

POTTSTOWN CLUSTER OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
 57 N. FRANKLIN STREET
 POTTSTOWN, PA 19464

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FEINSTEIN CHALLENGE

FEINSTEIN ANNUAL CAMPAIGN TO FIGHT HUNGER



It is that time of year again: the time when philanthropist Alan Shawn Feinstein, from the Feinstein Foundation in Cranston, Rhode Island, challenges individuals and organizations nationwide to participate in the 16th Annual \$1 Million Giveaway to Fight Hunger. Mr. Feinstein has been giving away \$1 million each year to anti-hunger agencies across the country as he believes that each of us was put here on earth to do what we can to help those in need. Your support, through a monetary donation specifically noted as part of the Feinstein Challenge or food donation, helps the *Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities* receive more of Mr. Feinstein's \$1 million donation. Agencies receive a portion of his \$1 million, based on the amount raised for the challenge, running from March 1st through April 30th, 2013. PCRC has participated in the challenge for more than five years now, with an increase in our donation from Mr. Feinstein each year. Can you help us to increase our donation from Mr. Feinstein this year? Checks can be made payable to PCRC, with Feinstein written on the memo line. Cash donations can also be made on our website, noting Feinstein in the box marked "On behalf of." All food donations received during March and April will be credited to the challenge as well.



NEWSLETTER

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE, ACTION AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR MISSION



SPRING 2013

PCRC Business Backers

We continue to be encouraged by all the support we receive from local businesses – businesses that are partnering with us to serve the Pottstown community. The list of such supporters is growing through connections we have made through parishioners of local worship centers who know about our work; through volunteers who work tirelessly for us and then are our cheerleaders to business connections they have; and those faithful businesses who support us year after year. There is not nearly enough space to mention all of our business supporters here; however, here is a sample of those, both new and old supporters, who helped us to provide a wonderful holiday program for our clients:

- American Infrastructure
- Budget Maintenance Services
- JB Supply
- Manatawny Association
- National Penn Bank, both Topton and Pottstown branches
- Valtech Corporation
- Wyndcroft School



We are grateful for the delivery of 190 turkeys from JB Supply and Budget Maintenance Services for our holiday boxes.

WORK ON OUR NEW INITIATIVE HAS BEGUN.

In 2008, when a five-year strategic plan was developed, the PCRC mission statement was revised to include the concept that our programs and referrals be coordinated to help individuals make real progress in moving from dependence to productive self-sufficiency. In June 2012, the PCRC Board of Directors approved a new program strategic plan, including the implementation of a new initiative, the **Getting Ahead Initiative**. This initiative consists of several components, including work with our stakeholders, the community and clients, all designed to improve knowledge of how poverty impacts persons living at the lower end of the economic scale. This is a first step towards actively addressing self-sufficiency.

In January, the PCRC hosted a two-day "Bridges out of Poverty" training for 25 community professionals. The training was facilitated by Tammy Schoonover, Director of Training, Bucks County Opportunity Council, Quakertown, PA. Bridges out of Poverty, written by Ruby Payne, Philip DeVol, and Terie Dreussi Smith, focuses on the "hidden rules" of living in poverty to forge a deeper understanding of day-to-day challenges, "tyranny of the moment," and inability to plan for the future.

Many in the middle class struggle when working with people living in poverty as the "economic rules" of each are not the same. Take, for example, the driving forces of each economic class. Poverty, as described in "Bridges out of Poverty," is rooted in survival, entertainment, and

relationships; whereas, the middle class is focused on work, achievement, and material security. To be unaware of the fundamental differences between classes can lead to an immediate roadblock in "getting ahead."

Our collaborative partners who attended the two-day training, included: Family Services of Montgomery County, Aging and Adult Services of Montgomery County, Educational Data Systems, Inc., the Salvation Army, True to Life Ministries, TriCounty Community Network, Transformation Initiative, Public Health Management Corporation/Montgomery County Homeless Prevention Center, Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation, The Hill School, Pottstown Public Library, and Creative Health Services. Our partnerships will be instrumental as the PCRC prepares to launch a 16-week workshop series "Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' By World" written by Philip E. DeVol, to facilitate an investigation with people who live in poverty, as to how poverty affects their lives and establish a plan for "getting ahead." The workshop series is set to start late winter with a small group of "investigators" who have identified themselves as people wanting to get ahead.

We are grateful for the support of both First Niagara Bank and the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation for their financial support of this initiative. We look forward to sharing news of progress on this initiative and opportunities for you to participate in future "Bridges out of Poverty" trainings.

We can use your help

We can use your help with the following: **For the Pantry** – dry cereal, oatmeal, peanut butter, jelly, and soup.
For the Dry Good Program – household items such as dishes, sheets, towels, and personal care items.

We are always grateful for your financial support to all our programs as well.

Such support helps us to keep our building open and allows us the resources to serve the many struggling families who seek assistance from our center.

YOUR FOOD AND FINANCIAL DONATIONS CAN BE DROPPED OFF AT THE CLUSTER OUTREACH CENTER.

THANKS YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT.

CLUSTER

Events Around Town

Details visit www.pottstowncluster.org

MARCH 1 – APRIL 30, 2013.

FEINSTEIN CHALLENGE FOR HUNGER

See related article on page 1

MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2013

Volunteer Recognition Luncheon at Morningstar Fellowship in Bechtelsville. Doors open at 11:30 AM. Lunch will be served at 12 Noon. RSVP to VBumstead@pottstowncluster.org

MAY 20, 2013

3RD ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

See related article on page 4

Are You Feeling Presidential?

You can feel charitable while having a great time at our 3rd Annual Golf Outing being held this year on the Presidential Course of Hickory Valley Golf Course in Gilbertsville, Pa.

The event will take place on Monday, May 20, 2013, and will feature a shotgun scramble format. Mark your calendars today! Spring will be here before you know it.

IN THE SPIRIT... An Appeal for Cohesiveness

"Why did this happen to me," ask most of the clients we see in the Chaplain's office. My reply is usually "Mankind's disappointments are God's appointments." Sometimes we are so busy that we don't take time to connect with our Creator. God longs for and loves us all, especially those who are too busy, stray or for some reason refuse to hear His voice. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:71: "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees." Imagine that! Gladness for an affliction because it brought one closer to God and his precious word. It is nice to encourage our clients by letting them know that they are much loved. Recently a client burst into tears when that hit home. Upon leaving, she asked for a Bible. I am thankful for the Cluster Outreach Center providing a Chaplain's office for our clients. It is just one such place where one soul can be reintroduced to God at the crossroads of life.

*"Who is this King of Glory that pursues me with his love — And haunts me with each hearing of His softly spoken words — My conscience, a reminder of forgiveness that I need
Who is this King of Glory who offers it to me — Who is this King of angels,
O blessed Prince of Peace" - King Of Glory Lyrics - Third Day*

Blessings, Chaplain Gary Pace

Caseworkers Corner

Ryan Keiser

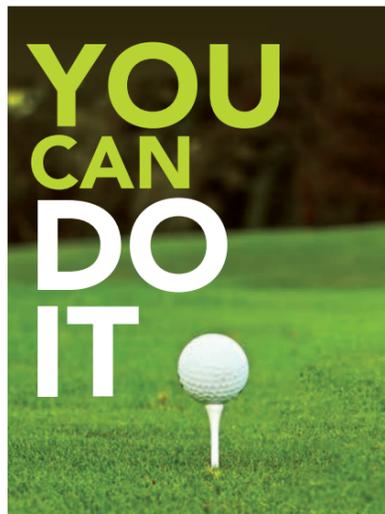
As we all know, sometimes it takes a lot of courage to be able to ask for help. Asking for help can be a serious challenge, especially for individuals who have never been in a position where they are in desperate need of assistance.

A few months ago I met a woman, whom we will call Chloe, that was in desperate need of food. Chloe is middle-aged and worked as a dental hygienist for the majority of her life. In 2007, Chloe lost her job that she had worked at for many years, and she was devastated. She managed to find temp work from time to time, but nothing permanent ever came of any of the positions. Chloe has years of education, training and experience and really wanted to use that to gain new employment. Unfortunately the only positions she was able to find were low-paying temp positions. Since it was still work, Chloe kept her head up and took every position offered.

After a few years of this, Chloe's money and resources had completely dwindled away. Chloe was left with a small paycheck that sometimes could not even cover her bills. One week she realized she could not afford to go to the grocery store and would not be able to buy any food. In tears, Chloe called the Cluster and requested to speak with the caseworker. When I answered the phone, Chloe seemed upset and just wanted some information about our services. As I began telling her about our food pantry, dry goods department, supportive services, etc., she began to sob. I asked her if she was okay. She said, "Yes, I just can't believe how nice you people are, and I have never been in a position to have to ask for help." I went on to explain that we are here to help, and I would love to have her come in and meet with me and schedule a food appointment.

The next day Chloe came in to meet with me and do an initial intake. During the intake Chloe cried quite a bit because she had many mixed feelings about her situation. After talking for some time, it was time for Chloe to go through the grocery

(Continued on page 6)



DO YOU PLAY GOLF? CAN YOU COLLECT DONATIONS FOR A SILENT AUCTION OR FIND PERSONS OR ORGANIZATIONS WILLING TO BE GOLF TOURNAMENT SPONSORS?

We need your help to make the 3rd Annual Pottstown Cluster Golf Tournament a fundraising success because a lot is riding on this event. Our food pantry, emergency financial aid resources and our incipient program to help clients out of poverty are all struggling with funding. We have set a lofty goal of raising \$25,000 at this year's tourney, up from \$15,000 last year.

This "scramble" golf outing will be held at the Presidential Course at Hickory Valley on Monday, May 20, with a shotgun start at 11AM. There will be prizes for low team scores as well as a special prize, dinner for four, awarded to the team with the highest score. Additionally, teams who register to represent a church (no additional fee) will participate in the quest for the bragging rights to the annual Cluster Church Challenge Cup.

If you are willing to help and/or play, please contact the Golf Chair, George Bell, at georgebell15@comcast.net ASAP!

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

After reviewing all of the responses for cluster Board participation, we are pleased to welcome as new board members, Mrs. Mary Ann Glocker, Mrs. Amy Lehman, Reverend Rick Knarr, and Dr. Steady Moono.

Mary Ann Glocker is a pediatric nurse practitioner with over 25 years experience with Reading Health Systems where she still practices today. Her primary focus and interest has been on improving access to healthcare for all children. Mary Ann has been an active participant in many forums on these topics both nationally and internationally.

Mary Ann received her BS and MS in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania. She currently lives with her husband Karl in Chester County

Amy Lehman recently moved to Pottstown with her husband Zack and their three children, to become the new headmaster at The Hill School. She holds an MBA from Boston University. She has spent the past ten years working in the health care management industry. Over the past 15 years, Amy has helped to start four non-profit organizations, worked as executive director for a small arts not-for-profit, and volunteered at numerous other organizations and schools.

Reverend Rick Knarr has spent 30 years serving in pastoral roles in various churches in the Exeter and Gilbertsville area. A graduate of Cairn University with degrees in Bible and Music and extensive graduate work at Westminster Theological Seminary and Lancaster Bible College Graduate Schools

Dr. Steady Moono serves as the Vice President of Montgomery County Community College, west campus for the past 10 years. He and his family reside in Colledgeville where they are involved with several local organizations.



First Niagara provided a generous grant to support the Getting Ahead Initiative.

A NOTE FROM A SUPPORTER

"Enclosed is a contribution toward your many needs. Hopefully, this check amount will help someone. I used to volunteer on Walnut Street to pack food. My prayers and best wishes for your success in helping many families. God bless you! P.S. I've been a member of First Baptist Church for 73 years, and take food or bath needs for our Cluster collection at least once a month!"

– Thank you to each of you who support our work in any way you can.

"THANK YOU"

"I want to thank you so much for your kindness and generosity. It meant a lot to me that there are people so kind. Someday, I hope I can give back to the Cluster. **You saved us!**

– LD CLUSTER CLIENT –

WE NEED YOUR HELP MORE THAN EVER, TO VOLUNTEER PLEASE CONTACT US AT 610.970.5995

From the Executive Director:



Barbara Wilhelmy
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Barbara Wilhelmy

One of my favorite things about living in Pennsylvania is the change of seasons. For me, each season has its own expectations – different colors, temperatures, different paces. I would say that would be true of what one might experience visiting the Outreach Center at any given time as well. Each season here has its own opportunities and challenges. As I am writing this, winter has set in. That means some snow causing some inconveniences; concerns about people coming for our services and having to walk or stand outside in the frigid cold; and routine work in the building to restore order after a busy holiday season. By the time this reaches your mailbox, spring will be likely here, with the hope of warmer temperatures; new life in the plants and trees; and the planning of food and clothing drives to sustain our resources during the summer months, when donations seem to be at a slower pace. Despite the changes that do occur because of the seasons, there are two things that I see as constants in our work that provide a sense of encouragement – the unending support of our faithful volunteers and the gratitude we hear from people relying on the work we are doing to feed, clothe or support their family. In the article about volunteers in this edition, you will get a glimpse of how valuable our volunteers are to our overall operations. Our celebration of their efforts at our annual recognition luncheon is small in comparison to all they give to this organization, but it is always a day we enjoy. Please join us on April 22nd as we celebrate all the good work you help us to accomplish. In another article, you are going to read about our new initiative, the Getting Ahead Initiative, and a story about a client who experienced a sense of hope from the work we do. While the need for help seem to be endless at times, hope exists in this building, through the

opportunity to receive some help with food, maybe a warm coat, maybe encouragement and prayer, or an opportunity to challenge thinking and dream to one day not need our services. In all of these times, there is always a "thank you" or "my family is blessed by this" or many other small signs of gratitude. Those of us in the building get to hear them, but it is because of all of our supporters that gratitude and hope exist. Thank you for your ongoing support of our work. Stop by the building someday if you have a moment. You might find an opportunity to experience that same sense of hope as well.

**Pottstown Cluster
OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES**

Nourishing Lives. Strengthening Families.



57 N. Franklin Street, Pottstown, PA 19464
Phone: 610.970.5995 | Fax: 610.970.6385

Staff:

Executive Director	Barbara Wilhelmy
Programs Manager	Amy Rossman
Food Services Manager	Sherrie Fazekas
Food Services Assistant	Tabatha Smith
Caseworker	Ryan Keiser
Dry Goods & Volunteer Coordinator	Vicki Bumstead
Dry Goods Assistant	Ashley Fillman

**Open for client Services
Monday - Friday 9am - Noon**

**Food Pantry & Dry Goods appointments
can be made by calling 610.970.5995**

**DONATIONS ARE ACCEPTED DURING
NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS
WWW.POTTSTOWNCLUSTER.ORG**

The Outreach Center Needs:

PANTRY NEEDS:

Canned fruit
Baby food
Soy formula and
Gentle formula

DRY GOODS NEEDS:

Spring and summer
clothing for adults
and children; pants
and tops consistent
with Pottstown School
District dress code.
Call Victoria Bumstead
for more information.

TOILETRIES:

Toothbrush/paste
Soap
Deodorants
Shampoo

CLEANING PRODUCTS:

Laundry detergent
Dish soap
Multi-purpose
cleaners

HOUSEHOLD NEEDS:

Fans, small air
conditioners

A phone message left by someone using our Pantry in December said:

"Thank you so much.

This was the first time I actually needed the service -- I came up this morning and you guys really helped.

I walked away with a good amount of groceries for my family. I find myself really thankful for what I received.

God Bless,"

MICHAEL

"thank you so much"



CASEWORKERS CORNER *(Continued From page 3)*

store and dry goods department. I told her she could stop by my office on her way out and let me know how things went. On her way out she hugged me and said, "Thank you so much for helping me through this and showing me it is okay to ask for help."

Since the first time I met Chloe, she has been to the Cluster every month with a smile! She is always happy when she comes here and she is no longer afraid or sad to accept help from us. I spoke with Chloe last week about additional services I feel could benefit her, and she was overjoyed that I thought of her. She will be meeting with me soon! This may not seem like an extraordinary situation, but for Chloe it is. With the help of the Cluster, Chloe has fewer worries and can focus more on her employment future.

CONGREGATIONAL CORNER - ATTENTION PASTORS! We pray that you will answer the call.

Sometime this spring, a member of the Spiritual Identity Committee of the Pottstown Cluster will attempt to contact every pastor and rabbi in our community to plead that you visit the work center of your mission to the impoverished. It is a call for renewal. You need to understand all the lives that together we touch and how we touch them. We need to understand your concerns, how we can improve communications and what we need to do to increase the flow of prayers, volunteers and other support from your congregations.

Please accept our invitation when it comes. Meet members of our Committee, meet our Executive Director, and learn, among other things, of our first ever pilot program that will attempt to help clients out of poverty. We are flexible on timing and can see you individually, or in small groups. We pray that you will answer the call when it comes.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In January, the Board of Directors approved a new five-year strategic plan for the Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities. The plan provides a roadmap for many areas. The plan focuses on the growth of programs and initiatives that will help clients attain self-sufficiency; development of a long-term marketing plan; and better utilization of existing facilities and resources. Furthermore, the plan provides structure and definition to the organization currently known as the Delegate Assembly; the development or strengthening of relationships with area worship centers; and the development of appropriate internal guidance, such as succession planning and diversity policies.

Interested in seeing the plan? Check our website at www.pottstowncluster.org.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

"Volunteers don't just do the work ~ they make it work"-
Quote from Carol Pettit (Volunteer Leader)

Volunteers at the Cluster "make it work" every day. It is not their job to be there when the doors open; they chose to be advocates. Volunteers are the key players in our mission. They have earned credibility through hard work and dedication. They bring perspective about the community and can be objective about the day-to-day operations. They are part of marketing and fundraising through word of mouth.

Our volunteers go above and beyond the call of duty. If you were a fly on the wall for just one morning you would see how endearing they are with clients: a hug to someone who had a bad day; a heavy box carried to a senior's car; a helping hand when groceries are dropped; finding an outfit for a special occasion; a kind word, a joke, a big smile. You would also see how dedicated they are to getting the job done: staying late to wait for the truck delivery; lifting heavy boxes; waiting to be sure all clients have been served; sorting bags and bags of clothing;



dragging heavy bags to be recycled; filling the daily shelf; waxing the floors over the weekend. Day after day, week after week, month after month, our volunteers arrive early in the morning, sleeves rolled up and ready to work. It takes patience, dedication, flexibility and, most importantly, team work to have a successful day.

Each year we gather to recognize the vital role volunteers play at our annual "Volunteer Luncheon." We thought it might be appropriate to have the luncheon during the month of April since we will also be celebrating Volunteer Week. We welcome everyone to join us.

The luncheon will take place at Morningstar Fellowship Church, April 22nd. The doors will open at 11:30am; lunch is served at 12:00pm. Please RSVP with number attending to VBumstead@PottstownCluster.org

If you are interested in volunteering and becoming a part of this amazing group, please contact Victoria Bumstead for a tour of the building, and we can discuss volunteer opportunities in detail.

TRULY BLESSED AT THE HOLIDAYS

Each year, in addition to the regular services we provide during the month of December, we provide a boxed holiday meal and toys to children and families who would otherwise not have these things without this help. With the support of many, we are able to pull off this task, in the midst of what is always a very busy month. This past December, we served a record number of families with both holiday programs – 263 holiday meal boxes were provided, and 175 families received toys for more than 400 children. So many individuals, businesses, worship centers and groups help us to accomplish this task, and we thank you for your support.

We are hoping the help you provided to us blessed you just as much as we are certain these programs blessed many families in Pottstown. We add a special thank you to First Presbyterian Church for their ongoing support and for filling up our board room with beautiful holiday bags filled with new clothes for many of those children; to St. Aloysius Church, for their generous donation of many toys for the children and holiday food items; and to the neighbors of Twin Ponds, who every year amaze us with the generosity and care they put into adopting a family.

DID YOU KNOW

Our Food Pantry program served 17,088 individuals with grocery orders in 2012. In addition to these monthly orders, 9,997 individuals were also able to receive food from our food shelf, available to anyone needing assistance.

Through both the grocery orders and the food shelf, 609,235 pounds of food were distributed to individuals in 2012.

Our Dry Goods program provided clothing, household, personal care and baby items to 11,409 individuals. This represents a 173% increase from those seeking these services in 2011.

Our Community Meals program served 18,786 individual meals to members of this community in 2012. These meals continue to be provided by approximately 35 different worship center and service clubs who volunteer their regular support to this program monthly.

Over 2,500 individuals called our casework staff looking for assistance with financial support or supportive services and information in 2012 and a total of 333 new families came to our center for services for the first time in 2012.

In addition to our staff, volunteers provided 20,082 hours of dedicated service in support of our programs. This represents 66% of the total hours of services provided in 2012.