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NEWiRE president's message: The "cause and effect" of community

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As real estate professionals and women, NEWiRE members have a unique tie to the community. Every day, we are engaged in the work of designing, building, and/or finding places for people to live, work, belong, and prosper. The flip side of that is that thousands of people in the city of Boston are less fortunate, a fact that does not go unnoticed by NEWiRE.

Luckily, there are many excellent nonprofit organizations that help people in need. In fact, NEWiRE's Community Involvement Committee (CIC) works to identify such organizations and offer assistance where they can. It may involve recruiting NEWiRE members to volunteer their time or expertise, collecting needed items, or raising money.

This year, the CIC decided that they wanted to have a greater impact on a few, specific charities. Rather than doing one-off events for various organizations, they took a hard look at the numbers and identified three (3) based on true need: Sancta Maria House, Carolina Hill Shelter, and East End House.

As you can see, there has been a noticeable "cause and effect" as a direct result of their efforts:

Cause: Sancta Maria House is a 10-bed shelter for homeless women located in Boston's South End. They provide a safe haven for over 3,000 women each year. Each night, the Sancta Maria House provides a meal, shower, change of clothes and a clean bed. It is staffed almost entirely by volunteers and funded solely through private donations.

Effect: NEWiRE has raised over \$6,000 for the Sancta Maria House capital fund (since 2012) and volunteers cleaned up and re-built the courtyard (see photos). As the holidays approach, gift cards to CVS, Walgreen's, Rite Aid, etc. are being collected and will be distributed to the residents.

Cause: The Carolina Hill Shelter operates as a transitional shelter for homeless women and children. The program houses 13-16 families at a time, depending on the size of the family. On average, the families stay for six months. Training is provided in basic life skills such as money management, parenting, nutrition, assertiveness, and accessing community resources. They have helped 323 families since 1988.

Effect: NEWiRE dedicated a luncheon to the collection of bedding (sheets and blankets), which significantly increased their supplies at the shelter. In addition, the CIC is hosting a holiday event on December 10 where attendees can purchase gifts for the residents and then volunteers will wrap them.

Cause: The East End House is focused on providing support to underprivileged children with kindergarten readiness programs, after school programs, emergency food programs, Thanksgiving food drive, holiday toy drive, parenting classes, and community events focused on bringing families together. East End House also provides support services to a diverse population, from infants to seniors to strengthen family and community.

Effect: NEWiRE hosted a "Shopping for a Cause" event on November 13 which raised \$1,800 for the East End House.

In all of these ways, our own NEWiRE community has been strengthened by our members coming together to help others in need. I would like to thank the CIC members for their efforts and encourage everyone to support our CIC events when they can. It's a wonderful way to make a meaningful contribution to the lives of others and to our communities at large.

To learn more about NEWiRE and upcoming events visit www.newire.org, find us on LinkedIn, or follow us on Twitter @NEWiREBoston.

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