

Our House

For volunteers & supporters of the homeless and our neighbors in need

Homeless Vigil—The Longest Night of the Year

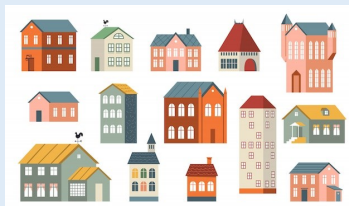
Each year the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council, Community Access Unlimited, and the Elizabeth Coalition mark another longest night of the year on the Winter Solstice. The vigil remembers and honors the lives of the homeless who died unhoused during the year. The 2022 vigil was held at Zion Lutheran Church in Rahway on December 22 and gathered together faith leaders and advocates who work in service of the homeless, their needs and their rights. For those who are literally homeless, street-bound, or living in their cars, the longest night of the year can sometimes feel like the longest night of their lives. To memorialize those who have passed away, candles were lit in remembrance and prayers were said in honor of the homeless who have been lost.

SAVE THE DATE

**April 20th - Hops for Homes,
a springtime hop-a-thon**

**May 24th - Annual Gala,
the Westwood in Garwood**

**TBA - Fall Designer
Pocketbook Bingo**



50 Affordable Units in 5 Years

A Solutions-Based Approach to Creating Housing

The Elizabeth Coalition is committed to solutions in its fight against homelessness and housing insecurity. Our 2022 Strategic Plan has set in motion our effort to build 50 affordable housing units in 5 years. This will add to our 9 existing Permanent Housing Initiative units. It is ambitious, but we need a solution to what is growing into a housing crisis for too many.

When we look around us today in Union County, and beyond, we can see the rapid development of new housing being built – though it is not exactly affordable. For the many people we serve on a daily basis, paying rents in the new buildings is all but impossible. We see this trend in housing as a serious threat to keeping people in their communities – where they work, send children to school, seek health care, and have enduring connections to their neighbors and neighborhoods. The homeless and housing insecure are literally being priced out of the housing market.

We may have an understanding of what homelessness is but what about housing insecure adults and families? These are the people who are living in doubled or tripled-up households under one roof – just to pool their resources together to pay the rent and all their daily living expenses. They are living just one emergency away from homelessness.

The face of homelessness has changed over the years. It now includes persons working full-time or families with two incomes, as well as the disabled and seniors. They are working in our supermarkets, restaurants, schools, daycares, and hospitals. Often, we find that the homeless are not just those sleeping in cars or unhoused but could be living on the couches of relatives and friends. We need to ensure that these people, who are so valuable to our community and economy, have safe and affordable housing.

This is what housing insecurity looks like. Preventing homelessness is a big part of what we try to do. But, without a stock of affordable housing in our county, we are seeing people become displaced and on the move away from what was home. No one should be without a safe, affordable place to live. Your support keeps people housed. To continue the conversation, or to find out how you can help, please contact us at linda@theelizabethcoalition.org or by calling 908-355-2060 ext. 202.

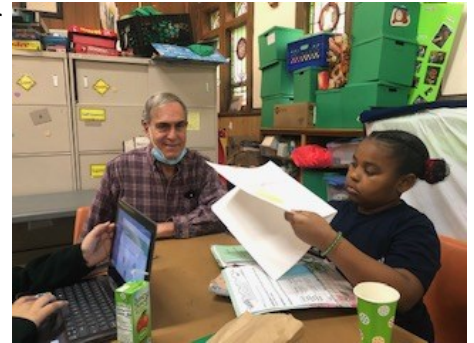


**JOIN OUR STORY. FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES VISIT
WWW.THEELIZABETHCOALITION.ORG**

Meet Alan Gelfand – A Volunteer with True Heart

Alan Gelfand came to our Center 5 years ago after an extensive career with the US Department of Housing and Development, HUD. While at HUD, Alan and his colleagues worked on issues of homelessness and the need for affordable housing after which, in his retirement, Alan shared, “I was interested in dealing with these problems on a more grassroots level.”

Alan has worn many hats at the Elizabeth Coalition since joining us. At first, he put his efforts into helping out in the administrative office by keeping our database up to speed, helping to prepare mailings, and by creating a checklist to interview the homeless for services in our drop-in center, the Advocacy Office. While we enjoyed his presence, Alan was called to ever more challenges on a personal level and began helping out in the children’s program for homeless youth, Bernice’s Place. There, his gifts of compassionate listening, good humor, and his ability to encourage and inspire all combine to help the children learn and grow from completing their homework assignments with one-to-one tutoring. When asked where his compassion comes from, Alan credits his mother and aunt, “who were very giving people.”



Another of Alan’s hats worn includes teaching in the ESL program, which he continues today with St. Joseph Social Service Center. Admittedly, he does not speak Spanish, a common language of the students, and resorts to “lots of pantomime” when the need arises. His creativity bridges the distance when language alone isn’t enough.

As if his talents and gifts weren’t already helping our community to feel cared for, Alan has recently begun giving his time, patience, and sense of hospitality in the drop-in center by, as he tells it, “welcoming homeless people seeking rental assistance and other services and guiding them to a case manager or to outside organizations for help. I’ve also been searching for available apartments in Union County that can be utilized by the Elizabeth Coalition.”

Not only has Alan shared his talents but he joined his wife, Judy Augustino, who chaired our 40th Anniversary Gala committee to rousing success, in planning the event. Alan was moved by this experience and said it only “reaffirmed for me what a skilled leader and organizer she is, as the event surpassed its fundraising goal.”

In all that Alan does and pursues, he is innately caring and kind to all those he encounters which was never more evident than when a child so touchingly expressed her joy at our community-wide event, Family Fun Day. When she won a prize by winning a game at a table Alan was staffing she then turned to Alan and gave him the prize she had so carefully selected. This is a tribute to the ways in which our volunteers, like Alan, touch the lives of our community with their kindness and selflessness. We are grateful to Alan for all the ways in which he touches the lives of the children, families, and adults seeking services at the Elizabeth Coalition.

**JOIN OUR STORY. FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES VISIT
WWW.THEELIZABETHCOALITION.ORG**

2023 Homeless Services Fair

The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless hosted its Annual Homeless Services Fair on January 26 to coincide with HUD's Point-in-Time count of the homeless across the country and right here in our communities. The event brought over 30 service providers from across the spectrum of Union County agencies and organizations working for the homeless and those in need. From Central New Jersey Legal Services and the Union County Office of Veterans Services to the International Rescue Committee and Jewish Family Services...each of these providers, and so many more, set up tables to meet the community. Health screenings were offered for hearing, vision, HIV testing, as well as Covid-19 and Flu vaccinations. Nearly 279 people from our community attended. We thank all of the people who participated in service of the materially poor and homeless.

You gave your time and expertise to a grateful community. *Thank you!*



Urgent Needs

Paper Products:

Toilet paper, boxes of tissues, and paper towels

Welcome Home Baskets:

Laundry baskets with kitchen and bath items to help an adult or family move into their new home. Please call 908-355-2060, ext. 202

Children's Program Needs:

Please call 908-355-2060, ext. 202

CONTACT US

118 Division Street,
Elizabeth, New Jersey 07201

Open Monday, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM,
Tuesday – Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.
Closed Wednesday.

Email: info@theelizabethcoalition.org

Phone: 908-355-2060 ext. 202

*Tax-deductible donations
can be made by scanning
the QR code and visiting
our Donate page, or by
mailing a check to
118 Division Street,
Elizabeth, New Jersey
07201.*



Or visit tinyurl.com/ECHHDonate

**JOIN OUR STORY. FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES VISIT
WWW.THEELIZABETHCOALITION.ORG**