We have kept sight of that objective, and we are proud to support IHN's mission of getting homeless families off the streets and into their own homes."

**Success is not final, failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts.**

*Winston Churchill*

## Celebrate

*Continued from p. 1*

snack, and then helped them get their homework done. On weekends, when Rhonda often worked, Ron would do things with the kids, even when he wasn't feeling well. Interfaith Hospitality Network has a grant for children's activities, which we used so Ron could take his kids swimming or to the zoo.

Although they were always appreciative of the kindness of IHN volunteers and everything that was being done to help them, it rankled Ron constantly that someone other than he was taking care of his family. But Rhonda and Ron kept saving, every day Ron looked for rentals and someone willing to rent to them, and finally they found a house to rent. They were so excited! The previous tenant had left the place a mess, so with the landlord's blessing, Ron joyfully went over and washed walls and windows, removed the garbage and junk that had been left all over the house and yard, and fixed numerous things the previous tenant had broken. IHN gave them beds and some of the other things they needed, and finally, after two and one-half months, Ron and Rhonda and their children moved back into a home of their own.

Homelessness is very hard on children, but in this family's case, it was hardest on Dad. Parents want to provide for their children, and Ron was devastated when his family became homeless and needed to depend on others. He is still dealing with his debilitating illness, but Ron's spirit has healed now that he and his family are living in their own home.

Homelessness is being in crisis, living in limbo, waiting to have a home so your lives can start again. Interfaith Hospitality Network is a compassionate community that embraces homeless families, and supports and helps them as they make their way on the path back to their own homes and normal lives. Thank you to all of you who have helped IHN families achieve independence this year.





**Interfaith  
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Network<sup>®</sup>  
of Yellowstone County**

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*The mission of Interfaith Hospitality Network is to help homeless families achieve and sustain independence.*



*If we have misspelled your name, or don't have your address quite right, or if we have inadvertently sent you more than one newsletter, please give us a call: 294-7432, so we can make the correction.*