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Beth-El Center Newsletter Summer 2020

Beth-El Center Increases Services During COVID-19

During the pandemic, more than ever, individuals and families are facing hardships like unemployment, food insecurity and the risk of losing their housing. Since March the Beth-El Center has increased its shelter and case management services as well as food programs to assist the most vulnerable populations.



COVID-19 Outcomes March - August 2020

Increased programs and services while keeping health a priority



Shelter capacity more than doubled: 34 beds to 71 beds



Meal distribution increased by 70% - More than 16,000 meals served



42 individuals and families have transitioned to permanent housing



Acceptance, Respect and Help for Homeless Man and His Dog

Jason Hurley was trying to get back on his feet after overcoming problems with drug and alcohol addiction. He was clean but homeless and living in his car with his dog Patch. Through 2-1-1, Jason came to stay at the Beth El Center.

Identifying as a transgender man, Jason found safety, security and acceptance at the Center. In Jason's previous experiences in rehab, his identifying as a man wasn't understood or respected.

"My stay at the Beth-El Center was a life changing experience for me. They helped to set me on the road to excelling. They offered lots of understanding and respected who I am as a person," said Jason.

Beth-El also welcomed Jason's emotional support animal-- his dog Patch, an Australian Shepherd mix. He discovered that many other shelters would not allow animals which hindered Jason's efforts to find a place to stay.

While at the Center, Jason tapped into the resources he needed to move forward. He found a job in Danbury and traveled an hour and half to and from work each day. Jason's case manager helped him find doggy day care to accommodate Patch while he was at work. With the Center's assistance, Jason found a permanent place to live.

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EDITORIAL

HUD's New Transgender Shelter Access Rule

by Jenn Paradis, Beth-El Center Executive Director

As the Executive Director of the Beth-El Center, an inclusive emergency shelter program, but more importantly as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I experienced homelessness as a queer youth throughout high school and college. Knowing firsthand how quickly one's stability can be lost and how important formal shelter supports are to meeting basic survival needs and realizing one's full potential, I hope to provide context to the [proposed changes of HUD's Equal Access Rule](#) and to stand with other leaders in the LGBTQ+ and housing justice community to say: NOT IN OUR NAME.

Homeless service providers, housing advocates, and most importantly people experiencing homelessness during a global pandemic, have recently gained heart-wrenching insight into the details of HUD's proposed changes to what we have all come to know as the "Equal

Access Rule".

The 2012 ruling sought to ensure that all individuals and families experiencing homelessness would have access to life-saving emergency shelter regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status. This ruling was later amended in 2016 to provide clear protections to transgender and non-binary people, and provided much needed guidance and support to shelter providers on ways in which to provide safe shelter services for members of the LGBTQA+ community. In practice, it affirmed that shelters are places of acceptance and hope, led by informed and competent staff, and helped to ease the fear and apprehension of these extremely vulnerable populations.

And to be clear, this was (and still is) needed. With 43% of people presenting in homeless drop-in centers identifying as LGBTQA+ and 30% of street outreach clients identifying at LGBTQA+, we must do everything in our power to create and maintain open and affirming shelter spaces. Without this, our goals to make homelessness rare, brief and non-reoccurring in our communities are impossible.

Furthermore, trans people and particularly trans people of color remain victims to intersectional, systematic discrimination that increase their risk of homelessness exponentially—including lack of access to healthcare and stable employment free from harassment, greater fracturing of family units, 3.7 times higher likelihood to experience police violence and 7 times greater risk of physical violence when interacting with police compared to cisgender victims and survivors.

[Read More](#)



Beth-El Center Executive Director, Jenn Paradis, spoke at the **'There is No Place Like Home – Equal Access Forum' on August 20, 2020**. Click on image above to view video.

Be Safe. Give Back

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, it has been an extremely challenging year for us to raise the funds necessary to meet the current and future need for our programs. We know that we must work together as a community, and so we have decided to partner with Milford Masks.



Milford Masks is a local business that's selling masks at affordable costs while giving back to Milford nonprofits. Milford Masks will be selling 3-ply disposable masks(50 pack) for \$19.99 and donating \$1.50 per box to the Beth-El Center. Our goal is to sell 1 million masks to help us meet our fundraising goals for 2020 to ensure that our programs and services can be retained for 2021.

Visit milfordmasks.com to place your order!

9th Annual Milford Trick or Trot 5K *An All Virtual Event Coming This Fall*



The 9th Annual Milford Trick or Trot 5K Walk/Run fundraiser for the Beth-El Center will be a virtual experience! For everyone's safety, this year you can walk or run anywhere between Saturday, October 31 and Monday November 2, 2020.

This year, we'll be hosting some fun online activities including yoga, a costume contest and a virtual trivia contest.

Your participation will help those experiencing homelessness and hunger in our community- especially during these difficult times during the pandemic. **Please register at www.milfordtrickortrot.com**

Food Donations

Beth-El Center is resuming the collection of food donations. As our demand for meals has increased during the pandemic, we greatly appreciate your donations of food and supplies. Donations can be dropped off at the Center any time.



Handyman/Maintenance Volunteer Needed

We are seeking a volunteer with experience/skills in any of the following areas to help us maintain our facility:

- Building maintenance
- Carpentry
- Construction
- Electrical
- Groundskeeping
- Locksmith
- Painting
- Plumbing

Hours are flexible, based upon your schedule.

Please fill out the [volunteer application form on our website](#) and send it to info@bethelmilford.org

Make a Donation to the Beth-El Center



Beth-El Center | 203.876.0747 | bethelmilford.org