



*Dear Friends:*

As the President of the Board of the Interfaith Aids Ministry, it is with tremendous joy that I greet you in 2007.

Although the past year presented numerous challenges to the organization, we have refocused our efforts and renewed our mission to the agency. We have the dynamic leadership of a new Executive Director, Lucy Clementi, along with a very strong Board of Directors, and loyal staff.

In addition to the skill and dedication of our current members, we are extremely blessed this year in that several professionals joined the Board bringing a wealth of resources and expertise from corporate America. We now have a technical expert from IBM who is also a Marine Special Forces veteran, Michael Goodenough; our Secretary/Treasurer from Boehringer-Ingelheim with a degree in social work, Leslie LaCroce; a doctor of psychology who focuses on the problems associated with AIDS and HIV, Gail Brick; as well as a committed nameless consultant and mentor with over 25 years of experience with not-for-profit organizations who has donated hundreds of hours helping us improve our mission.

Through Interfaith's transition and under Lucy Clementi's direction, we have continued to serve our clients and their families in a well-organized, seamless and loving manner. Our Living Pantry remains a hygienic, bright, safe haven that is fully equipped for the nutritional instruction that

we offer as part of our wellness model of care. Our nutritionist, Peggy Zamore, prepares healthy snacks and even stockpiles gloves and hats for those wintry days when our clients come to pick up food.

Lucy's attention to detail and innovative ideas bring new energy to the agency. In December, Lucy wanted to pay tribute to our indefatigable volunteers who stock shelves, answer phones, clean, and deliver fresh groceries to our shut-ins. She hosted an intimate holiday luncheon at a local restaurant. It was so successful that we plan on making this an annual event. It was Interfaith's opportunity to publicly thank our friends who labor quietly behind the scenes, especially our brothers and sisters at Ability Beyond Disability who are a big part of Interfaith's extended family.

In September, we were able to equip over 50 children with backpacks crammed with school supplies so that these kids could begin their school year on an equal footing with their peers – such a small gesture but so vital for the self-esteem of children who live with chronically ill parents.

We held our Second Annual Night of Brazilian Music right here in the heart of Danbury, which not only raised money for IAM, but brought our community together for an amazing evening of food, dancing and fellowship.

Our holiday program was better than ever. Many of you "Adopted a Family". In addition to donating food baskets, you also bought superb gifts for our clients. Wish list items were often simple requests for a pair of boots, a hooded sweatshirt, or a jacket - things we take for granted every day of our lives while our own wish lists consist of iPods, new cars, and computers. Thank you, thank you, and thank you for remembering our clients!

I so look forward to the coming year under the energetic and determined leadership of our Executive Director, Lucy Clementi, as we continue to work together to address the needs of our clients.

**- Marion Lynch, Board President**

## *Marion Lynch Biography*

**B**orn in New Rochelle, New York,

Marion's working career as an executive secretary spans the fashion industry, municipal government and her current job as an admin assistant with IBM in Southbury, CT. Along with an Associates Degree in Business, Marion is in the process of completing her BA in Literature at Western Connecticut State University.

It was during IBM's employee food drive that Marion became involved with Interfaith. Her caring evolved into her active participation as a volunteer on the Board of Directors and finally, as Board President.

"I came of age when the AIDS plague was killing many of my contemporaries. Although more people are thankfully surviving AIDS, they must still bear the stigma of HIV, as well as contend with a greatly diminished quality of life. The cost of medicine alone drives many families into poverty. The psychological effects of dealing with this illness along with the poverty are overwhelming for the families. If we can offer food and education it is a wonderful thing; if we can offer acceptance and hope, it is even better. Interfaith is their sanctuary."

Marion has called Brookfield, CT her home for the past ten years along with her husband, Michael, two daughters, Lesley and Elizabeth, and their adopted greyhound, Winston. Marion became involved in community work when her girls were small. She designed and implemented a creative writing program for incarcerated women at the Valhalla Correctional Institute in Westchester County. Under her guidance, the women prisoners created and published their own chapbook, *Valhalla Blues*. A friend eventually replicated the program and offered it to senior citizens at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y in Manhattan. Because of the success of the prison program, Marion was asked to be a guest lecturer at Iona College and other local groups. She continues to look for new avenues to help the less fortunate.