



Many Hands, Many Thanks

When planning what I would say in this Newsletter, I considered a slogan from a campaign I read of- "Now, more than ever", Now more than ever, we need your help, now more than ever people are coming to us for help, now more than ever we are encountering the poor. That was my original thought, but our friends are stepping up. Recently, we experienced the following-

A woman arrived to discuss a day of service she wanted to have- as a 60th Birthday gift, she wanted her friends and family to come and work for a day at the Shelter

Another woman came with a cash donation in the hundreds that she had collected from their Corporate Office members to help finance out Thanksgiving Dinners.

A team of receptionists called for a "pick-up". They had collected a sizeable pile of cans, boxes and bottles of non-perishable food stuffs to be added to the Thanksgiving Baskets which we distribute.

A volunteer carpenter was in the back yard constructing and painting a new "garbage hut" to replace the one we are currently using that is disintegrating from age and weather.

A team of "bad boys" and one father were raking and bagging the leaves that have gathered on the premises this fall as a community service.

The mail brought several unexpected checks to help us make the Holidays brighter for our clients.

In the light of these rays of **HOPE**, could I write about gloom and destitution? It seems to us that the needs are great, but many are coming forth to help.

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On the day we actually assembled our two dozen dinners, volunteers, staff members, and Board members came to assist. A large corporate office provided nine dinners and a local private school provided twelve. A daycare and a charter school contributed non-perishables and in one day we got all donations in and all dinners out to those that depend on us.

Indeed we have much to be thankful about. Our work though arduous is not solitary. Our friends have joined hands with us to help the Homeless - once again.

Case Manager's Report

At Easter-time a family arrived to stay after a trip back to our area from Florida. I'll call this woman, Mary, for she was, as the Scripture says. "Great with child". Mary's other children were peaceful and loving and in general we liked having them with us because they were so well behaved. Mary's eight weeks flew by and just before the new baby was due, she was scheduled to move on. Not wishing to cause a birth on the streets, we extended their time and the new baby was born, hale and hearty in June.

Within two weeks she moved to another Shelter closer to her extended family and she began to really get back on her feet. We saw her in August when she was applying for jobs, and soon we heard she was successful, landing a part-time position in a skilled care facility. Soon she was working a full shift at night with her family helping with her children.

She applied for and won a slot in a transitional program which would assist her to find a place of her own and give her the budgetary advice and counseling to succeed in the long run.

We are pleased to say that she is in her own place now. We were able to help out with three truckloads and two van loads of furniture, bedding, pots and pans, dishes and small appliances and some big ones to help her get started. (All items donated by our benefactors) We even had a donated computer to give her for her oldest son to do his homework, thanks to some corporate friends that were upgrading their PC's.

Mary's family was one of our Thanksgiving beneficiaries and I took her dinner to her house just before Thanksgiving. The kids were in Daycare and she was ready to be off to work for the night, but she had a smile on her face and words of gratitude on her lips for all that she has been given. I did my best to congratulate her for achieving as much as she has in a few short months.

She is a good example for others, an example of how to work for what you need, an example of making sacrifices now to end up someplace better later, and an example of a good parent doing what is necessary to provide for her family. We are happy to be of some help to her, and we stand on the sidelines cheering her on ... You go, Girl!



Delicious Date



Mark your calendars now because this coming **Valentine Brunch** will actually take place on Valentine's Day, **February 14th**. On that day, we will be serving our renowned all-you-can-eat breakfast from **9:30 till 12:00**. Come and see the attractive decorations! Come and buy a 50-50 chance! Come and feast on home-baked sweets and all the other usual treats to tickle your palate.

We hope to see you there!

Over-stuffed Mailbox?

We welcome new contributors to our mailing list. We hope this publication serves to inform you about our Shelter, and what your dollars are supporting. If, however, you are seeking to reduce your mail volume, we understand. If you would rather not receive this newsletter, please contact us:

Phone 610-933-3097

Fax 610-917-9845

e-mail: stmarysfs@verizon.net



OR write to us:

St. Mary's Shelter

209 Emmett St.

Phoenixville, P A 19460

Honor Roll of Schools



Villa. Maria Academy Malvern

St. Pius X Broomall

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Doylestown

St. Francis of Assisi Springfield

Our Lady of Calvary Philadelphia

Bishop Shanahan High School
Downingtown

Tunnel Vision

From where we sit, delivering services to some of the poorest citizens, the economy has a lot of growing to do before the 'light at the end' will be visible. The stock market posts gains and people with a stake in it can breathe a sigh of relief. Stimulus money earmarked for road-work will renew some contractor paychecks, but folks coming to us are still searching for work, and as always, jobs are the key.

At a recent County meeting called to begin discussion about Chester County's share of Federal Stimulus money we were told in no uncertain terms- "Shelters need not apply". Federal dollars in our county are aimed at helping to prevent foreclosures. They are not destined for our folks, the habitually poor.

These facts prompt some thoughts:

Anyone in a position to create a job, even just one job, should proceed because even one job is a step in the right direction, and an investment in the future of all of us.

St. Mary's needs dollars to pay our bills and keep the Shelter afloat till the tide turns and grants begin flowing at their former pace. Anyone in a position to help us, should do so. Formerly we included in our holiday newsletter an envelope for this purpose. After receiving several of these envelopes for other non-profits, I felt besieged, and a bit remorseful. I decided not to add to the pile of envelopes on your desk, but our needs are still substantial. We have great confidence that God will provide. We thank you for reading our request.

We need to add some people to our "prayer list". We need to pray for guidance for our president and his cabinet and all of our leaders in these difficult times. Perhaps together, we can begin to kindle the fire that will be the light at the end of the tunnel.



Needs List

stamps Regular coffee

Baby Wipes Soda in cans

Quart size Ziploc bags

Large food storage containers

Gift cards from:

Wawa

Giant

Home Depot

Staples

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIXVILLE, PA
PERMIT NO. 12

ST. MARY'S FRANCISCAN SHELTER
209 EMMETT STREET
PHOENIXVILLE, PA 19460

