

Cohort Committee
Addressing Homelessness
A Day In the Life of a Homeless Child

Let's take a look at how Interfaith Hospitality Network of Ocean County works and the benefits that are provided for the children during a traumatic time.

Interfaith Hospitality provides Safe Shelter for Families While They are in the Program.

The families stay at each church for one week. At the end of the week they go to the next church. The families cycle through the 10 churches anywhere from 3 to 9 months. This is how long it takes for them to find suitable and affordable housing for their families. During this time, the families are able to save money because they are not paying for rent or food.

Each church provides beds and a dining area where the families can sleep and eat. Each church provides a hot dinner, and breakfast, lunch, drinks and snacks that are needed for their host week. These meals and supplies are donated by parishioners and other donors. Each morning the families leave the church no later than 7am (most leave earlier to get the children ready for school and get themselves ready for work).

Families can go to the Day Center, which is located behind Saint Joseph Church in Toms River, to wash laundry, take showers and do what is needed to get ready for the day. The Day Center is also available to them when the families have the day off.

By 6 pm the families travel back to the church where they are greeted by 2 volunteer hosts who will sit down with them and enjoy a family style dinner. When dinner is finished the kids either do homework, play a few games or watch a little tv. The Hosts usually enjoy spending some time playing with the children or conversing with the parents. At 8:30 pm, 2 more volunteers show up to spend the night sleeping there at the church. Since the families move from church to church our volunteers provide a safe place for our families to rest. Quiet time is at 9 pm but usually the children and parents are in bed well before 9 since they are up so early.

Stay tuned for more...To Be Continued.....