

Who We Are

An annual report from First Light is so much more than charts and graphs showing dollars and cents.

Certainly, as good stewards, we gladly report where contributions come from and how these dollars are put to use. Current economic conditions dictate that costs in all areas of the services and programs we provide are increasing.

But it is the intangible — the numerous encounters, the trying, the individual journeys, the successes, the failures and the starting over which make up what First Light is to so many individuals in the course of a year.

Volunteers reveal the depths to which their hearts have been touched after preparing and serving meals for our guests or spending the night in the Emergency Shelter.

Hearing story after story from women who are facing unimaginable hardships and painful pasts, yet still mustering hope for their futures, can be an awakening for those of us unfamiliar with the lifestyle of the poor and the homeless.

A former guest tells us, “Social workers helped me get back on my medications, get stabilized, and get into classes for substance abuse.

“I am finding myself again and realize now, that for years, I had been punishing myself, thinking I didn’t deserve to be happy. Now I know that I am worth something and I am hopeful about my future. I feel joy for the first time in a very long time.”

It is the human spirit, then, that we must have faith in and must nurture if we are to make lasting and positive changes in so many damaged lives.

And for many who come through our doors — guests, donors, visitors and volunteers alike, First Light is sacred ground where improving the human condition reigns.



Lives are being changed in sometimes startling and unexpected ways. Our mission statement includes the phrase... “we seek to help guests grow spiritually.”

Visitors tell us “it is so much more than I expected.”

One former guest tells us “I had absolutely nothing. I had been robbed, so I lost my apartment, had no food to eat and had one outfit to wear.”

“First Light gave me a gift—I am able to close my eyes at night and know I am safe.”

The faces change, but the common human experiences are recognized by all who come here.

Ours is a story of pain and compassion, strife and celebrations, self-discovery, healing and newfound hope.

First Light could not serve the homeless women and children in Birmingham without the dedication and hard work of our many volunteers- volunteers who provided almost 8,000 hours of volunteer service last year!

Who We Serve

With your generous support, First Light provided shelter to 1,040 women and children in our Emergency and Overflow Emergency Shelters in fiscal year 2007-2008.

Of those served, 865 were adults, 175 were children. We served 104 families.

WHY THEY CAME

Of the 865 unduplicated women served by First Light

- » 205 had a chronic substance abuse problem (drug or alcohol)
- » 182 reported some kind of abuse during their lifetime
- » 132 suffered from a severe mental illness
- » 153 were chronically homeless
- » 154 were victims of spousal abuse/domestic violence
- » 41 suffered from either a developmental or physical handicap
- » 16 were veterans
- » 13 were elderly
- » 8 had HIV or AIDS

HOW WE HELPED

289 women accessed transportation assistance to be able to:

- » Go to work
- » Search for a job
- » Go to a doctor
- » Go to a hospital
- » Go to other community resource offices, such as, Social Security, food stamp office, outpatient treatment programs, get medication assistance, etc.

THEY USED OUR PROGRAMS

- » 490 people attended at least one life skills class
- » 116 people attended at least one Group Therapy session which began towards the end of the year
- » 445 people attended Art Therapy sessions
- » 359 people attended Music Therapy sessions
- » 997 people attended Bible Study
- » 75 people attended Harp Circle which was subsequently cancelled

WHERE THEY WENT WHEN THEY LEFT FIRST LIGHT

Of the 1,040 who left First Light from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008:

- » 84 went into permanent housing
- » 20 went into transitional housing
- » 252 went to other shelters because there were not enough beds in the Emergency Shelter
- » 14 were sent to a hospital or inpatient facility
- » 3 went to a detox facility
- » 1 went to a group home
- » 5 went to a domestic violence shelter
- » 2 went to a rehab facility
- » 1 went to a hotel
- » 30 went to live with a friend or family member

Of the 322 women and children served in the emergency shelter during the fiscal year, only 24 returned.

*if First Light did not exist,
I would not have been able to have this
fresh, new beginning.*

*I would've been forced to
either sleep on the streets or stay living
in a nightmare.*

Letter from Board Chair, Blair Sandford

A woman and her child find themselves alone, afraid, without a place to call home. They have been stripped of all dignity, all hope, and see no future opportunities. Because of YOU, First Light is able to provide a place for them to feel at home and to begin to work towards their dream of once again having their own home. It is our privilege to surround our guests with encouragement and hope and provide them with an environment that is safe and nurturing. Our permanent supportive housing programs continue to strengthen and grow and provide women with confidence and a new sense of purpose. We truly appreciate all that you do for First Light and we hope that you will continue to support these women and their children as they strive to achieve their full potential. Together we can make a difference!

Thanks!

Blair



Causes of Homelessness

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Divorce/family break-up | Mental illness (undiagnosed and untreated) |
| Domestic violence | Physical disability |
| Eviction | Ran away from home |
| House burned down | Released from hospital |
| Hurricane | Released from jail |
| Inadequate income | Released from psychiatric institution |
| Kicked out by family or others | Released from treatment program |
| Loss of benefits | Substance abuse |
| Loss of spouse | Unemployment |
| Medical problems | |

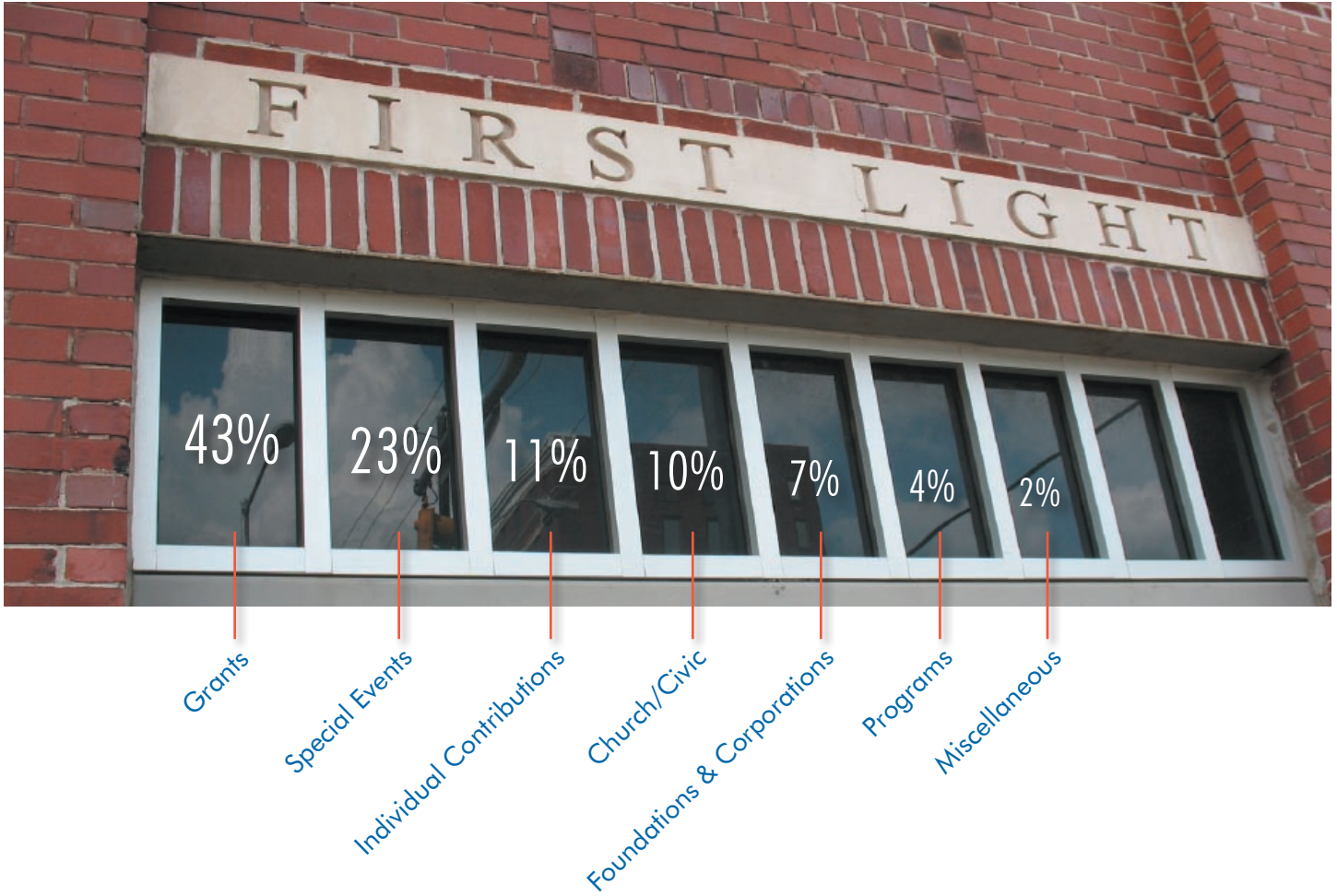
*No matter who or what you are,
we all need someone and a
place to collect and prepare
ourselves for what we
do next in order to make it.*



Needs of the Homeless

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| A place to receive mail | Food assistance | Life skills training |
| A place to shower | Help finding a job | Medical care |
| A place to store belongings | Help signing up for government programs | Medicine |
| Case management | Help obtaining identification | Mental health services |
| Child care | Help with physical disability | Permanent supportive housing |
| Clothing | Housing placement | Rental/utility assistance |
| Dental care | Job skills/job training | Substance abuse treatment |
| Development disability services | Job training/employment assistance | Transitional housing |
| Emergency shelter | Legal assistance | Transportation |
| First aid | | |

FY 08 Revenue



FY 08 Expenses



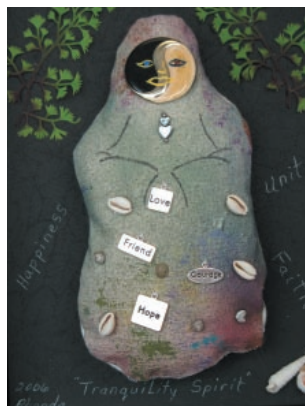
10%

Management and General



37%

Permanent Supportive Housing



53%

Emergency Shelter

Since First Light launched two new permanent supportive housing programs last year, the percentages of expense shifted:

- » Permanent Supportive Housing increased from 18% of the budget in FY 2007 to 37% of the budget in FY 2008.
- » Emergency Shelter decreased from 75% in FY 2007 to 53% of the budget in FY 2008.

*I'm here because I have nowhere
else to go, no family to go to*

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Osarieme Erhunmwunsee, *Shelter Assistant*
Deborah Jackson, *Shelter Assistant*
Therese O'Hara, *Shelter Assistant*
Marilyn Gross, *Art Therapy Coordinator*
Yvonne Hardy, *Weekend Supervisor*

VOLUNTEER PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Birmingham Southern College
Birmingham's First Seventh Day
Adventist Church
Bluff Park United Methodist Church
Brookwood Baptist Church
Cathedral Church of the Advent
Dayspring Missionary Baptist
Church
First Presbyterian Church of
Birmingham
Gardendale Mount Vernon United
Methodist Church
Hopewell Baptist Church
Independent Presbyterian Church
Leeds Presbyterian Church
Montevallo Presbyterian Church
Mountain Brook Presbyterian
Church
Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic
Church
Saint Francis Xavier Catholic
Church
Saint Mark's the Evangelist Catholic
Church
The Cathedral of Saint Paul
Saint Peter the Apostle Catholic
Church
Shades Valley Lutheran Church
Starnes and Atchison
Vestavia Hills United Methodist
Church

Yes! I want to make a difference!

I want to help provide shelter and essential services to homeless women and children

Your name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

HERE IS MY GIFT FOR \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$5,000 \$10,000 or other \$ _____

I would like my gift to be in honor of in memory of _____

Please send an acknowledgement of this gift to _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

PLEASE CHOOSE AN OPTION

>> I am sending a check payable to First Light for \$ _____ to: First Light, 2230 Fourth Avenue North, Birmingham, Alabama 35203

>> Please bill my Mastercard Visa for \$ _____

Name on the card _____ Account number _____

Expires ____/____ Your signature _____

>> I will donate online at firstlightshelter.org.

WOULD YOU LIKE THIS TO BE AN ANONYMOUS GIFT? Yes No

Thank you! Your gift helps us offer dignity, love, and hope.

firstlightshelter.org
205.323.4277
Birmingham, AL 35203
2230 Fourth Avenue North
A CENTER FOR HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

FIRST LIGHT



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