

# Newsletter

Women's Lunch Place Fall 2009

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Joanne Sullivan, Mayor Thomas Menino, and Sharon Reilly

I am a participant in a leadership program at Boston College- Leadership for Change- and one of my instructors is a master of using quotes to convey concepts. Recently, at one of the sessions, a peer, a young man who appeared to be in his early 30s, an engineer and recently engaged, asked if he could share his favorite quote with the class. This is what he said and his words have possessed me ever since he uttered them:

**“What I do today is important, because I am exchanging a day of my life for it.”**

Initially, I thought about all the ways I like to squander time: looking for antique buttons, drinking chai lattes with soy. I also thought about the work that I do at the Women's Lunch Place and those thoughts lead me to the women themselves and the many misconceptions that people hold

about poor and homeless women: they are addicts and alcoholics, uneducated, and don't want to work; they can't hold their lives together. And, of course the list goes on.

In those moments, I wished that I could tell those people about the kinds of things I see women doing at the Lunch Place. Things like making a commitment and keeping it to participate in a 14 week program - Working through the Barriers of Employment. We offered the program for the first time last fiscal year and the response was life changing. Women we never guessed would have been interested were showing up every Thursday morning at 9:00 a.m. to do something important because they realized that they were exchanging a day of their life for something better. None of the participants were women who had never been employed. In fact, there was a former researcher, a chef, a paralegal, a fashion model, and a community organizer in the group. What each

had in common was that something in their lives had started to unravel and they could not piece things back together again in a timely fashion and one event led to another and before they knew it, they were out of work, out of their home, out of themselves.

The 17 women who participated ignited something in other women and so as we prepare to offer the program again, I am reminded that providing the opportunity for women, to do something important is something that I exchange my life for every day. It is an exchange that is made possible by the generosity of so many. Thank you for all the ways that you support the mission and core values of the Women's Lunch Place. Thank you for deciding that the Women's Lunch Place is worthy of your time, your resources, and your love. After all, when you volunteer, make an in-kind donation, or write a check, you are doing something important; therefore, exchanging a day or a portion of your life for it.

Please join me for the special graduation ceremony for the Barriers of Employment participants on Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 – 10:30 am!

All the Best,

[Sharon Reilly](#)

## Make Your Donation Today!

For 27 years, the Women's Lunch Place has made a difference in the lives of Boston's poor and homeless women. We are open six days a week, year-round, to offer food, friendship, and a full spectrum of advocacy and support services to each of our guests. But we don't do it alone. We need your help. By making a gift to the Women's Lunch Place today, you too can make a difference in these women's lives.

For more information or to make a gift, please visit our website at [www.womenslunchplace.org](http://www.womenslunchplace.org) or call our administrative office at 617-267-1722.



## Salutations from Sarah Monaco



The Grove Family, Sharon Reilly, Sarah Monaco, Bruce Herzfelder and Michelle McGee

*"If you are new to the Women's Lunch Place, I welcome you and would like very much to meet you in person and offer you a tour if you haven't seen the shelter."*

Dear Friends,

The Fall season is upon us. With it comes that sense of reinvigoration that arrives with the crisp, cool weather. Do we ever forget that feeling, of going back to school and getting back to the business that comes after the dog days of August? At the Women's Lunch Place ("WLP") we have been working all summer, but still share that sense of anticipation and excitement at the return of many beloved volunteers who have been away for the summer. It also marks the start of a new board returning to active duty.

It is my great pleasure to introduce five new board members: Caryn Appelbaum, Joe Bator, Mary Jane Patrone, Sauci Saffitz and John Sutich. They each value the mission of the WLP, which is to provide a safe, comfort-

able day shelter for women who are poor or homeless and to provide them with nutritious food and needed services. I am thrilled that we have these new five board members on our team and look forward to the board working closely with each other over the next year.

We are also saying good-bye to some board members who left this year. Thank you so much to Shelly Cohen, Kim Epstein, Mary Jacobs, and Jenni Watson for all your hard work and commitment to the WLP. We appreciate all you have done for the WLP, and we hope to see you often in the future.

This will be an exciting season for us. We just completed a new Strategic Plan and will be starting the implementation of it shortly. In addition, we have

many exciting fundraising opportunities coming up, especially our famous and fabulous "Spaghetti Dinner". For the second year in a row we will be the guests of the Taj hotel as they have kindly underwritten most of the event. Spaghetti Dinner takes place on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please, mark your calendars and save the date.

If you are new to the Women's Lunch Place, I welcome you and would like very much to meet you in person and offer you a tour if you haven't seen the shelter. If you are a returning volunteer, friend or donor, thank you for all that you do for the Women's Lunch Place.

Best Regards,

[Sarah R. Monaco](#)

President of the Board of Directors

## New Board Members

The Women's Lunch Place is pleased and proud to announce new members of the Board of Directors and Advisory Committee!

**Caryn Appelbaum** is a realtor for Coldwell Banker Real Estate. Caryn has been a volunteer at the Women's Lunch place for three years. **Joe Bator** is the senior vice president and director of Business Banking at Eastern Bank. Joe also serves on the organizing committee for and participates annually in Swim Across America, a Boston Harbor relay swim to raise money for the Perino Cancer Institute. **Mary Jane Patrone** is a retired journalist, who spent 31 years at the Boston Globe, where she was also on the board of the Boston Globe Foundation. **Sharon Saffitz** is a longstanding volunteer at the Women's Lunch

Place and tutor at the Boston and Newton public schools. Sharon also has experience teaching and has held leadership roles in her congregation and for Hadassah. **John Sutich** is the Director of State Government Relations for Comcast. John has served on the Board of Directors for the YMCA of Greater Boston. **Francis Trapasso** is the founder of the law firm Francis J. Trapasso & Associates. Francis is currently on the board of the Family Services Organization of Worcester, and has been on planning committees for golf tournaments to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Special Olympics.

**Frankie Boyer** has long been a fixture in the local community, most famous for her health-focused radio program, "The Frankie Boyer Show."



New Board Member Joseph Bator and wife Julia Kim enjoying the Art Show at the Prudential Center



Sharon Reilly with Board Member Deb Maguire & Counselor Mike Ross, Advisory Committee Member

## Volunteer Opportunities

The Women's Lunch Place is known for its dedicated group of volunteers who create delicious meals six days a week. What you might not know is that the WLP is looking to expand its volunteer program to include a team of volunteers willing to work on Support and in the Resource Center (RC) throughout the week. These unique opportunities will give volunteers the chance to get to know the guests we love to serve everyday!

To work as a **Support Assistant**, we ask that you are able to work two shifts per month on a regular schedule for at least three months. We

require four training shifts. The following shifts are available: Monday through Saturday 8am-12pm or 9am-1pm. A typical day consists of distributing toiletries from our guest services closet, maintaining laundry and shower appointments, changing nap room beds and doing house laundry.

Volunteers are needed in the Resource Center (RC) Monday through Saturday. Working in the Resource Center requires a commitment of two-four hour long training shifts. The RC is open from 9am- 1:30pm, and volunteering may include an extra few minutes before opening

and after closing.

Please be able to commit to at least two shifts per month, though preferably one per week, on a regular schedule for at least three months. RC volunteers wear many hats, but primarily assist guests with computers: including tutoring and technical assistance, helping guests with copier, fax, mail inquiries, and distributing office supplies.

All interested parties should contact Sophie Lehman, Volunteer Coordinator, at 617.267.1722 x 27 or [sophie@womenslunchplace.org](mailto:sophie@womenslunchplace.org).



### Save the Date for Friday, October 23, 2009!

For 27 years, the Women's Lunch Place has made a commitment to improve the quality of life for women and children who are poor and homeless.

The Spaghetti Dinner is the WLP's signature annual event that is dedicated to raising critical funds that support the daily operations of the organization. Last year more than \$200,000 was raised to support the WLP's Meals and Advocacy programs.

These are challenging times and the need for increased funding has never been greater. In 2009 the WLP has seen a 25% increase in meals served; a 20% increase in food costs, and nearly a 30% decrease in revenue. That is why the success of this year's Spaghetti Dinner is so critical.

**Art Show & Cocktail Hour~ 5:30pm. to 6:30pm.**

**The Women's Lunch Place  
67 Newbury Street**

**Followed by Dinner at 7:00 pm.**

**First Lady, Diane Patrick, Honorary Chair**

**Special Guest: Anita Diamant**

**Taj Boston**



+Crystal and Baby John

## A Second Chance

When Crystal first came to the Women's Lunch Place three years ago, she wasn't in a position to think about taking advantage of many of its services.

"I would come in, go in the nap room, sleep all day, and eat," Crystal said. When WLP was closed at night, Crystal would sleep just outside it.

Crystal was born in New Hampshire, however after many years of struggling with abuse and unemployment, she moved out of her home at the tender age of 18 with a world full of adversity before her.

After suffering the loss of her first child, prematurely, Crystal moved to Massachusetts

# Mother's Day 2009



Staff and Guest embracing at Mother's Day Celebration

*"The day was just beautiful. It is nice to come to the WLP on Mother's Day and celebrate all of the women who come here that have gone through so much,"*

The Women's Lunch Place is proud to announce our most successful Mother's Day Card campaign to date. This year, the WLP raised over \$80,000 to benefit our core programs and services through the sale of our signature Mother's Day cards.

New this year, the Women's Lunch Place had an opportunity to sell our beautiful cards at The Shops at the Prudential Center. For 15 days, throughout the months of April and May, our dedicated volunteers staffed the WLP kiosk and sold cards to the shoppers and tourists of Boston.

"The WLP Mother's Day card sales have now become a tradition at Saint Cecilia Parish," said Mark Lippolt, WLP volunteer and St. Cecilia liaison.

"Members of our congregation love the idea of supporting the mission of WLP by selling the attractive cards at

our church after services and by volunteering at the Prudential Mall kiosk. Spending time together at the kiosk was a great deal of fun," continued Mark.

The culmination of our campaign took place on Mother's Day with a beautiful celebration at 67 Newbury Street. Every year the WLP transforms itself into a beautiful oasis fit to celebrate the incredible mothers, daughters, friends, and guests we serve year-round. This year the WLP honored our guests with live entertainment, gifts, and flowers. We also featured a picnic-style lunch to match our beautiful butterfly garden decor.

"The day was just beautiful. It is nice to come to the WLP on Mother's Day and celebrate all of the women who come here who have gone through so much," said an anonymous guest.

The Women's Lunch Place

2009 Mother's Day Card Campaign was made possible by the generosity of Boston Properties, Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P, St. Cecilia's Parish, and the countless volunteer groups who kept our kiosk sales thriving. Thank you for all of your support and dedication!



Mother's Day Volunteers



Guests enjoying the festivities



HOPEsudbury representative and a WLP Guest unloading donations

This spring members from HOPEsudbury made a special connection to the staff and guests at the Women's Lunch Place. After taking initiative to reach out to local non-profits, HOPEsudbury organizers orchestrated a

Spring Drive to benefit Local Heroes, Inc. and The WLP.

The drive focused on raising awareness and much needed in-kind donations for our Guest Assistance Closet. After a two week period of soliciting donations at local businesses like Shaw's, Sudbury Farms and the Goodnow Library, HOPEsudbury delivered a tremendous amount of socks, slip-

pers, undergarments, toiletries, DVD's, and non-perishable candies to the ladies at the WLP.

HOPEsudbury, or Humanitarian Outreach Project, established itself in 2002 after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. With hearts still heavy with grief and hands ready to do good work, HOPEsudbury was born.

"I love what HOPEsudbury stands for. The town of Sudbury has helped so many- we are amazed by the support we receive every year. From our Blankets to Afghanistan program to the WLP we support a wide variety of vital organizations," said Carole Ann Baer HOPEsudbury officer.

Today a diverse group of local

businesses, residents, and youth join together to help others who need support and financial assistance. Each year HOPEsudbury raises over \$65,000 to support and strengthen communities in the area.

"The WLP has such a positive energy and sense of hope here. Every woman needs a friend and these women are not strangers to each other. They are friends and supporters of each other's struggle. It is great to be able to help," said Jeannie Able HOPEsudbury member.

For more information on HOPEsudbury please visit their website at [www.hopesudbury.org](http://www.hopesudbury.org).

# Spreading a Little Hope

## A Second Chance Cont'd.

and hid her pain through drug abuse. She also began dating John, her current boyfriend who was also an avid drug user.

This downward spiral took a turn for the better when Crystal realized she was pregnant for the second time. Although Crystal was still devastated by the loss of her first child, she made the decision to put the well-being of her future child at the very top of her priorities.

"It was my second chance," she said. Crystal stopped using drugs immediately, and John stopped a month after she did. Suddenly, everything in Crystal's life revolved around ensuring the success of her pregnancy and well-being of her future son.

Withdrawing from drug use can be physically and mentally excruciating and difficult, but for Crystal, the thought of having a healthy baby overshadowed all of that.

"All I needed was a place to stay," she said. Currently, Crystal is staying in a family shelter. To stay there, women must be pregnant or have a child. When Crystal was ready to look into rehab programs, and find living situations, the staff from the Women's Lunch Place

helped her find resources, brought her things when she was stuck inside pregnant, and provided a lot of support.

The baby, also named John, is nine months old now. He was born weighing eight pounds and fifteen ounces, and has grown healthily,



Jesuit Volunteer, Hilary Searle, and baby John.

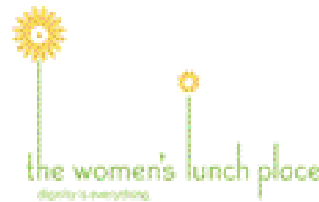
weighing twenty-five pounds now. He's a favorite at the Women's Lunch Place, where staff beg Crystal to bring him in so they can see him and hold him.

Last August marked Crystal's one year anniversary of sobriety. She is currently completing an outpatient addiction recovery program that she goes to all day, twice a week, which she has been in since April. While sometimes it's hard to avoid the temptation of old habits, baby John provides all the strength she needs, and she calls him her guardian angel.

"Right now I'm taking it day by day," she said.

John, Sr. is about to graduate from an addiction recovery program and plans to go on to barber school. During the day, John, Jr. goes to daycare at Horizons for Homeless Children while Crystal works at getting her G.E.D and housing.

"I do miss him when he's there," Crystal admitted. "I love my baby to death. He's my heart and soul."



## Volunteer Spotlight

Vicki Morte is a senior theology major at Boston College who has been volunteering at the Women's Lunch Place since her freshman year.

Vicki has spent most of the past three years working in the kitchen one day a week during the school year and more frequently during the summer. Vicki likes working in the kitchen, but has sought to branch out this summer to other areas of volunteering.

"There's this solidarity with kitchen volunteers," she said.

This summer, Vicki has been doing shifts on support and in the re-

source center. She's had the opportunity to translate for a guest's housing application and, recently, helped lead a workshop on CORI reform (which she had studied previously in school) before some WLP guests and staff went to the state-house to support the legislation.

"To approach the issue from student activism perspective, and then in solidarity with the women," Vicki said. "It was really cool."

Vicki wants to go to graduate school for social work, and feels that her experience at WLP has helped her to get an idea of what that career could entail.



Volunteer, Vicki Morte

"That's why I wanted to try (working outside the kitchen in advocacy and support), to see if I love it as much as I think I do," Vicki said. "And I do."

## FY 2009 Fast Facts

### During the last fiscal year, The Women's Lunch Place provided:

**52,015** meals to women and their children.

**583** more meals to children than the previous fiscal year.

**1,191** warm showers.

**2,272** naps and **1,824** loads of laundry.

**5,710** guest visits to the Resource Center.

**2,544** units of advocacy services which addressed a number of issues including but not limited to emergency shelter, housing search

and stabilization, emotional counseling, legal issues, finance, substance abuse treatment, employment and education.

**236** different workshops to assist guests with employment, housing, and medical/mental health counseling

**The WLP also transitioned 41 women into stable housing during the last fiscal year.**

**These services would not have been provided without the generous support we received from our many donors, volunteers, and neighbors. On behalf of the guests, staff, and volunteers who call the Women's Lunch Place their home, thank for making our work possi-**



### The Women's Lunch Place

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[www.womenslunchplace.org](http://www.womenslunchplace.org)

### Mission

The Women's Lunch Place provides a safe, comfortable daytime shelter, nutritious food, and services for women who are homeless or poor. We treat women with dignity and respect, and foster a community committed to meeting each woman's needs.

### Core Values

We believe no individual should have to be hungry or homeless

We believe all human beings should be treated with dignity and respect

We meet each woman where she is, and we base and adjust our services according to her needs

We offer our services in a gracious, comfortable and safe environment, offering both physical and emotional sustenance

We create a community of understanding and acceptance among guests, staff, volunteers and board members