

St Mary's

Franciscan Shelter for Homeless Families

"Family and home go together. As a family, it's very difficult to move forward, without a home. I call on everyone: individuals, social entities and authorities, to do everything they can to assure that every family has a place to live."
--Pope Francis

Director's Report

Hello St. Mary's!!

And what a big hello it has been! I arrived here at Saint Mary's right in time for the fourth of July, Phoenixville style. More importantly, in time to spend a bit of time with our amazing residents before we closed for August clean-up and repairs. At that time we shared our home with 4 delightful mothers and nine energetic and engaging children. Each family was carefully planning a next step as the Shelter prepared for the month of household rehab!

In July I met Miss K. our resident who had the longest lifespan as a member of the community at 209 Emmett St. Miss K. and her sons were packing and planning since they had a new apartment to get ready and a new life to engage. It was a challenging, stressful month for them. With the help of so many "Friends of St. Mary's" we were able to furnish their apartment, stock their cupboard and

feel assured that success is ready to greet them.



Sr. Bernadette greeting our residents

Each of our families found a way to move into temporary housing, return to family or settle in a local hotel while continuing their search. July was stressful for all of us as we hoped for the best for each of our friends facing such big transitions. Each success on the part of our residents feels like a big success for us as our hearts relax a bit with all their good news reports!

On July 31 we said goodbye to Sister Chris with a thank you lunch and a promise to keep the Franciscan spirit

alive in our home. We wish Sister well as she engages in her many hobbies and interests during her well-deserved retirement. Best wishes, Sister Chris.

Today our August cleaning, rug replacement, painting, and restoring of the house is complete! We look ahead to the friends who will be at our door this month. Your loving support makes all that we do possible. How can we thank you enough?

Ooops.. I forgot to say that I am Sister Bernadette Dougherty SSJ, the new Director of Saint Mary's Franciscan Shelter. I am a Sister of Saint Joseph and I came to St. Mary's after working for the past 10 years in Geriatric Care as a Director of Social Services. I am very happy to be here.

With hope in our hearts, a nice clean house, donations at our door and friends who always seem to lift our hearts, we are open for business and happy to be able to help in whatever way we can. It is with great delight that I say, "Hello, Saint Mary's Franciscan Shelter!!"

--Sr. Bernadette

Resident Highlight...

Ms K is St Mary's Franciscan Shelter's newest success story. She is in fact her OWN success story as she did all of the work! Ms K was, self admittedly, tired of living on the edge. She knew it wasn't good for her children to live that life and she knew she wasn't setting a good example for them. So one day she went looking for help and ended up in Gaudenzia. At Gaudenzia she received 7 months treatment for her drug habit and after completing the program she came to St Mary's Shelter to travel down the next leg of her journey, being independent and preparing to live on her own.

While at St Mary's she continued to do outpatient therapy and worked diligently on getting her life in order. Once she got her Section 8 voucher she searched for a home for her and her family. After a long and exhaustive search, she finally found one. She often had many obstacles placed in her way but she always had faith, both in herself and in her religion. Ms K was a model resident and while at the shelter she

always attended parenting class and many times was a wise voice of reason with the younger moms. She and her children were



Ms K & her son

a joy to have with us. What we will remember most about Ms K is her determination and her willingness to own her mistakes as well as her sheer desire to correct the wrongs in her life and make a better life for her and her children. She always put her children first. **Good luck Ms K & family!!**

What's Happening...

August has been a very busy month at Saint Mary's. Our staff worked incredibly hard to make an already "super-clean" home even cleaner! Bedrooms have been painted, new carpeting has been installed in the hallways and front stairs and each area has been thoroughly cleaned and polished.



New carpet! Now we are ready to go!

We also used this time to make many necessary repairs and changes. In order to add space for the residents and to tighten up the business areas, we rearranged the rooms on the first floor. Sister Bernadette and Kathie, our bookkeeper, are working in the business office established in what was the sitting room. The former chapel is now shared space used by staff, volunteers and residents. Files are cleared, office plans for future use are in place and staff is already coming up with new ideas for outreach and resourcing for our residents.

Along with our planned revitalizing of the property came some unexpected challenges. A leak in the business office required a plumber. We now know that this leak may lead to a far greater concern than we expected. A week later we found water in the basement and were told of a

water heater problem. With a 150 year old building we are always watching and hoping that each incident will be able to be repaired with minimal expense so we will be able to maintain our budget for the sake of the ministry.

For now, our beautiful building is ready and we are enthusiastically looking forward to a successful autumn season.

Thank you Sister Chris!

On July 31, 2015, our staff and some of our volunteers gathered to say thank you to Sister Chris and to extend warm wishes to our Franciscan friends, Sister Veronica and Sister Maria Theresa. A delicious lunch, a beautiful prayer, and lots of storytelling marked the celebration of Sister Chris's near 20 years of dedicated service to Saint Mary's Shelter and to the people of Phoenixville. Sisters



Sr. Chris & Staff

Chris, Veronica and Mary Theresa blessed us in turn with a traditional Franciscan hymn – sung *a cappella* in beautiful harmony. We are most grateful for the dedicated service of the Sisters of Saint Francis over the years and we send our thoughts, prayer and good wishes to Sr. Christine A. Kranichfeld.



Sr. Chris & Volunteers

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 Denise Jowett
 Karen Thompson
 Donna Yashura



Contact:

St Mary's Franciscan Shelter
 209 Emmett St
 Phoenixville, PA 19406
 610-933-3097
stmarysfs@verizon.net
www.stmarysfs.org

Volunteer Corner

This month we honor and applaud two volunteers, Sister Mary Theresa and Mary Ann Bursich. Both Sister "MT" as we call her and Mary Ann have been serving St. Mary's for many years.



Maryanne Bursich & Sister Mary Theresa

Sister MT was a staff member for many years, during which time she would use her former principal skills to keep peace among the many children that resided while she was at the shelter. Sr. MT has a warmth and compassion for everyone as she believes that all people are children of God and deserve to be treated with respect. When her time at the shelter came to a close, she began giving her time to her favorite "friends" by volunteering at a local animal shelter, exemplifying the true spirit of St. Francis. Sr. MT is a permanent member of our staff luncheons where she will happily sing us a tune or share a funny story.

Mary Ann Bursich has been a constant with St. Mary's for many years. She is a member of our Board previously serving as president/chairman. Each Saturday she cooks a wonderful meal and delivers it to the shelter piping hot and ready to serve. If she is away, she will bring it the day before - true dedication. Mary Ann recently hosted a delicious luncheon for Sr. Chris's retirement.

We are blessed to have these wonderful women as a part of St. Mary's Family and may you receive many blessings for all your dedication. Thank you!!

Needs List

We are currently in need of the following items in order to keep our shelter running and supplying our residents with everything they need in order to feel at home. We appreciate any and all you can provide. Items can be dropped off at the shelter 7 days a week. We can be accessed by our front door located at 209 Emmett St Phoenixville, PA or our side door on South St (North of the corner of Emmett and South-across the street from St. Mary's Cemetery). Monetary donations are also always appreciated. This helps us provide for our many expenses including heat and air conditioning as well as our upkeep and safety requirements in order to protect our residents. St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter is a 503C non-profit and tax forms are available at your request. This month we are in need of the following:

Laundry Detergent Plastic pillow covers Plastic mattress covers (twin size with zippers)

Food store/Retail Gift Cards

Donations (monies) to assist with unexpected plumbing and heating repairs

We always need and are most grateful for your loving concern and care for our families in crisis.

Please remember us in your UnitedWay Donations (Donor Option #9208) or
any employee sharing programs of your choice.

Mission-St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

Guided by the Gospel and the spirits of Francis and Clare of Assisi, we provide temporary shelter for homeless families. We create a community environment which fosters the dignity of each person, and we perpetually seek innovative ways to help families move toward independence.

Trenz Pruca
4321 First Street
Anytown, State ZIP

209 Emmett St
Phoenixville, PA 19460

