

Strategic Plan

Preliminary Plan – March 17, 2008

Provisional Approval – April 2, 2008

Final Approval – May 7, 2008

Overview of Document

This document is a detailed description of Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network's three-year strategic plan. This plan to be given final approved May 7, 2008 at the regularly scheduled monthly general board meeting. This is GIHN's third three-year strategic plan.

Mission Statement

Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network is a flexible, cooperative ministry providing an opportunity for our community to be actively involved in caring for the needs of homeless families.

Core Values

We believe that every human being has inherent worth and should be treated fairly in all circumstances with respect for their uniqueness and personnel dignity.

We believe that people should be given the opportunity to excel.

We believe that a community consists of people who are responsible to one another to ensure the well being of each individual as well as the whole community.

We believe that every child has the right to enjoy the opportunity to thrive in a loving, caring and stable environment.

We believe that homelessness has neither a single cause nor a single solution.

We believe that homelessness like poverty is an all-intrusive affliction that is injurious to the physical, emotional and spiritual self and families.

Internal Assessment

- GIHN has skilled and dedicated staff that is able and motivated to carry out the mission and goals of the organization. Maintaining appropriate staff policies and procedures, regular evaluations and affirmation, and providing avenues to reduce burnout help assure a strong organization.

- The GIHN Day Center is currently adequate for meeting the needs and programs of the organization. However, should an opportunity for modest expansion become available, it should be investigated.
- Our model of actively engaging individuals and churches as volunteers helping to meet the needs of homeless families in Elkhart County is a unique strength of our program. This uniqueness is strongly embraced by our community and local social service organizations.
- Our program depends largely on volunteers. Continuous training of volunteers is essential. Likewise, our process for screening guest families must be sensitive to the threshold of skills volunteers possess.
- Our financial position continues to be an area requiring consistent work.
- We need to assure GIHN continues to have a strong Board.
- GIHN has no debt – owning both the day center and the van.
- GIHN has been in operation for over 12 years.
- GIHN has an established endowment and maintains a plan for continued small donation funding.

External Assessment

- Homelessness is a problem in our community. At present it appears that the number of homeless families in Goshen is somewhat static while across the country it continues to grow. Children suffer the most.
- The number of homeless individuals in Goshen has increased dramatically within the past few years.
- Homelessness is often the result of repeated cycles. The problems grow if the cycles are not broken. A significant portion of homeless and at risk families would benefit from structured education, professional case management and long term mentoring. Funding for such programs has declined and remains scarce. GIHN and other local agencies have been challenged by this issue and seek to find creative solutions. Cycles of brokenness are a central issue.
- Many jobs in our community pay only modest wages, making it challenging to adequately support a family. This is especially tough for single parent families. A vehicle repair or unexpected medical expense can put a family on the street. Livable wages are a central issue.
- The availability of supportive programs like Section 8, subsidized housing, and transitional housing is inadequate to meet the need.
- Affordable, low-income housing is not accessible to the families we shelter as the rental cost and qualifying criteria for acceptance into these units exceeds the income and history of our guest families.
- There is moderate to good inter-agency cooperation within our community. Local agencies do not compete with GIHN in terms of either mission or programs. GIHN is committed to do all it can to strengthen relationships, build cooperative solutions, and operate at the highest level of efficiency. Inter-agency cooperation is central to improving outcomes and aiding in maintaining community contributed costs.

Core Competencies / Uniqueness

Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network is the only provider of emergency shelter exclusively for homeless families in Elkhart County. The only other established homeless shelter in Elkhart County is Faith Mission. Faith Mission provides shelter primarily for homeless individuals but does have five rooms dedicated for families. Some of the policy differences that distinguish the two programs include Faith Missions limiting their services to married couples only, their mandate for residents to participate in church services and their willingness to admit childless couples. GIHN on the other hand admits cohabitating couples and extended family members as part of the family unit but in every instance insists that children, born or unborn, are somehow involved with the “family”.

Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network is also distinguished from Faith Mission by the fact that GIHN does not make any type of religious activity a required part of staying in the shelter program. Additionally, GIHN relies on volunteers for 14 of every 24 hours of shelter for guest support, supervision and feeding.

Long Term Strategies

Position our staff for continued success. Hire right, retain the best, have a well-crafted plan, and never let them feel unappreciated.

Strengthen and grow our programs. Maintain our focus, creatively leverage our uniqueness, forge stronger partnerships, and watch for new opportunities.

Call our community to respond. We need each other. We all have needs. We all have something to give. Opportunities for exchange make us all more whole.

Build and maintain a strong Board. The Board defines the governing policies and expected outcomes for the organization. This requires strong leadership, a diverse set of skills, great communication, and firm commitment.

Maintain the best equipment necessary. All organizations need equipment to conduct the activities of the organization. For the activities of any organization to be at their best, the equipment used must be appropriate, well maintained, efficient and cost effective.

Continue to build and maintain the financial resources of the organization. For an organization to provide the best services possible it is imperative that it have the financial resources available to conduct its ordinary activities. In most instances no-fee new initiatives can be funded by grant monies, however, no-fee programs – even successful programs – must be maintained through donated monies – a responsibility shared jointly by the board and the executive director.

Annual Goals:

Strategy: Position our staff for continued success

Annual Goal:

1) Provide for and fund opportunities for staff enrichment with a focus on empowerment and renewal (Personnel Board and staff).

Actions:

- Identify opportunities for training and renewal (Board and staff).
- Include funding in annual budget for each full time staff person to participate in appropriate trainings or renewal experiences (Finance Committee Board
- If required, secure additional funding.
- Plan for follow-up report to the Board a month or two subsequent to training / renewal time.

Strategy: Strengthen and grow our programs.

Annual Goal:

1) Complete the existing “videos in process” teaching parenting and social skills to shelter guest (Executive Director).

2) Develop a plan to offer additional support for guest once they exit the shelter program to encourage their continued stability (Program Development Committee and Executive Director).

3) Work on plan to develop a fixed site emergency shelter for homeless individuals in Goshen (Program Development Committee and Executive Director).

Strategy: Call our community to respond.

Annual Goals:

1) Maintain an active web site including: an event / action calendar which includes major events / fundraisers and the hosting schedule.

2) Publish a newsletter three times per year that includes a variety of content over the course of the calendar year such as success stories, recognitions, needs and opportunities (Communications Committee).

3) Provide for additional opportunities for church host/volunteers to be more involved guest families (Site Supervisor).

4) Increase the awareness and understanding of GIHN in every host congregation (Communications Committee).

Actions:

- Make personal contact with every host congregation in the first quarter, working with appropriate persons to plan for volunteer appreciation events, and trainings events.
- Plan newsletter content and timing well in advance. Get the schedule on the Board calendar. Assure timely distribution that is well coordinated with key events and fundraisers.
- Schedule time for each Board member to attend at least one coordinating meeting per year.
- Offer a Sunday School presentation to each host congregation at least once per year.
- Work with other IHN programs and local service agencies to build a training program for coordinators on ways volunteers and guests can jointly participate in healthy family activities. Seek support from area businesses and schools (gift certificates, donated tickets, etc.).

Strategy: Build and maintain a strong board.

Annual Goals:

1) Maintain a full board and slate of officers (Executive Committee).

2) Prepare an annual budget and monitor it regularly (Finance Committee).

3) Plan and conduct Board business retreats two times per calendar year (Board Vice Chair and Executive Director).

4) Maintain a board approved and affirmed strategic plan at all times (Executive Committee and Executive Director).

5) Watch for opportunities in our community for volunteer Board training. Encourage and support Board member participation (Board and Executive Director).

Strategy: Maintain the best equipment necessary.

Annual Goals:

- 1) Contract for technical support for all information technology (Executive Director).
- 2) Insure that all needed maintenance on the van is completed as recommended by the mechanic (Executive Director).
- 3) Insure that all building maintenance is completed in a timely manor (Executive Director).
- 4) Insure that all fire and safety equipment is maintained in appropriate operating condition (Site Supervisor)

Strategy: Continue to build and maintain the financial resources of the organization.

Annual Goals:

- 1) Maintain an awareness of grant availability for any programs currently operated or proposed by the board (Executive Director).
- 2) Apply for all appropriate grants (Executive Director).
- 3) Build our donor database through tracking of gifts (Executive Director and Treasure).
- 4) Prospect for new donors through target solicitation (Board and Executive Director).
- 5) Develop and maintain a plan for continued funding of the GIHN endowment (Finance Committee).
- 6) Insure that both Board committees responsible for the maintenance and development of financial resources remain active and focused (Board Chair, Finance Committee Chair, Fundraising Committee Chair).