

Homeworkers Organized for More Employment

This Time

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Celebrating 40 Years of

“Serving First Those Who Suffer Most”

H.O.M.E. Celebrates 40 years!

Homeworkers Organized For More Employment (H.O.M.E.) was established in 1970 as a craft cooperative. Today it has evolved into a multifaceted organization involved in economic reconstruction and social rehabilitation. It has grown from the single retail store, where home crafters could sell their goods, into a small community offering jobs, food, education, shelter, and home ownership to individuals and families in need.

The first edition of “This Time” was printed in newsprint in 1970. At that time, it was notable that H.O.M.E had grown so fast in the two years since its inception that it had become necessary to create TWO departments. Today H.O.M.E. has quite a few more departments! Among these are the craft shops, the saw mill, the shingle mill, the garage and woodshop, as well as the Market Stand which houses the Soup Kitchen and the Food Bank.

The Learning Center houses Administration, Fund-raising, Publications, Bookkeeping, Housekeeping, the Education Office, the Housing Office, The Maintenance Office and Daycare, as well as the Covenant Community Land Trust and the Shelter Office.

There are two organic gardens, two greenhouses, and the garden department attends two farmers markets where they sell produce, preserves and baked goods. The Garden Department also participates in the federal Senior Farmshare program.

H.O.M.E. runs two thrift stores--Abby's Attic and The Bargain Barn--as well as the Craft Store, still in operation after forty years, but moved to larger quarters!

The idea...

“ I remember answering the doorbell...and a woman coming in and asking me if I could help her sell her quilts. Her name was Mrs. Arsenault...Out of Mrs Arsenault's question about selling quilts we arranged a meeting at the Public Safety Building in Bucksport. Quite a large group showed up, about 35 people, that's how we began - selling crafts.

After the meeting we got a little farm on Route One - first we rented it , then eventually, we bought it. It was the old Dorr Farm. The Dorr's were an old Maine family, very good people. They sold us their farm with 23 acres. We originally used the farm house for everything-sales, retail, offices, inventory. We were really cramped!

It was a success from the start and as we sold crafts, more people brought more crafts to sell. At that time, in 1970, there weren't many outlets for Maine-made crafts using the old skills, the cottage industries had been handed down from mother to daughter, from father to son. So when H.O.M.E. first began, it was one of the first attempts to help people earn their living in their homes doing crafts that had been part of their family history.”

- Lucy Poulin H.O.M.E.'s founder.

Reprinted from “ This Time Newsletter, 1988.

1978: Covenant Community Land Trust: The Covenant Community Land Trust was started by H.O.M.E. in 1978. A land trust is an alternative way of providing homes for homeless and low-income families. It is an organization created to hold the land in perpetuity, not as public or private property, but in trust, thus removing it from market forces. Together the houses are built by volunteers, H.O.M.E. staff and the future homeowners. The houses are then purchased by families or individuals.



Jo Barry, Velma McDonald and Virgie Betts celebrate H.O.M.E.'S 40TH Anniversary at the Annual Dinner.

1987 Emmaus International: At the Annual Meeting in 1987, the general membership of H.O.M.E. voted to become members of the International Emmaus Movement, and in October of that year, Emmaus delegates from 27 countries met in executive session for a week at H.O.M.E. From its founding in Paris in 1947 by Abbe Pierre, Emmaus has grown worldwide into a movement for social and economic justice, with communities in Europe, Africa, India, and Central and South America. H.O.M.E. in Orland, and the St. Francis Community in East Orland, are the only communities in North America.

1994 Emmaus Guatemala: San Juan Comalapa, Guatemala is the home of H.O.M.E.'s sister community. During the Guatemalan Civil War, refugees among the Cakchiquel Maya, indigenous people were displaced in large numbers. A number of those people reached Maine and eventually reached H.O.M.E.

When violence subsided and they returned to their homeland, they took with them the goal of starting an Emmaus community there. Now this goal is closer to a reality. With H.O.M.E.'s help land was purchased, and in 2002 the roof of a four room building was finished to house Emmaus, Guatemalas medical clinic, weaving outlet, and second hand store, as well as a shelter. H.O.M.E. provides ongoing support to the Comalapa community, by direct aid, selling their weavings in the Craft Store and by sponsoring annual exchange missions. Today this relationship is alive more than ever.

H.O.M.E./EMMAUS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping and enhancing the quality of life for low-income and homeless families. Through services, stewardship of resources, and shared responsibility, we aim to bring forth new possibilities for food, jobs, shelter, low-income housing, education and self sufficiency.



“Serve First Those Who Suffer Most”