



54 N. Summer Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

The Diocese of Springfield
P.O. Box 1730 • 65 Elliot Street
Springfield, MA 01102

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Homework House Newsletter

HOMework HOUSE



Fall, 2011

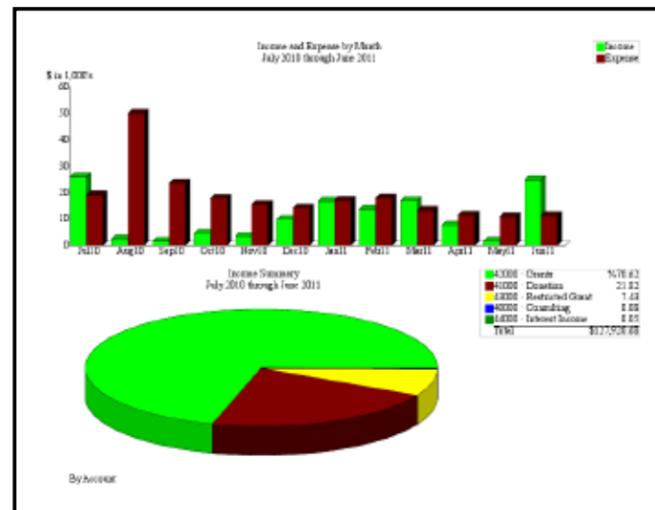
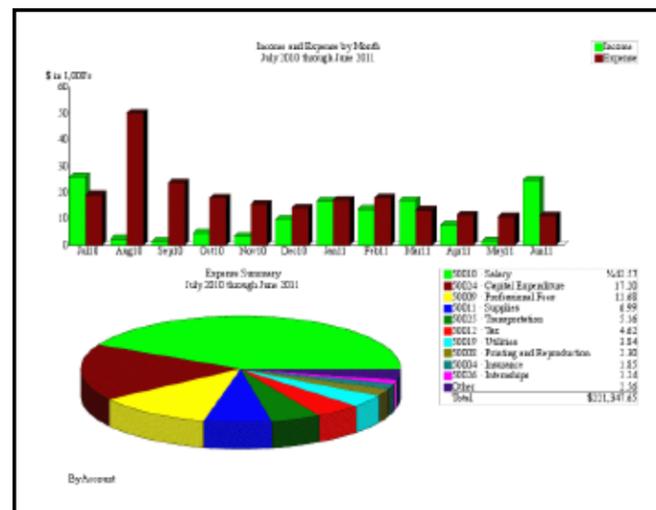
Tutoring one child at a time



Homework House provides free tutoring and mentoring for children who are at risk for academic failure and dropping out of school. We give children a loving and caring environment. We help them improve their literacy skills so they can become productive members of our community.

We work towards rekindling their interest in learning and self-improvement - one page at a time. Services are provided to school-age children without regard to race, religion, ethnicity or gender.

Annual Report - FY 10-11



VOLUME 4, 2011

Stories Inside:



What's New!



ArtsFridays



New and Former Staff

Homework House Celebrates Its Fifth Birthday

Like its uncountable children, Homework House keeps growing and growing up. In February 2006, we easily kept count of our first two students and tutors, and in springtime had a growth spurt to fifteen children from grades three to five working with twenty tutors. When the new school year began, we opened a second site in Churchill at the request of Lawrence School and our spurt began taking us beyond our hopes thanks to active collaboration.

Now, we're fully five years old. This past school year over 150 children came between September and June. We've helped each child because 235 volunteers tutored regularly. They came from the high schools, colleges and homes in the Pioneer Valley. This year over 150 tutors are helping our children, already numbering 150. Soon we will be looking for tutors for 2012. Want to come?

FUNDRAISING NEWS

We need to keep our doors open. We need an endowment. So we need you to give us one hour. **Come February 16, 2012 to Holyoke's famed Yankee Pedlar.** You'll hear our children tell our story. You won't want to miss it. Mark your calendar now! The snow date that, please God, we won't need, is Mardi Gras.

Other fundraisers held for Homework House over the next few weeks:

- **MAGICAL NIGHT OF GIVING** at the Holyoke Mall, November 20, 2011.
- **BON TON** Store in Westfield, MA, November 11th and 12th.
- **VILLAGE COMMONS** in South Hadley, MA, December 1, 2011.

A Tutor's Perspective

I am a graduate student in an education program at UMass. I tutor every Thursday at Homework House. On most weeks, I tutor two students who happen to be brothers. When they arrive, I ask how their days were at school and how much homework they have to do. Both of them are motivated and usually get started on their homework right away. They ask for help when necessary. I enjoy working with these boys because they don't just rely on me for answers. They do what they can on their own and also use each other as resources.

Homework House is structured in a way that helps me keep on track with the kids. We do homework, we read, we work on math skills - usually on the computers, and we have time to socialize while snacking and playing some sort of game at the end of the session.

Not only is tutoring a rewarding experience, but I am continually amazed at what the students and I can accomplish together.

-Kat Warder, Homework House Tutor

What's New!

The old windows at Chestnut Street continue to be replaced thanks to a Peabody Grant.

New flooring also continues at Chestnut Street thanks to a Beveridge Grant.

Thanks to the students of Elms College's Dorothy Day program, our 6th, 7th and 8th graders now enjoy a new classroom in our middle school center at Chestnut Street.

144 students are currently enrolled this year, including six at our newest site at the Boys' and Girls' Club in Springfield.

ArtsFridays

Our **ArtsFriday** program continues, this year increasing in frequency to four Fridays a month. Students at Site 1 (Flats) participate two Fridays a month at the NEARI Jumpstart Program next door, where they play games, do art projects and enjoy dinner.

Our students at Site 2 (Churchill) come after school two Fridays a month for art classes with local artists. Most recently, they've been taking advantage of our new puppet stage as they make their own puppets.



Homework House Staff

Sister Maureen Broughan continues to serve Homework House as Executive Director. You can count on her to know every child by name. They may call her "Teacher", "Tutor", "Sister", or some Latina version of Maureen, but they know her as their friend and the caring face of Homework House.



Sister Jane Morrissey, back from a sabbatical year in which she started writing the history of Homework House, serves as Program Coordinator. She says that, above all, she feels that her year was a long rejuvenating pilgrimage leading home. She didn't know when she started that the journey would be "so round-trip".



Joanine Carey of Easthampton, an Elms alumna, since graduation spent one year as a Passionist Volunteer working in Honduras and the next year as an AmeriCorps worker at Homework House. In October, she joined the full-time staff as Education Coordinator and serves as site supervisor of the middle school learning centers in Churchill.



Sister Kathy Imbruno, since serving on the SSJ Leadership Team, has been "following Homework House with great interest." She now works as Site Supervisor in the Flats. She reflects, "The goal of helping the at-risk children of Holyoke to advance in their studies is perfectly in keeping with the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of meeting the unmet needs of the dear neighbor wherever they are found." She discerns, "This is what draws me to Homework House."



Melinda Pellerin-Duck, after being honored in the State House and the White House as "Teacher of the Year for her 27 years in Springfield classrooms," has left retirement to be a Homework House Site Supervisor. She is "awed" by the kindergarteners' excitement as they hurry upstairs and tell, "what kind of magical animals they saw on the bus." She lines them up to go downstairs to the bathroom and reminds them "to hold on to their magic tickets . . . don't lose them." She motivates students and tutors, stressing that "phonics, math and reading can be fun when you use your imagination!"



Jacqueline Díaz, our first AmeriCorps worker, now serves as assistant site supervisor in the Flats. After earning her GED last year, she is now enrolled in course work at Holyoke Community College's newly opened Transportation/Education Center in Veteran's Park. She studies and works, and does both while raising her four sons, all of whom come to Homework House. The newest, Josiah, born the day after Easter, comes in her arms.



Frankie Quiñones, our other AmeriCorps worker, serves as assistant site supervisor in Churchill. He too earned his GED last year and has started his transition into college studies on-line. He and Joanine share the credit for the stabilization and impressive growth of the Homework House program for middle-schoolers, their "Reading Challenge" and ArtsFridays. He says, "Homework House is great. It's such a big help for children in need in this community."



Andrés Hernandez, a junior at Dean Tech High School, assists Melinda in the Kindergarten - 3rd Grade rooms after school in Churchill. The older brother of two Homework House students, Andres knows the students and neighborhood well and serves as a good role model for the children.



Annual Report of Donors We are supported by Amelia Peabody Foundation; Annual Catholic Appeal; Beveridge Family Foundation; Campaign for Human Development-Diocese of Springfield; Chicopee Savings Bank Charitable Foundation; Christian Brothers Foundation; Community Development Block Grant; Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts; Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet; Conrad Hilton Fund; Davis Family Foundation; John Bickford Foundation; Olivia's Organics; PeoplesBank Community Outreach Program; Project Bread; Ronald McDonald House Charities of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts; Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange Fund; Springfield Sisters of St. Joseph Ministry Fund; United Way of Pioneer Valley. This project is also supported in part by a grant from the Holyoke Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and all our 550 benefactors.