



From the Executive Director

2011 has been an exciting year for us, and we are grateful for the tremendous amount of support you, our friends, have provided us throughout the year. As we are busy preparing for our holiday programs, it is hard to imagine that we made do for so many years in the tiny space we formerly occupied. While we are once again challenged for space to house all of the generous donations of food and toys, we are very pleased to be settling into our new home and having the space to meet the needs of our clients and our programs. As the weather turns cold, it is wonderful to offer a place for our clients to sit, in out of the cold. Having office space for our clients to meet in privacy with our caseworker or our chaplains has been a true blessing and has provided the much-needed privacy for clients to express their needs in confidence. We have also heard many positive comments about the changes to our pantry and clothing programs, where clients can shop on their own and really make individual selections based on their needs, and unhampered by former space issues. Throughout the year, we have seen many blessings as a result of this new space and our increasing support from you our friends. As the year ends, I wish you all a blessed holiday season and look forward to what 2012 has in store for our work together.

Barbara Wilhelmy

Can We Keep up with the Demand?

Although the picture to the left shows people enjoying our grand opening celebration this summer, as we come closer to the end of the year, we are finding our waiting room continually crowded with members of this community who are doing their best to make ends meet and feed their families. When we moved to our new building, we changed the process of how we provide both pantry and clothing/household assistance. Clients now come to the center for a scheduled appointment, allowing personal selection and individual attention to their needs. We have also increased the number of days we provide both services, providing appointments for approximately 160 families per week and serving an average of 140 families each week. This is 40 more families per week than in our previous building, and unfortunately, even with this increase, we are still finding it difficult to meet everyone's needs. While there is no longer any line outside of the building, we do have people calling daily who are in desperate need of a food appointment, and our schedule is so crowded, we are



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In the Spirit.....

They do us a favor

Whether you are devoted to the Torah way of life, or to the way of the New Testament, there is abundant faith in the merits of helping the less fortunate.

"Tzedakah" is a Hebrew word that encompasses giving aid, assistance and money to the needy; however, it goes beyond simply being magnanimous. For many of the faith, there is great spiritual benefit to this giving, including the forgiveness of sins and as a means of giving thanks to God. It is one of the highest duties of the faith.

For devotees of the New Testament, Mathew's "The Last Judgment" is quite instructive. In this Chapter, the Lord separates the "sheep" from the "goats" and calls the "sheep" to inherit the kingdom that was prepared for them from

creation saying "For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me. I was ill and you comforted me." When the just asked Him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you...?" The Lord answered them, "I assure you, as often as you did it for one of the least of my brothers, you did it for me."

Sadly, it seems the poor will always be with us. On the other hand, it provides believers with the opportunity to grow spiritually through our sacrifice for their basic needs. Given the dramatic increase in the number of households needing help, the opportunity for all good men and women to step forward with aid has never been greater.

May all of us, clients, staff, and supporters alike, experience God's peace and love during this holy season and throughout the new year and may we all grow spiritually.

Patience, Discipline & Satisfaction

The vast majority of clients needing groceries have come to greatly appreciate the new system employed by our pantry staff and volunteers.

Each client signs up for an appointed date & time. The client is assigned a "host" or "hostess" when they arrive for their appointment to help them through the "store" aisles and to choose what they need within the parameters of the pantry program. This provides for the opportunity for warm interaction between volunteer and client as well as eliminating excessive wait times. The vast majority of clients and volunteers greatly appreciate this approach noting in their comments that it promotes a very dignified experience and is respectful of their time.

A small percentage of clients miss their appointments. Unfortunately, we must insist on having them reschedule or wait until there is an opening in the schedule. First of all, it is not fair to the majority that keep their appointments to have another preempt their time. Secondly, if there is no consequence to missing an appointment, the system will ultimately break down. It is also important that clients grow in their cognizance of personal responsibility for their long term benefit.

Having an abundance of volunteer "hosts" / "hostesses" would certainly help us reach our goal of maximum satisfaction among our grocery "shoppers". If this program interests you, give us a call and feel the satisfaction of this interaction.

Volunteer Recognition Luncheon 10.6.11



Val Daniels and Pat Royer from First Church of the Brethren accept a certificate on behalf of First Brethren for one of our top worship center food donors for 2010

From the Casework Corner

By Heather Kauffman



As winter approaches, we all know that cold weather is on its way. I have received numerous phone calls from people in need of oil to heat their homes. I recently met with a gentleman that I will call Joe who was in need of oil to heat his home. Joe's family consists of five people: his wife, two children, and an 84-year-old mother-in-law. Joe and his wife are employed; however, they recently fell upon hard times and suddenly found it hard to make ends meet. When I first met Joe, he struck me as a very intelligent and well-educated man. He was very polite and respectful. He seemed to me like your "average Joe"; however, deep down he was struggling. He came into my office, very humbly, to ask for assistance. Joe was very open and honest about his situation, and for that I was very grateful. The Cluster was able to help Joe with 100 gallons of oil. The next day after my meeting with Joe, I received an e-mail from him. This is what he expressed:

My family and I appreciate all your help, yesterday, in getting heating assistance. We did receive 100 gallons of oil in the afternoon, as promised. It would have been a very cold night for all of us without it. Thank you!

This was a simple e-mail; however it touched me deeply that the Cluster was able to provide Joe with a warm night. And it is with all of YOUR support and dedication, that we are able to provide families with a warm home. THANK YOU!

Some Changes in Staff



After seven years as our Community Meals Coordinator, Diane Darby (left center) resigned her position to move on to full-time work. Thank you, Diane, for your dedication and assistance in serving this community.

In October, Ann Faust (right) joined the staff as our new Food Services Assistant. She and Sherrie Fazekas, our new Food Services Manager, are now overseeing both the food pantry and community meals programs.



Keeping up with the Demand continued:

forced to ask them to wait a week or two before we can get them in. We do encourage everyone to take advantage of the many hot meals served in this community, five being provided through our community meals program. We also urge them to come in daily to take food from our "free shelf"; however, even with these options for immediate assis-

tance, people are still struggling to keep food on their tables. Your support and prayers are needed more than ever as we try to accommodate everyone's needs and provide services in a dignified and timely manner.

An Inspirational 2nd Annual Banquet

Our second annual banquet was held on Sunday, October 9th, at Sunnybrook Ballroom. We had over 375 in attendance and enjoyed an evening of fellowship, music and inspiration. Music was provided by two children's choirs, from Coventry Christian School and St. Aloysius Church. Additionally, a combined adult choir was directed by Mrs. Teri Hoffman and accompanied by Dr. Myra Forrest, both of First Baptist Church. We were also

pleased to have two clients share their stories of services received at the Outreach Center. Their messages were inspirational and were a testament to the support needed to continue serving members of this community. We are grateful to all of our silent auction donors and table sponsors for their help in making the evening a success. Please visit our website for more pictures of the event.

The adult choir, directed by Mrs. Teri Hoffman



PCRC Board Member Gene Hohl (right) enjoys the evening. Gene is retiring from the board in December.

A Note of Thanks from a Client to one of our Chaplains:

Gary,

We wanted to reach out and send thanks to you. You made such an impact in our lives. We can never fully repay your acts of kindness. You helped us find God again after we had lost faith. Thank you for the companionship and treating us like people when the rest of the world turned its back. Thanks to you and your family we have been lifted back up on our feet and will continue to move forward. I hope if you are ever in need of help that someone helps you the same way you've helped us. Thanks for being one of God's angels without wings.

Gary Pace is one of three chaplains providing volunteer chaplain services at the Outreach Center. With the renovations to our building, we were able to provide an office dedicated to this service and see this as an opportunity to address the spiritual needs of our clients.

Acknowledging Alden Lanphear's Contribution

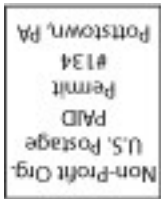
It is with regret that we acknowledge the passing of board member and previous interim executive director Alden Lanphear. Alden passed away on October 27, 2011. His spirit of treating everyone as equals and his dedication to non-profit work will be truly missed. Alden

was most recently chair of the board's governance committee and active in community efforts to address homelessness in Pottstown. His presence and support to others in this community has been a lifelong devotion.

Alden at our capital campaign board event in August 2010



Visit us at www.pottstowncluster.org for more information on programs or how you can support our mission.



Newsletter

Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities
57 North Franklin Street
Pottstown, PA 19464

PottstownCluster
OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Nourishing Lives. Strengthening Families.



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Staff:

Executive Director	Barbara Wilhelmy
Programs Manager	Amy Rossman
Food Services Manager	Sherrie Fazekas
Food Services Assistant	Ann Faust
Caseworker	Heather Kaufman
Receptionist	Mercedes Jackson
Volunteer/ Clothes Closet Coordinator	Vicki Bumstead

Open for Client Services Monday–Friday 9 AM–12 Noon

Food Pantry and Clothes Closet appointments can be made by calling (610) 970-5995

Donations are accepted during normal business hours

Capital Campaign Facts

As of Thanksgiving progress towards our \$1 million goal



Is there a Santa Claus?

We would love to close this campaign out this year and turn our attention to other worthy projects. Your donation to the capital campaign is still needed to fund projects and programs that can help clients recover self-sufficiency. Please consider a gift during the holidays ahead.

RAISING HOPES

Building Dreams