

The Christ House Newsletter

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for friends and family

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THE CIRCLE COMPLETED

The events in our lives are often a chain of events that comes back to the beginning, a circle of sorts. It is nothing that we plan or can control; it is just what happens, so it looks like God's plan to me.

One such circle is being completed this month when Nick Florea comes back to Christ House to do some carpentry for us. He came to Christ House in the summer of 1996, referred by an attorney for the Travelers' Aid Society. Nick had won a visa to the US in a lottery in Romania, spent six months in London with friends on his way, so he arrived here with some English and the address of relatives who would help him get started. The address was wrong, He found himself stranded in New York City. Travelers Aid called, and we took him in.

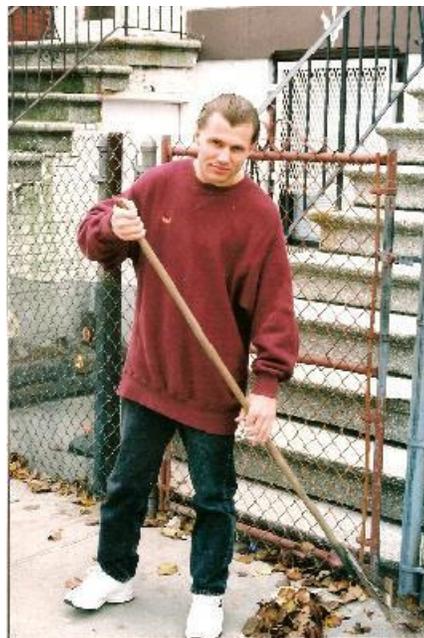
Shortly after we accepted Nick, the Mayor's Office asked us to take in three Romanians who had walked across Europe, hid in a container being shipped to N.Y., were picked up by police as they walked up the NY Thruway. They were trying to get to Catskill where there were supposed to be friends. They wound up trying to camp out in the park by the Mayor's office. Not a good place to hide out!

Some of the stories of our residents are much stranger than fiction. We accepted

the three because it was obvious that God had sent the interpreter ahead of them!

When Nick left us, he got a job working in a nursing home, took courses and got qualified as a book keeper, married a co-worker and became a step dad of three boys. Always multi-talented, he learned a lot about carpentry while here working with Brother Vincent, and he learned more working with others fixing up his own home in Queens

Nick is coming back to Christ House to rebuild the front doorway and install both the exterior and interior doors. It is a big job and we do appreciate the help that he is going to give us.



Nick, seen here as a resident

OUR RESIDENTS

Luis and Antonio have moved on. They both have jobs and apartments, so it was time. We wish them well and will keep them in our prayers. There are several applicants for their place. We would like to introduce you to Samuel



Samuel has been with us for five months. He has completed his GED and plans to start college next semester. His trademark is a big smile and pleasant personality. Ethiopia is his homeland. That country has one of the oldest rites in the Catholic Church

CHRIST HOUSE - THE BUILDING

The building needs a lot of work because it is an old timer. The first records we have say that one of the posts on the front steps was worn out in the early 1900's and there was a question of it being two inches off line.

It seems that the building dates from the Civil War days. The foundation walls

are not cement block, but field stones that were piled and cemented together in walls about two feet thick. The floor of the basement was dirt, and there was a coal hole for a slide to convey the coal down.

There were two chimneys and fireplaces, one in the front and one in the back. The kitchen had a hearth and it is probable that the food was cooked over a wood fire. The ceiling of the kitchen was an embossed tin that can still be found in some old farm houses. Ours was destroyed in the fire we had in 1982.

There was a lot of beautiful plaster work on the ceilings originally, but the last of it came down with a bang about ten years ago. The curved stairs to the top floor was also of fine workmanship, but the many years of traffic have taken their toll and that is on our list for replacement next year. The windows on the first floor are as big as doors, and that is a problem when it comes to replacement and to insulating in the cold of winter.

Typical of all row houses, there is no fire escape, but rather a closet containing a ladder to a hatch on the roof. We pray we will never have to use it.

All in all, it is a grand old house and deserves our care and our love, because it is also a home.

Over the years our mailing list has shrunk considerably. We would very much appreciate getting from you, our friends, the names of others who might like to be part of our ministry to victims of torture and political asylum cases.

Thanks, and God bless you.