



From the Executive Director

It has been an exciting time to be involved in all of the work that PCRC has been doing this year. The finishing touches of our new building were completed with many professionals and dedicated volunteers. The month of June involved closing down operations at our former location on Walnut Street and convening many volunteers to help us move to our new location on North Franklin Street. We were thrilled to have so many volunteers and community members participate in our building dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony on July 14th. We can finally say that we are in our permanent home, thanks to the generosity of so many who contributed to our capital campaign and provided prayers, support and leadership in this momentous occasion. However, the work doesn't stop here. Our overall mission is to help those seeking assistance move beyond our help to their own sense of sufficiency and be prosperous members of the Pottstown community. In the coming months, plans for program evaluation and consideration of new programs or partnerships are being explored to ensure that PCRC remains a strong source of needed support in this community. Your support and encouragement to all of us here has been tremendous and I look forward to what we can continue to do together to serve those in this community. God Bless you.

Barbara Wilhelmy

Can Winter Be Far Behind?

In 2010, the Cluster provided \$38,000 to households in desperate financial need. Unfortunately, many other legitimate requests had to be turned away due to lack of funding. In the bitter months of winter, the need for help with expenses ranging from utilities to prescriptions seems all the more urgent for needy families in our community. Please help us better prepare for this winter season by enclosing a donation to our operating funds now with the envelope enclosed in this newsletter.



Philabundance Promotes PCRC

The Food Pantry is happy to announce that the Cluster Outreach Center has been designated as a **Flag Food Cupboard** with Philabundance. This designation is their highest level of distinction. Philabundance is the Delaware Valley's largest hunger relief organization and works through partner agencies throughout the area seeking those agencies that use the best practices in distributing food in order to get the most food to the greatest number of people. The Cluster is among those chosen to be a Flag Food Cupboard because it meets the criteria of: having regular hours of operation, being visible in the community, offering a variety of food, allowing customers choice in the food, and distributing over 100,000 pounds of food a year. In the last ten months, the Cluster Food Pantry has distributed 364,696 pounds of food to 10,395 individuals. With the opening of our new facility, we give the customers complete choice in a grocery store atmosphere. Philabundance provides the Cluster with weekly delivery of fresh produce and connects us to stores in the region to provide us with meat, staples and personal care products. Thanks to our donors and the Cluster's many volunteers who give so generously of their time, Pottstown residents in need are able to visit the Outreach Center Monday through Friday from 9-12 for emergency food, clothing, financial needs and counseling.

In The Spirit.....

Observe the opportunity (Ecc. IV 20)

“A Helping Hand, Not a Hand Out” has long been the tag line for the Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities. Now, with the advent of a larger and permanent home, there is room to do much more than feed the hungry and clothe the poor.

Showing continued faith in the Strategic Plan and in the Lord’s countenance, the Board of Directors has charged a small mixed team of professionals and dedicated volunteers to identify and develop a roadmap for utilizing programs, partnerships and referral systems that can realistically augment our focus on helping clients attain self-sufficiency. This team will benefit from an experienced facilitator, and it is anticipated that a truly impactful and workable plan will be developed by May of 2012. This effort will surely be a pivotal one and is worthy of the hopes and prayers of our faith community. It is written, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” (Prov. 16:3)

As we pursue this next great task, it is well to remember it is also written, “That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil - this is the gift of God.” (Ecc. 3:13)

Thanks to one of our Business Supporters



Vice President Bill Maguire (left) and Plant Manager Pete Gardner (right) present PCRC Board President George Bell with a donation from an Exelon Golf Tournament

From the Casework Corner

It is great to be in our new building!! Since moving, casework management has been busy! It has been such a joy and blessing to work with our clients doing our best to meet their needs.



Heather and John at the Outreach Center

The feedback from clients has been wonderful! They love being able to wait in an air-conditioned building and meet with me in a bigger office that gives them the confidence of privacy. I love that we are having a positive impact on lives in the community. For example:

I ask you to please take a minute to step into the shoes of a family who came face to face with despair but was ultimately able to overcome some tremendous adversity with just a little bit of help. I first met John when he came into the Cluster as a new client. He told me how he was on the bus with his family when in desperation he began talking to a woman passenger about the inevitability of soon being on the streets. This woman told John about the Pottstown Cluster and how they would be able to help him. He later discovered his “angel” is a volunteer at the Cluster! John continued to describe how his family had been staying in a hotel in Pottstown. They ran out of money and would no longer be able to stay there. John made several phone calls to available apartments, but no one would rent to him since he didn’t have a security deposit. He was standing on the curb with his pregnant wife, three children and their belongings wondering what in the world he was going to do. John started to pray that God would do something for them and God answered. A landlord John had called earlier told him he would give him and his family a chance for the little money they had. They moved in immediately. Additionally, John attended a Coffee

Continued on Page 3

From the Casework Corner (continued)

House gathering sponsored by the Cluster and was given information on an organization that would supply furniture to his family. John feels genuinely blessed.

I have seen John many times since our first encounter, and he always has a smile on his face. He faces adversity and believes God will

provide. John's wife has started working at Genesis Healthcare, and his family has soared towards self-sufficiency despite the dire circumstances they once faced. John attributes their success to that fateful day on the bus when he met his "angel" and was directed to the Pottstown Cluster!

News from the Clothes Closet and Volunteer Opportunities

The clothing/housewares department is now open Tuesday through Friday. These new hours have given us the ability to serve twice as many clients compared to our old building. We are finding that the need is not only clothing and housewares but more personal hygiene items and cleaning supplies. Our goal is to increase the amount of donations for these specific products instead of clothing. It seems "off balance" to offer four to six items of clothing per person but only four personal hygiene or cleaning products per family. Some of the churches

have started donating some of these items, which has been a great help.

Because of the additional days that we are open, the Cluster is in great need of additional volunteers for the Pantry and Clothing/Housewares Departments. We have been working with local organizations such as Montgomery County EARN Program and Summer Youth Workforce Program; however, would welcome any additional volunteer support. Please contact Vicki Bumstead for more information.

Holiday Preparations Begin Early

It is time to think of preparing the Holiday Dinner Boxes and toys for children for 2011. Last year we handed out 167 dinner boxes to families and toys to 160 children. As we begin our preparation to provide this program this year, we are once again asking for the community's assistance in meeting this need.

For our dinner boxes, we are planning to prepare for 180 families. Your support in donating food is what helps us to meet this goal. This year we will need turkeys, canned sweet potatoes, 1lb brown

sugar bags, marshmallows, stuffing, cranberry sauce, potato mix, gravy, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, green beans, mushroom soup, canned corn, cookies, apples, oranges, eggs, butter, packs of rolls, pies, milk, celery, carrots, onion, and jars of olives. As always, we would also be grateful for cash or gift card donations to help create beautiful holiday meals for all those asking for assistance. Please contact Sherrie Fazekas, Pantry Manager, with questions or to lend help.

2nd Annual Cluster Banquet

Tickets are on sale now through Sept. 23rd for our banquet at Sunnybrook Ballroom, Sunday, October 9th, 5:30—8:00 PM. Dinner at 6 PM. The banquet will be a fundraiser for our general operating funds and will feature the children's choirs from St. Aloysius and Coventry Christian Schools, an adult choir led by Dr. Myra Forrest and Teri Hoffman, a silent auction and more. Don't miss your opportunity to participate in an inspiring evening and provide your ongoing support to our work. Tickets are \$25 for a sit-down dinner and entertainment and can be purchased on-line at www.pottstowncluster.org or by calling 610.970.5595. Looking forward to seeing you there!



We are also in need of several toy drives to allow us to create a wonderful toy shop in which parents may shop for their children. Contact Vicki Bumstead, Volunteer and Clothes Closet Coordinator, if you can help with the toys.

And as always, we can always use a few extra hands around holiday time to put these programs together. Contact Vicki for more information.

Tickets on sale now for the 2nd Annual Cluster Banquet. Visit www.pottstowncluster.org to purchase your tickets.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit
#134
Pottstown, PA

Newsletter

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

PottstownCluster OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Nourishing Lives. Strengthening Families.



57 North Franklin Street
Pottstown, PA 19464
Phone: (610) 970.5995 Fax: (610) 970.6385
www.pottstowncluster.org

Staff:

Executive Director	Barbara Wilhelmy
Programs Manager	Amy Rossman
Pantry Manager	Sherrie Fazekas
Meals Coordinator	Diane Darby
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 mid-August progress towards our \$1 million goal



We're SOOO Close!!!

Can you put us over the top? An anonymous friend of the Cluster has promised to buy two tickets to the PCRC Annual Banquet October 9th for the individual whose donation gets us across the \$1Million Dollar goal line.

It could be you!
Make a donation to the Capital Campaign today!!!

RAISING HOPES

Building Dreams