

FWWS hires new director Welcome Brad—been there and beyond

From being homeless at age 29 to recently being named director of Fox Valley Warming Shelter, Inc.

at age 51, Brad Vivoda is uniquely qualified for this challenging role.

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The product of a broken home and very little parental guidance, he chose, early on, alcohol as his best friend. In his own words,

"By the time I was 29 years old, I found myself divorced, homeless, and living in Appleton's Soldiers Square parking lot. I began to ask myself on a daily basis if waking up in the morning was worth the effort."

Over the past 22 years, with fierce conviction to turn his life around, along with the loving support of his wife, Kathy, Brad has accumulated an outstanding list of accomplishments: a recently earned degree in social work (UW Green Bay), employed with Winnebago Mental Health Institute as a forensic drug and alcohol counselor, serving as executive director of Community Outreach Temporary Services (C.O.T.S.) during its first years (2001-2005) and overseeing its expansion.



Welcome Director Brad Vivoda

Brad's professional experience as a member of a forensic mental health treatment team, his administrative skills honed with C.O.T.S., and his personal recovery skills, all combine to give him an intimate understanding of the population served by the FVWS Inc. The Board of Directors is excited and grateful to welcome Brad to his newest challenge as director of Fox Valley Warming Shelter Inc.

~ Therese Janssen

Warming Works is a periodic publication of Fox Valley Warming Shelter Inc. If you wish to be added to our mailing list (or removed) please email your wishes to FVWS@new.rr.com. Thank you. ~ Penny Robinson, Editor

From the President's pen: pleased with progress



Don Stoegbauer, President
Fox Valley Warming Shelter, Inc.

I am quite pleased with the progress we have made at FVWS, Inc. with all of your support and hard work:

- FVWS, Inc. 501 (c) (3) status was confirmed by the Internal Revenue Service.
- FVWS, Inc. has been incorporated as a non-profit organization by the State of Wisconsin.
- Grant applications have been filled out and submitted for funding.
- Several speaking engagements have been scheduled with various organizations.
- FVWS, Inc. and St. Vincent de Paul of Appleton of have joined

in a collaborative effort to provide safe shelter to the homeless of the Fox Valley.

Can we afford to sit back and catch our breath? Not at all! The cold weather is upon us and our clients need us more than ever.

Your continued support will be appreciated as we move forward with our mission to provide safe and warm shelter to the homeless. Our success depends on you.

For Valley Warming Shelter, Inc. is most grateful for all donations. Every little bit makes a big difference to the poorest among us.

Introducing the Board of Directors

Last time we introduced the officers; this Warming Works highlights another important director.

CAROL BURNS OFFERS GOD CHOCOLATE CAKE

When asked why she serves on the FVWS Board, Carol Burns writes:

"My involvement in providing meals, first at the Emergency Shelter and then starting Loaves and Fishes of the Fox Valley, Inc. at Trinity Lutheran, began as an effort to discover a way to say 'thank you' to an untouchable, unreachable God, as I thought of God at that time. I was looking for a way to give God a chocolate cake, as one would do to thank a neighbor.

"Since Jesus was the one who knew God best, I searched Scripture to see how Jesus served God. I discovered that Jesus loved the people. In Mt. 25:40, Jesus says 'Whatever you did to the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did to me'; and

again in Mt. 25:35, 'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink...'

"I knew what I had to do. I read Mother Theresa, Dorothy Day and Oscar Romero; and they became my



Carol Burns does it all.

heroes for the manner in which they treated the poor. So I felt called to care for those in need. Serving on the board of FVWS, Inc. is an extension of, and corresponds to, my other ministries."

NURSING, TEACHING, COOKING: SHE DOES IT ALL

Carol has B.S. in nursing and a master's in theology from St. Norbert College. In addition to working 22 years in obstetrics and five in surgery, she was director of faith formation at St. Pius X Parish.

Her many volunteer accomplishments include starting the volunteer program which cooks the evening meal daily at the Emergency Shelter and founding Loaves & Fishes of the Fox Valley, Inc., which provides an evening meal Mondays at Trinity Lutheran Church for those who are hungry or alone.

A letter from the director: Spirit of community needed to bring about good

Greetings to you all:

The word "community" is what first came to my mind when I was asked to participate in starting a warming shelter in the Fox Valley.

One of the deepest longings of the human soul is the desire to belong — to be included, encircled, acknowledged, and accepted.

Many of us have a desire to make a difference in the world. Both of these very basic aspects of our existence are fulfilled in our experience of and participation in community.

Gathering in community helps us generate more meaning in our life and amplifies our individual efforts exponentially.

In community we support each other in standing for and practicing values of service, compassion and generosity as opposed to what we frequently encounter as individualism, competition and control.

I don't have to remind you that we are going through some very trying times in our community. Mortgage foreclosures, a paper mill closing, divorce and uncertainties concerning

our personal finances in general, have made us all feel more vulnerable.

We shall get through these uncertain times not with our plans and strategies, but because we have trusting relationships and we know how to work together. The one who has learned to love all people will find plenty of people who will return that love. By joining in the Spirit of community we bring about as much good as we can.

Sincerely,
Brad Vivoda, Director
Fox Valley Warming Shelter Inc.

Volunteers see return on their investment of time

Everyone says last winter was one of the worst and longest in years. It was particularly hard for those who have no place to go when the sun sets and all the public places close.

Fox Valley Warming Shelter Inc. opens its door when most others are closed, opens them to those who need it most. Even a building whose temperature is 72° can still be a cold place.

That is where the volunteers and staff come in. FVWS Inc. gives us the opportunity to add the warmth that only a welcoming smile, a cheery hello, some friendly conversation and a cup of hot soup can provide.

Time is a most precious commodity, and spending time

with those who come to the warming shelter provides a return that is hard to measure. It sends you home at the end of your shift with warmth that does not go away when you step outside into the cold night or early morning.

The gift of money is critical to all organizations that help people, but we don't often get to see the end result of those donations. With the donation of time at the warming shelter, the *thank you* that is heard, the smile that is seen or someone sleeping warm and peacefully shows us right away that the investment of time has been worthwhile.

We encourage everyone to invest some time in the warming shelter.

~Bill and Mary Beth Comerford

Note to our valiant volunteers

Welcome back to each and every *Valiant Volunteer* who contributed so generously with open hearts and hands to help make the first 60+ guests at Fox Valley Warming Shelter, Inc. comfortable and safe for a least one quarter of 2008.

Even though our hopes and plans for a permanent location have been temporarily side tracked despite our diligent efforts over the past year, we will be reopening the Fox Valley Warming Shelter, Inc. November 2, 2008, during the cold winter months.

This will happen because of the gracious agreement of several parishes/congregations to host us for a week or two at a time. We are most grateful for the generous support and encouragement from Father Larry Abler and his parishioners at St. Joseph Parish.

Having considered alternative programs that have been operating

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"I guess a big part of my ability to manage my time is that I don't have to 'work' any more. For 22 years I 'worked'... I didn't like the shift work and hot and dusty environment I was forced to endure. Now, I spend my time doing what feels correct in my heart. No more 'work'."

Brad Vivoda, director, Fox Valley Warming Shelter Inc.

(Continued from page 3)

FVWS to reopen Nov 2—volunteers will be trained

successfully in other cities, we have decided to adopt a rotating shelter plan. This plan works with a number of congregations/parishes agreeing to provide for the homeless, over a one week period, space, and perhaps some volunteers.

A positive outcome of this plan is that it helps to raise awareness of the need in our community, and it creates a broader volunteer base. At press time, four congregations/parishes have expressed interest, with several others considering

making a commitment. Letters are being sent regarding training of veteran and then new volunteers.

For questions, call Volunteer Coordinator Therese Janssen, (920) 739-8692.

~Therese Janssen