

BUFFALO PEACE HOUSE



Quarterly Newsletter: Spring 2014

SPRINGING AHEAD

501(c)(3): After nearly a year of IRS processing, we received our 501(c)(3) determination letter in February; it was a great Valentine's Day gift! Now we no longer need an "umbrella" and we can apply for a wide array of grants. We are grateful to everyone who has helped us get to this point, and we're encouraged by the willingness of new supporters pitching in and joining our efforts.



We were sad to see these three leave, but happy they were able to find an apartment together!

TIME TO DEFROST

Like all of you, BPH residents have endured our unusually harsh winter. Luckily, despite the cold, things have been very busy at the Peace House and many positive changes have occurred.

STARTING THE NEW YEAR OFF RIGHT

New Residents, New Asylum-Seeker, New Technology, and New Website

New Residents

Since the New Year, we have welcomed 25 residents from 11 different countries, including Iraq, Burma, Central Africa Republic, Nigeria, Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico. In February the house reached its capacity; currently we continue to house residents in every room.

New Asylum seeker

In February, we also welcomed a new asylum seeker to Peace House life. Our resident, who is from Nigeria, was referred by the Volunteer Lawyer's Project; her attorneys told us that she has a very strong case. At this stage in her journey, she does not yet have the legal ability to work, or access to government assistance. Without resources such as the VLP and the Peace House, she had nowhere to turn. Her case epitomizes the serious need for shelter for US asylum seekers who are in danger of being detained or further injured on our streets.

"My journey for freedom and protection brought me to the Buffalo Peace House, a place of protection and comfort. The Peace house is a home of compassion to people of all races and religions. I was lost, but now I feel loved and cherished. I am treated with dignity and respect. God Bless the Peace House."

—Appo, resident, asylum seeker

New Technology

In February, one of our employees donated Rosetta Stone Language Learning software. With access to this software, our residents now have the opportunity to work on improving their English at any time at their own pace.

New Website

We have redesigned our website and added some new features including a map which shows the country of origin of all the residents we've housed and a feature which allows people to make donations online via credit or debit card. Check us out at buffalopeacehouse.us

Our mission is to provide safe, clean housing, and to facilitate legal access for refugees and asylum seekers.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This year we have established relationships with local refugee organizations. In January, Jericho Road Hope Refugee Drop-In Center referred three refugees to us who would have otherwise been homeless. In their time with us they attended ESL classes, and by February their case manager had found them an apartment. Jericho also helped us by enabling a few of our residents to be treated by primary care physicians, a service they offer to refugees. We look forward to working with them in the next few months.

In addition to the International Institute, with whom we have had an ongoing relationships, we are grateful for the opportunity to work with other local resettlement agencies including Jewish Family Services, Catholic Charities, and Journey's End Refugee Services. Working with Jewish Family Services we provided pre-resettlement housing to a family of 7 from Iraq. Similarly, working with Journey's End, we housed a family of 4 from Nigeria. Before being referred to us, they spent a night out on the street when they ran out of money and were forced out of the shelter where they had been staying.

DON'T MISS OUT ON OUR UPCOMING EVENTS!

JUNE 21ST: On June 21st we will be celebrating the Solstice with an event introducing a chicken BBQ at the Buffalo Peace House. Interested in helping us plan it? Please contact the BPH. We hope this will be a great celebration. Save this date and come treat your friends and relatives to an afternoon of super fun and entertainment. Please call or email us for tickets!

AUGUST 3RD: On August 3rd, Saint Columba Brigid is hosting the band "The Boys of Summer". Admission to the concert will be \$5, with food and drinks available at an additional cost. The address for this event is: 75, Hickory Street, Buffalo, NY 14204. Contact Fr. Roy (716-852-2076) with any questions. ALL proceeds will benefit the Buffalo Peace House.

Volunteer Spotlight

The Buffalo Peace House would like to highlight the efforts of Laura, who began volunteering in January 2014. Every Sunday morning Laura teaches an ESL class for BPH residents. She also provides transportation for our clients as needed and have also donated to the Peace House Office supplies. We also thank Delia Becker. We are very thankful to have both as part of our team. Indeed we're grateful to all of our faithful volunteers.

PRESS COVERAGE

This January, The Western New York Catholic published an article about the Buffalo Peace House titled [Vision of Home for Asylum Seekers is Realized at Peace House](#). Here is a brief excerpt:

"On the outside, Buffalo Peace House is a cozy brick building on the lawn of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Athol Springs. On the inside, a community of international refugees and Western New Yorkers is coming to quiet life. Speaking directly to Pope Francis's call to host refugees in unused parish buildings, Father Ross Syracuse, pastor. And the social outreach group from Sr. Francis Parish welcomed Peace House in their former convent buildings."

If you would like to read the entire article, there is a link to it on our website.

Share the spotlight

We are always looking for volunteers to help us meet our residents' various needs. Call us at: 716-627-9800 or send us an email:

buffaloph@aol.com

Our Needs

Due to the unusually harsh winter, we were forced to spend much more than expected on utilities. This spring we are making a major fundraising push to get us back on track financially. We need to raise at least \$5,000 each month to sustain ourselves. Fortunately, relief is one the way, as we can apply for grants as a registered 501(c) (3). Our major challenge is to raise enough money to keep us going as we apply for grants from foundations. All donations are tax-deductible and greatly needed so we humbly ask for your support in our time of need.



Above is a map illustrating our residents home countries. It is truly a blessing to be able to bring such diversity to Hamburg, NY, and to be able to experience so many cultures.

Due to safety concerns we are unable to disclose some resident's countries of origin.



Recent Events

Celtic Spirituality

On February 1st, the feast of St. Brigid of the Ireland, the Buffalo Peace House sponsored a day of *Celtic Spirituality* at Our Lady of Charity Parish Maguire Hall in South Buffalo. Seventeen women participated. From the evaluations, it was a wonderfully life-giving experience for everyone.

We are especially thankful to Msgr. David Lee and the parishioners for offering their wonderful facilities, and Bella Pizzeria (3330 South Park Ave, Lackawanna, NY 14218) for donating a sheet pizza for our lunch. Those who do not care for corned beef and cabbage were especially grateful! We would also like to thank Patricia McGuire for the absolutely delicious and moist soda bread!

The Celtic Spirituality Day of Reflection was also offered at Immaculate Conception Church in Wellsville, NY on March 22nd. Although the group was small (8 persons) the sharing and questions were very insightful.

Secret Café

On March 14th and 15th the Buffalo Peace House transformed into a secret café. A traditional Irish dinner was served, along with spanakopita made by one of our African residents which gave the meal an international twist. Thank you to all who attended!

Peace House Lunches

Our two asylum seekers, in conjunction with board chair Mary Callahan prepared a delicious lunch for supporters of the Peace House. Attendees (pictured to the left) were invited to listen to the stories of our two asylum seekers while eating a scrumptious meal.

SPRING SPRINT CAMPAIGN

Enclosed is a donation of \$ _____ to the Buffalo Peace House for:

- General Operating Costs
- Educational Opportunities
- Asylum Seekers

Our Goals is 10,000\$

Name: _____

"We are rich according to what we give not what

What we possess" (Attributed to St Patrick and others).



PLEASE and THANK YOU

Can you spare any plastic bins for storage of winter clothing?

Do you have few hours to do a “mini field trip”? Contact us.

Thanks to Everyone who has helped support the Buffalo Peace House.

Naima is grateful to Patricia Harrity for driving her to Hilbert College.

We all say thanks to the [Silversteins](#), [Fr Peter Drilling](#), [Kathy Zalocha](#),

[The Herbsts](#), [the Hefferns](#), [Nicolays](#), [Kathy Maculoso](#), [The Matthews](#),

As well as to each March donor. Also, Gratias to [Mary Maloney](#),

our Attorney and to our new board members for "taking the plunge".

Do you know? For every homeless person there may be two, three or four empty buildings in most geographic areas of our country.

Buffalo Peace House

P.o box 370 Athol springs

Hamburg Ny 14010

BE OUR GUEST

On a chilly February night our residents prepared a community meal and enjoyed an evening of sharing stories and laughter. We'll be doing this again on Fridays in April and May. We'd love to have you join us on one or more of the following dates:

**April 25th, May 10th,
May 30th at 5:30 pm.**

Just call ahead!



PLEASE JOIN US IN OUR SPRING SPRINT CAMPAIGN

To our Christian Friends, HAPPY EASTER! 