



www.blackstonevalley.org

Valley

FOCUS

"Your Business Community Newsletter"

Developed by The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce and Valley T&G Advertising

MyFamilyCanHelp.com Launched by Hit Catcher, Inc.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, two Massachusetts executives were touched by the utter devastation and its affect on individuals and families of the Gulf Coast region. Namely, the thousands left homeless by the storm and residual storm surges.

Our member, Hit Catcher, Inc. of Whitinsville, Mass, is a three-year-old web hosting and development firm specializing in e-commerce solutions. Hit Catcher founder and president, Jason (Jay) Johnson, and Hit Catcher's development team, immediately recognized that the firm could use its expertise to help Katrina's victims. Wells says, "We saw a need for a long-term housing solution, so we decided to create a tool to connect people willing to 'host' individuals or families with those who need it."

On Monday, September 5 - Labor Day - the website, "MyFamilyCanHelp.com" went live at noon. The Hit Catcher team spent the entire holiday weekend working on their own time to create this tool. This simple, easy-to-use

site allows potential "hosts" to register by providing information such as the home's location; number of rooms available; preferable length of stay; whether the home is appropriate for children and/or pets; and other pertinent information. Individuals and families searching for housing can search by several criteria, including state, town, number of rooms available, whether children are welcome, and more. Searchers can then contact potential hosts by e-mail to inquire further. The best part is the service is free.

The team at Hit Catcher is making a difference. Since Labor Day, they've had 864 sign up to share their homes (3,318 beds so far) in 46 states and DC. While they don't collect or publish personal information on anyone that uses the site, they've already had 2 families contact them to let them know that they matched up with evacuees by using the site.

For information about MyFamilyCanHelp.com, visit the website or call Hit Catcher, Inc. at (508) 234-0399.

Upcoming Events

Business After Hours at the Newly Renovated Pytheon Building and New Home of ERA Key Realty

Thursday, October 20, 2005 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

76 Church Street, Whitinsville OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - FREE!

Please join us for a special networking-only event hosted by ERA Key Realty! Come tour the newly renovated Pytheon Building in downtown Whitinsville. There are some surprises still in the basement and upstairs that you certainly won't want to miss! Appetizers, open bar, and fabulous door prizes will be available! In lieu of a registration fee and cash bar, we ask that you consider making a donation to the Hurricane Katrina effort at this event.

Business After Hours at The Stadium Theatre of Performing Arts

Thursday, November 17, 2005, 5:30PM - 7:30PM Woonsocket, RI

\$10 Members/\$15 Non-Members

Holiday Business After Hours at W.B. Smith Companies

Thursday, December 8, 2005, 5:30PM - 7:30PM Grafton, MA

\$10 Members/\$15 Non-Members

Chamber News

Footsteps In History

Take an adventure through the centuries during the Blackstone River Valley Footsteps in History Preserve America Weekend October 8th, 9th, & 10th. There will be 150 places to see and things to do throughout 24 communities from Worcester, MA to Providence, RI. These interesting places will cover 500 years of history, culture, and the arts. For a listing of events and participating sites, please visit or call 1-800-454-2882.

Thousands left homeless by Katrina

Find housing ★ Donate housing

Learn More →

Blackstone Valley Youth Leadership Academy

The Blackstone Valley Youth Leadership Academy is currently recruiting candidates for the 2006 class. The Academy was developed to cultivate the next generation of leaders in the Blackstone Valley. The target group is 9th and 10th grade high school students in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, identified in their schools as emerging leaders. The program will run for 12 sessions, beginning in November and ending in May. Students will experience a challenging curriculum including topics on team building,

leadership development, consensus building, communication skills, community needs assessment, project planning and civic engagement. It will culminate in a community service project in April 2006. The Youth Leadership Academy is a program of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation. More information is available at www.blackstonevalley.org or by contacting the coordinator, Mary Lou Anderson @ 508-234-9090, or e-mail mlanderson@blackstonevalley.org

Congratulations!

The Worcester Business Journal and Junior Achievement of Central Massachusetts co-sponsored this year's sixth annual 40 Under Forty Awards. The winners were selected from a field of more than 100 nominees throughout Central Mass and exude positive energy about their careers, their communities, and their fellow human beings.

One of our own staff members, Membership Services Manager Heather Elster, was among those honored. Ms. Elster has been at the chamber for about a year, and she is responsible for member recruitment and creating and implementing member programs and events. We would also like to congratulate our members who were recognized for their professional and community services contributions: Renee (Gargulinski) Hackett from Bowditch & Dewey LLP; Stacey Johnson from Commonwealth National Bank; Randy Manyak from Staples, Inc.; and Nicole Valentine from the American Red Cross.

New Members

MILLBURY

Verizon Wireless
Tina Cavanna
508-581-7000

WHITINSVILLE

Tauper Land Survey
Joseph J. Tauper
508-234-3493

SUTTON

Ally Etc.
Thomas Place
508-865-9218

WORCESTER

Protector Group Insurance
Ryan Fasold
508-595-7977

UXBRIDGE

Cahill Transportation, Inc.
Donald Cahill
508-579-2351

Volunteer Appreciation Day



Several volunteers from the Celtic Festival, the Art and Wine Festival, and chamber committees and Board of Directors participated in the chamber's Volunteer Appreciation Day held at The Willard House and Clock Museum on September 22nd. The message of the day was "Your gift of time is priceless, thank you for giving some to the BVCC".