

The Christ House Newsletter

432 East 142 Street
Bronx, NY 10454-2109

Tel: 718 665 8740 Email: christhouse@christhouse.us

For Friends and Family

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Christ House - A Veritable Mini United Nations

Our residents presently represent the countries of Zimbabwe, Morocco, Chechnya, Guinea, Colombia, and Burma. They range in age from early twenties to mid-sixties; in education from basic grammar school to a medical degree. What they all have in common is the oppression they suffered in their country and their desire find a better world here in the United States.

While we are designed for a one-time stay of around six months, time enough to get one's papers in order, to find a job and get on with one's life, we extend the helping hand of Christ to some whose needs are different when we can. We recently took back a man who did well with us, moved out to share the rent with a co-worker, and is expecting his wife and twelve year old son to allowed in within a few months.

The co-worker doubled the rent, thinking that Marco had no other option but to pay; We have taken him back in which means essentially that we have given him a bed. He is working two jobs and has time for little else. Life is not easy for him, and we can not solve all his problems. We do what we can.

We have also taken in on a temporary basis Mr; Oo Yea, an older gentleman from Burma, who bears the marks of torture and hardship on his body; his fingers are mangled by torture and disease to such an extent that he can not do ordinary simple tasks.

Mr. Yea has a wife and five children back in Burma, whom he has not seen in five or six years. We hope to find a suitable more permanent home

Some Former Residents Tell Us How They Are Doing

We encourage residents to stay in touch, and many do if only to keep a mailing address that is secure and more or less permanent. Many of those who came from a totally different culture are vulnerable to scams and to making bad judgments such as thinking when a policeman gives you a ticket, it is an invitation for a bribe - which could be perfectly true in their country.

Sam is prospering in the Job Corps program here in the Bronx. He is studying accounting, which suits him well because mathematics is his natural gift. He come by every other week, picks up mail, sometimes stays for supper, and renews friendships with the present residents. We like that for many reasons, one of which is that he can tell them about the advantages of the Job Corps program, and perhaps open a door they never knew about.



Mr. Oo Yea tends the fire for our weekly BBQ

Former Residents Continued

Another former resident checked in with us to tell us he had gotten his high school diploma and was ready to go on to college. The truth was he had spent about \$600 on a correspondence course which promised to give him a certificate of passing **their** high school course. They had no standing with the New York State Dept. of Education, so it was worthless for college admission.

We warn them, but there is enough “macho” in many to cause them to want to go it alone. Could this phenomenon be something like the man who refuses to ask for directions when he is lost?

Help On the Way

Brother Larry to the Rescue

This is an old building, dating from the Civil War, hence there are always things to be repaired, adjusted, renovated.. It may be only a leaning door frame, a window sill rotted out, a stair tread loose, or a water leak from a faucet, but all those little thins add p to a large gift from Brother Larry. Another one of the young old men, he has spent the last fifteen years or so since retiring from his very capable work in the classroom, going around using his other skills to further our ministries in another way. .

Our Funding Is Slashed.

We were notified by Catholic Charities a few days ago that our funding for purchasing food and per diem support of the residence has been cut by around 30% and may be cut more.

This was money from the federal governments channeled through Catholic Charities to the many different residential programs in the archdiocese... As unwelcome as the news is, we realize that this is just another manifestation of the economic distress the country is experiencing. The grants we received were never huge, but the loss of even a few thousand dollars is still significant.

Residents' Corner

“Nicko” is hoping everything right in pursuit of his goal of a truck driver’s license for the big rigs. He wants to see America and get paid for it. Still working security jobs, he has passed all the tests so far and is waiting out the time required for applying.

Humphrey, who has an Assoc.Degree from U of Cambridge in Zimbabwe is working at an Egyptian deli.

Pierre has incorporated an entity similar to the one he had in Guinea, his native country. Its purpose will be to raise money to help fight the AIDS epidemic in his country. The work there which required a lot of travel in and out of the country, caused him to be seen as a trouble maker, hence he became an asylee refugee.

Mustafa, our most recent arrival, is from Morocco, has a degree in medicine from the University there, but of course can not practice here until he does a residency, etc., etc..

Mamadou Salio, our senior resident moved on. He had been with us two years while taking courses on accountings, working nights and hoping to bring his career up to-date

News From Down South

We get some many enquires about Bro. Tom that we decided to bring everyone up to-date.

(Photo from Naples Daily News)



Brother is still living in Florida, playing in several musical groups, and teaching bassoon to some middle school students. He comes up to CH periodically to see how we're doing.