



Spring 2009

# Dorothy Day House

Each day folks at Dorothy Day House rise before the crack of dawn to prepare breakfast. Our volunteer base and two employees work hard to bring a warm meal to the folks at the Berkeley Men's Shelter in the Veterans building and at Trinity Church. Most evenings each month, dinners are prepared and served by various East Bay groups at the Men's shelter. And during the winter, DDH runs the Storm Shelter at St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

## ***Sleeping Bag Drive, a Success***



We set out last fall to provide sleeping bags at our Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter, which is open on rainy and cold nights during Dec-March. The goal of the bags was to act as bedding on our cots, but then to be something shelter residents could take with them for cold winter nights, often spent in doorways on the street. Thanks to our newsletter supporters, we received over \$2,000, enough to buy more than 200 sleeping bags, which got us through the entire winter. Thank you to all for your support!

This month's community dinners feature is with Berkeley Midrasha, which sponsors a few dinners each month run by Jewish high school students in 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades. See page 2.

## ***Berkeley Midrasha at the Shelter Dinners***

*Since Dorothy Day House volunteers stabilized the breakfasts more than 15 years ago, we have coordinated numerous groups serving dinner in the shelter. Local schools and churches take on an evening or two each month to be responsible for a meal. This program, in Catholic Worker grassroots fashion, blossomed into meals served almost every night of the month.*

Diane Bernbaum, Director of Midrasha, writes:

Midrasha is a high school program for 8th-12th grade Jewish high school students. We are sponsored by ten different synagogues and open to any teen in the East Bay Jewish community. Our students both attend weekly classes and go on weekend retreats several times a year. Part of what we try to teach our students is the Jewish value of "tikkun olam" a Hebrew phrase which translates to "repairing the world."

***"We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community. It all happened while we sat there talking, and it is still going on."***

**- Dorothy Day**

I honestly can't remember how long Midrasha has been cooking at the Shelter. I think it's been about 14 years. And I also can't remember how the association first came about; our contact was Shura Wallin, although I can't remember if she found us or we found her. Midrasha first started cooking dinner at the Shelter once a month, soliciting cooks from our students and their families. Within a few years we had more volunteers than we could use so we asked for a second day of the month and then a third. We are now responsible for dinners on the first Wednesday, third Tuesday and fourth Thursday each month.

At the beginning all coordination of the program was done by Midrasha board member, Marilee, and the Midrasha office. After a few years Marilee took me out for coffee and told me she thought that teens could do all the administration of the program by themselves. I was incredulous. Organizing all those volunteers was a hard enough job for capable adults. How could teens manage? But I trusted Marilee's instincts and we passed the program over to a teen committee about seven years ago. They have done a magnificent job.

One person schedules families to cook and to shop for the dinner. Another sends reminders as the date nears. Another sends thank you notes and another gets a separate family to bake cookies for dessert. Over the years I have been in awe of the teens. Hats off to Gabriela, Sarah, Mollie, Mayan and Lindsay who have chaired this group since its inception and many thanks to Cynthia and Marilee who have been the parent/board of directors support who have aided these amazing young people.

It has been Midrasha's privilege to have been able to cook dinner, year after year at the Shelter. It has truly given our community a sense of tikkun olam, repairing the world.

## ***Midrasha Dinner continued.***

Lindsay (volunteer) writes:

I help out with the meals because it's fun to cook in the kitchen for so many people and plus I feel like I'm actually making a difference instead of watching Scrubs all night. I learned that the men are of all ethnicities, that most of them have jobs, they are off drugs, and they are usually only staying at the shelter temporarily. When it's only females cooking and we have to heave a large bowl or soup or water container, the men always help by carrying it out for us.

I have gone to Berkeley Midrasha for five years. Last year I joined the Homeless Meal Committee not knowing what to expect. This year I took on the position as head of the Committee. I am responsible for scheduling Midrasha families to cook at Berkeley's Men's Shelter. I have never experienced such responsibility before. When I do not do my homework only I am affected, but if I fail to complete my tasks for the committee, fifty men go hungry. Often times I help out as an extra pair of hands in the kitchen. The men always appreciate a home cooked meal. When we made jambalaya, we got a standing ovation! Sitting down to talk and eat at the same table with these men allows me to connect with them as fellow humans.



### ***Regular Small Business Donors***

**Consider patronizing our regular small business donors, who help us in many ways to provide significant portions of the meals we serve.**

- Berkwood Hedge School
- Polly Kerr--The Burrito Factory
- The Cheeseboard Collective
- Mechanic's Bank
- Armando--Starbuck's (Shattuck)
- Nadia--Peet's (Telegraph)

### ***Foundations***

**We are grateful for the support of the following foundations:**

- City of Berkeley
- Walter & Elise Haas Fund
- Y & H Soda Foundation
- Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund
- Crescent Porter Hale Foundation
- Van Loben Sels/Rembe Rock Foundation

**Consider a donation in honor of a friend or family member**

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Our food prices, like yours are increasing, so please consider a regular donation or pledge.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory/Honor \_\_\_\_\_

For pledges, we will send a reminder. All donations are tax deductible. We do not share our mailing list.

| <b>Donation Amount (used daily)</b> |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | \$10.00 Four gallons of milk    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | \$15.00 One case of eggs.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | \$25.00 Oats and butter         |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | \$30.00 Farina and sugar        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | \$50.00 Oats, Farina, & Grits   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | \$100 Ham or other protein item |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Other \$ _____                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | One-time donation               |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Monthly Pledge                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Bi-monthly Pledge               |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Other _____                     |

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