



# RAIHN Inc.

## Weather Report

ROCHESTER AREA INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK, INC  
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### Letter from the Director



Dreams seemed to be the theme of my recent Florida trip. I attended the National Family Promise Conference in Orlando FL (April 29-May 2) and it was titled, "Dare to Dream." My leisure book of the moment was about lucid dreaming, sort of like "extreme" dreaming.

The day I spent at Disney World was heavily dominated by dream-like fantasy and entering the world of dreams and pretend. Even the mere idea of going on vacation in sunny Florida was, for me, a dream come true!

So, it seems fairly obvious to me that I should explore the phenomenon of dreaming: Letting the mind wander into new and unfamiliar places... aspiring to previously unattained goals, stretching ourselves to invent new ideas and challenges to conquer.

For the guests involved in RAIHN, their dreams are usually very simple: a safe place they can settle their family into and call "Home." To think that this place might include a yard with grass, or a playground nearby is almost a dream too large. To expect that they could complete their educational training and qualify for an adequately sustaining job is, for many, a dream too distant.

I am charged with the responsibility of helping them see their dream (of housing) turn into reality. In order to do that, first MANY things have to happen:

they have to resolve their financial problems, frequently they have to resolve family and relationship quagmires-to restore their social supports that will enable them to sustain their independence. This is very difficult with families that have been living so close to the edge of poverty/disaster, for so long, that they have systemically tapped out every little smidgeon of help available. Their friends and family have given and given and usually can't or won't give any more.

And that's where you come in. You care. You share what you have (your congregation, your food and expertise in preparing it, your time...to listen, to play). You let them know that THEY MATTER! You show them respect. Together, we help them feel safe. We help the children be *carefree* children again, now that they have a place to sleep peacefully once more.

Never underestimate the power of this connection. These simple interactions might be memorable in the mind of a child. One of our parents recently was telling me about a volunteer who showed their little girl how his watch worked, and had time zones of the world. She was fascinated by that and her little world expanded! Can't you just imagine her mind dreaming of visiting those far off places that are in a different time zone? I can imagine lots of potential for dreaming. Thanks for all the ways you help our guests expand their energy and capacity for dreaming of a better time and a safe home! You are THE BEST!!

~Nancy Elliott



Left to right: Tricia Polizzi (RAIHN Administrative Assistant), Wanda Wolf (RAIHN House Manager), Danielle Straka (Outgoing Roberts Wesleyan intern). Back row: Nancy Elliott (RAIHN Network Director)

### RAIHN Director:

Nancy Elliott, LMSW  
Email: Director@raihn.org

### Board of Directors:

President: Nancy Frank  
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David Poland  
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Michele Saccente  
Susan Stanger  
Helen Vanderbilt Tiss  
Kathy Weber  
Michael Williams

RAIHN is saddened by the death of Janet Hansen, RAIHN Coordinator at the United Church of Pittsford for several years. She was a dedicated, enthusiastic volunteer and her designation of RAIHN to receive memorial gifts in her memory is another generous gesture so typical of her. We send our thoughts and prayers to Janet's husband and daughters and family. We will miss her.

### RAIHN Newsletter TEAM

STEPHANIE KETTERL  
SKETTERL@SJFC.EDU



## A letter from The President

The year 2009 was a tough year everywhere. Grantors withheld grants or gave smaller ones as they watched their invested funds diminish. RAIHN was blessed by receiving generous grants from the following foundations in 2009.

- Alfred and Molly FANA
- Ames Amzalak Memorial Trust
- Catholic Charities
- Catholic Diocese of Rochester
- Cobblestone Capital Advors
- Episcopal Diocese of Rochester
- Foodlink
- Genesee Valley Association United Church of Christ
- Interfaith Alliance
- Kiwanis
- Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation
- Mary S. Mulligan Charitable Trust
- Masonic Service Bureau
- Monroe Foundation Covenant United Methodist
- Polisseni Foundation
- Presbytery of Genesee Valley
- United Way Donor Option
- Women of the ELCA in America
- Realtors Charitable Foundation

Thirty six faith congregations gave to RAIHN in 2009 totaling \$36,827, approximately 28% of the RAIHN budget. Most of the giving congregations were RAIHN hosts and supports though some were not.

RAIHN received monies from the 56<sup>th</sup> NYS Senate District and an Emergency Shelter Grant from the City of Rochester as well. If you know of a foundation which has given but is not listed above, it may have been an off cycle year for them. The thank you notes written to each funder express our thanks but our gratitude for the support we have received is ongoing. We know we are blessed by each donation and grant from the community and congregations. Please rest assured that the Board attempts in every decision to be careful stewards of every precious dollar.

In gratitude for all the support RAIHN receives,  
Nancy Frank  
President






RAIHN was honored to receive the Greater Rochester Community of Churches Community Award at the "Faith in Action" Dinner on Tuesday, June 1st. Nancy Frank accepted the award of a certificate and an oil lamp on behalf of the organization. Both will be on display at the Day Center.

This is an event where the faith community of Greater Rochester, NY gathers to recognize and thank the many people who put their faith into action with joyful hearts. Many of RAIHN's Board members and volunteers were present to share in the moment.



Above: Reverend Lawrence Hargrave reads from the New Testament.



Check out our Website

*to read Nancy Frank's review of the Family Promise National conference which includes useful documented statistics on homelessness.*

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

Front Row left to right: Donna Nasca, Rod Frohman, Dave Poland. Back Row left to right: Mike Williams, Nancy Frank, Kathy Weber, Alain Perregaux, Lawrence Hargrave, Nancy Elliott, Joanne Ligtenbert, Michele Saccente. Missing: Doug Hitchcock, Wendy Rose, Ruthellen Hoyle, Sue Stanger.

## Coordinator spotlight:

# Sandra Cannon

Meet Sandra Cannon! Sandra is the RAIHN Coordinator at New Life Presbyterian Church. We asked Sandra about her experience with RAIHN, and here is what she had to say:

**Q: How did you get involved with RAIHN?**

A: Sandra and her family (husband and daughter) were guests of the program after becoming homeless. Both Sandra and her husband suffered work-related injuries which left them unable able to work and support themselves. They were eventually served with an eviction notice that would leave them homeless. Sandra found the RAIHN program through the Rochester Social Services, Emergency Shelter Department.

**Q: What do you find most rewarding when it comes to your association with RAIHN?**

A: Through RAIHN, Sandra has learned that people really do care and that there is hope. She believes that it is very important to be grounded and have goals. Sandra still keeps that old eviction notice as a reminder to stay grounded.

**Q: What is your favorite memory on the job?**

A: Sandra remembers her daughter being very scared while her family were guests in the RAIHN program. Now when her family volunteers, Cierra relates very well to the kids and on moving day makes sure to tell them "it will be okay".

**Q: Tell us what you do outside of RAIHN.**

A: Sandra is currently attending Bryant Stratton College and will graduate in August in the field of medical administration. She is looking forward to interviewing for a residency position and then will be looking for fulltime employment. Sandra has also traveled to Albany to address the issue of the new education grant cuts and how it affects low income/no income families. She also used this opportunity to bring up the RAIHN program.

Interview by: Joanne Ligtenberg



## Board Member Spotlight:

# Michele Saccente

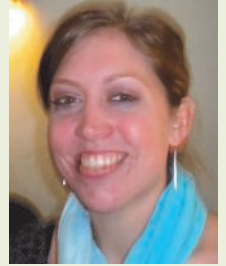
Michele became involved with RAIHN by coordinating a community service initiative with the Community Youth Collaboration whereby they tended to the garden at the Day Center. Michele was so impressed by the volunteerism and level of impact this program had on its participants that she decided to get further involved. Michele finds her volunteer work with RAIHN to be very rewarding as she is awed by the compassion she sees from the volunteers as well as the unity of all its volunteers when they work on a event. Michele is a bilingual social worker for Catholic Family Center in the Family and Youth Enrichment Program. This program provides job readiness training to youths, and provides case management services as well.

Michele has been married to her high school sweet heart for 37 years and notes she is more in love with him each day, they also have a son who in her eyes "can do no wrong". Michele loves the Yankees, listening to music and enjoys bird watching. Her favorite quote is "Dance like nobodies watching!" She is excited about her involvement with RAIHN and is impressed with the level of commitment from it's volunteers.

Written by: Donna Nasca

## RAIHN Interns

RAIHN loves its interns. We have consistently used Master of Social Work (MSW) interns, arranged through Roberts Wesleyan College who need to fulfill their field work component of 500 hours of on-site training in the senior year of their program. Usually the interns that are matched with RAIHN come from the Child and Family concentration of their program (as opposed to the Mental Health or Congregational concentrations).



Danielle Straka, 2009-2010 Intern

There are many reasons we contract to have interns. Not only does it give RAIHN the additional case management personnel backup needed, it gives them excellent exposure to working with at risk families. It gives them experience in advocacy, practice with interventions aimed at improving family relationships, conflict resolution, etc. While, in class, they are learning several theories on therapeutic work with families, at RAIHN they have the opportunity to apply that knowledge and practice the skills and apply the theories in real life situations. The "hands on" nature of the case management we do with our guests is a perfect way to fine tune the interns' knowledge base.

Some may wonder if our guests are getting "the short end of the stick" by having inexperienced social work interns handle their cases. Let me assure you, the majority of the first semester an intern is working at RAIHN is spent observing, and shadowing the directors' interactions with guests and potential families. They are given practice in writing case notes (summaries of events, pertinent things that take place) and they are monitored carefully when given introductory tasks. We ask the guests permission when a new intern sits in on "sessions," explaining that they are learning and could eventually be in charge of helping this guest move back out on their own. The guests are usually very open to having more people available to help them, so it works out nicely. If they are resistant, we give them time to warm up to the idea, and it always works out.

By the end of the first semester, our interns have learned all about the program, about other resources in the community to help our guests, and they have started doing interviews and assessments under the watchful eye of the director. They are learning to lead our Life Skills group, which is another requirement of their program, and they are looking for a way to bring their own new ideas and energy to our program.

In their second semester with RAIHN, our interns are ready to work more independently and are given more responsibility. They accompany guests, advocate in various ways, strategize and interact constantly. I challenge them to overcome areas of shyness and fear, and give them duties that will stretch their abilities and competencies. When graduation approaches, they will have demonstrated progress in 19 areas of competencies as defined by the MSW program requirements and will be ready to go out into the professional world of social work, making their own mark in the lives of those they serve.

Written by: Nancy Elliott



*Families of*  
**FANA**

FANA (the Spanish acronym for the Foundation for the Assistance of Abandoned Children) has helped over 10,000 children find nurturing homes with families all over the world. In Western New York and Pennsylvania, over 300 couples and their families have had their lives enriched with the adoption of these beautiful children. (<http://www.familiesoffana.org/fana.php>)

At the end of February, Families of FANA WNY presented RAIHN with one thousand dollars after Eileen Phillips, (sister of RAIHN board member, Sandra Holloway) nominated RAIHN for the Families of FANA's charitable donation. Eileen's daughter, Taylor was adopted through FANA, from a private orphanage in Bogota, Colombia. Families of FANA of Western New York, provides

support to adoptive families through the process of adoption and continues to support the children and families after the adoptions are complete.

RAIHN was blessed by Families of FANA's donation and thanks them and Eileen for the contribution to RAIHN's work with homeless families. Thank you, Eileen, for your networking and connecting RAIHN and Families of FANA!

Written by: Nancy Elliott



*Coming this fall*

**Snazzy Jazzy**



**RAIHN Wish List**

[HTTP://WWW.FRONTIERNET.NET/~RAIHN/WISHLIST.HTML](http://www.frontiernet.net/~RAIHN/WISHLIST.HTML)

# *First Annual...* **Interfaith Worship Service**

RAIHN's first annual Interfaith Worship Service took place on May 16th at 7:00 at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Penfield. Folks from many of our host and supporting congregations participated in the joyous service which honored our indispensable volunteers.

Our beautiful RAIHN shelter of multi-colored ribbons tied us together as we sang at the closing of our time of worship. It was a joyous ending to our service which celebrated the hospitality and welcome which are central to RAIHN's identity!

Our message was proclaimed through words and through the inspiring music of our volunteer choir directed by Matt Curlee. The words came from the story of Abraham's greeting his guests in the Bible, definitions of hospitality from a diversity of authors, and descriptions of the ministry of hospitality offered by our RAIHN volunteers.

A special thank you to everyone who worked so hard to help make this service happen. Keep watch for the date for our second annual Interfaith Worship Service. You won't want to miss it!

Written by: Ruthellen Hoyle



**We  
gathered  
together.**



# Reflections from where I sit...

I have worked for RAIHN since September 2009 as an Administrative Assistant. I have seen confused children, and the tired, pained expressions of newly arriving families. After a short time in the program, children and parents are refreshed and regain the energy to carry on, find work, save money and eventually find a real home.

The first family I met when I began working at the RAIHN Day Center was originally from Peru but had been living in the United States for some time. Their time in the program allowed the father to continue his night job in order to save money. The RAIHN Day Center had a small room for him to sleep. It would have been difficult at best to find a place to sleep during the day had it been any other shelter.

The older children were able to look for work and sign up for college. The youngest daughter was able to attend pre- school and work on her English language skills. Although the mother struggled with the language barrier, she still kept appointments with doctors, attorneys, her children's school and other needed supports.

During the holiday season, this special mom was melancholy while helping to set up the Day Center's Christmas tree. She commented, "I have a beautiful Christmas tree that is in storage". It's hard to be separated from one's belongings.

When the time finally came for the family to find an apartment, I shared in their anticipation. There were a few let downs at first, but eventually they were accepted and the mood changed to one of celebration. Once they were all settled in to their new apartment, they invited our staff to their home for a house warming and a delicious dinner. I saw the sparkle in the eyes of the mother as she proudly showed off her kitchen. She was so happy that she could once again prepare her native dishes. The family was extremely grateful for the support to get back on their feet.

Being able to interact with and see a beautiful family achieve independence has been enriching for me personally. I feel proud to be associated with RAIHN.

Written by: Patricia Polizzi, RAIHN Lifespan Administrative Assistant

**Volunteer Training**  
 Thurs Aug 26@7:00pm  
 Baber AME  
 550 Meigs Street

Tue Oct 12@7pm  
 First Universalist  
 150 S. Clinton

**Please contact Nancy Elliott if you plan on attending one of these sessions.**  
 (director@rainh.org)



## Dorothy Phillips

member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, created this beautiful banner of all

the ribbons from the original "RAIHN Opens It's Doors" reception of April 2004.

This banner is available to congregations and may be loaned for short periods of time.



# RAIHN by the numbers...

Dates	Number of families in program	#of individuals served	#of children	Adult females	Adult males	Bed nights	#of meals	Average Stay	Casework Interventions	Families placed permanent housing	Clients enrolled MCC	Clients enrolled in vocational education	Discharged	Adults placed in employment	Clients on permanent disability	Families placed in other shelters	Families placed with relatives	Families returned to homelessness (<1yr)	Volunteers trained	Families remaining in housing for one year minimum
5/1/04-12/31/04	36 families; 100 persons	100	56	35	9	2,688	8,062	32	25/family	24	6	11	7	18	5	2	3	2 of 24 families	600	22 of 24 (92%)
1/05-12/05	30 families; 97 persons	97	57	31	9	3,897	11,700	41	25/family	18	2	5	5	16	7	1	6	1 of 18	550	17 of 18 (94%)
1/06-12/06	36 families; 123 persons	123	74	34	15	3,884	11,652	28	25/family	26	0	0	1	20	11	0	7	0 of 26 families	130	25 out of 26 (96%)
1/07-12/07	27 families; 90 persons	90	51	26	13	4,120	12,360	41	25/family	22	2	5	2	13	10	0	4	0 of 22 families	120	22 out of 22 (100%)
1/08-12/08	35 families; 111 persons	111	66	33	12	3,602	7,204	32	25/family	18	0	0	11	3	4	2	2	1 of 18 families	80	11 out of 18 families (60%)
1/09-12/09	28 families; 84 guests	84	50	30	4	3,649	6,928	56	25/family	14	0	1	3	6	1	0	2	1 of 14 families	181	9 out of 14 families, (64%)
01/10 thru 5/25/10	11 families; 37 guests	37	22	10	5	2,492	7,476	53	25/family	7 (so far)	1	0	6	1	2	1	2	4 of 15 families	40	Data not yet available
Aggregate 6-year statistics	203 families; 642 persons	642	376	199	67	24,332	65,382	47 average	25/family	122	11	22	35	77 or 28% of 271 adults	40	6	26	9 of 122 families	1,701	106 out of 122 (86% of families)

THE ROCHESTER AREA INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK, INC.

NEW YORK NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION WITH 501(C)3 STATUS.

ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

**RAIHN** INC

**UNITED WAY DONORS** CAN DESIGNATE ROCHESTER AREA INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK AS THEIR OFFICIAL DESIGNEE BY USING **ID #2435**



**Host** ORGANIZATIONS

THE HOSTS HOUSE AND FEED GUEST FAMILIES FOR ONE-WEEK PERIODS, FOUR TIMES EACH YEAR.

- Asbury First United Methodist Church
- Brighton Reformed Church
- Church of the Assumption
- Downtown United Presbyterian Church
- First Presbyterian of Pittsford
- First Unitarian Church
- First Universalist Church
- Irondequoit United Church Of Christ
- Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word
- St. Luke's & St. Simon – Cyrene Episcopal
- St. Matthias Episcopal/Trinity Lutheran
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- Temple Sinai
- Third Presbyterian Church
- Trinity Emmanuel Lutheran

**Supporting** ORGANIZATIONS

FAITH COMMUNITIES THAT PROVIDE IN-KIND AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT TO ONE OF THE HOSTING ORGANIZATIONS

- Baber AME Church
- Baptist Temple
- Christ Episcopal Church
- Church of the Epiphany
- Church of the Transfiguration
- Messiah Lutheran Church
- Mountain Rise UCC
- New Life Presbyterian Church
- Pittsford Baptist Church
- Religious Society of Friends
- Seneca United Methodist
- St. Catherine of Siena
- St. John's Lutheran
- St. Joseph Catholic Church
- St. Louis Catholic Church
- St. Mary's Catholic Church
- St. Paul's Evangelical
- Summerville Presbyterian
- Twelve Corners Presbyterian
- Trinity Reformed Church
- United Church of Pittsford

**PHOTO memories**

**Clergy Luncheon** *April 28, 2010*



Above (left to right): Intern Danielle Straka, Rev. Rod Frohman, Wanda Wolf, Joanne Ligtenberg



Above: Rev. Aileen Robbins of Messiah Lutheran Church welcomes clergy guests



Above: Discussion amongst the guests.