



St. Mary's

Franciscan Shelter

For Homeless Families

Director's Report

Here, at the Shelter we are in the center of so much energy! Our neighborhood is vibrant in the colors of autumn, our lovely gardens here at 209 appear to be settling in for their long winter nap and our families, especially the children, are absorbing the holiday spirit. Halloween trick or treats are fading into the sense of Santa is coming!

Let's not forget Thanksgiving! What a wonderful season to remember and reflect on the many blessings we have received. We, at St. Mary's, are blessed every day with many kindnesses. A few to mention - a gift of a new shower for our day room, a bag of canned goods and paper products left at our door, a mother and teen daughter visiting with our children so their parents can have an hour free time. So many blessings each day. How could we mention them all. We hope each one knows that we are so thankful.

Thanksgiving always reminds me of families and friends at our door, at our tables. Each person has in some way touched us with loving kindness and found a place in our hearts. For those who are with us, what is it that draws us to them? For those who have died, what keeps their spirits alive so long after their deaths?

The words to the song **Find us Faithful** often lends light to my day. I close with these words as we hold up the real heroes in each of our lives and share thanks for all the blessings showered upon us.

May those who come behind us find us faithful.

May the fire of our devotion light their way.

May the footprints that we leave,

lead them to believe and the lives we live inspire them to obey.

Fall Fun with our Halloween Costumes and Candy



"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."
—St Francis of Assisi

Good bye and Good Luck Sister Mary Teresa

On Sunday, October 2, we celebrated Sister Mary Teresa's retirement after 88 years of service to the community and the Sisters of St. Francis! After many ministries throughout the country, her path led her to Saint Mary's Franciscan Shelter.

1990, she came to Phoenixville, PA to help Sr. Emma Mary then the Director at St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter. It is here that we all came to know and love her. As part of the Saint Mary's staff, Sister Mary Teresa shared in the administration of the shelter as well as the care of the families. Additionally, she volunteered at The Clinic and at the Main Line Animal Rescue.

All who know her, know of her kind and caring ways – and her wonderful sense of humor. It is this rich history and loving woman that we celebrated – along with 150 of her friends and associates! In true Sister Mary Teresa-style, she entertained us all with her reminiscings and her rendition of 'Let Me Call You Sweetheart' on the accordion! Many others shared their stories and their love for her – it was a true testament of her impact in all of our lives. She will be greatly missed by everyone and we wish her all the best in her retirement at the Assisi House!



Left, Sister Mary Teresa performing at her own retirement party on her favorite accordion.



Right, Sister Mary Teresa in her most common and favorite role, caring for the animals.

Hunger and Housing in Chester County

Even though Chester County is the wealthiest county in Pennsylvania, 51% of requests for emergency shelter were unmet last year and 14% of county residents are food insecure - that's over 50,000 of our 509,468 Chester County neighbors!

What can we do?

1. Stay informed- www.hfa365.org (Housing and food for all 365.)
2. Get involved.... Visit a shelter, food bank, lunch program
3. Recognize the facts: 45 percent of people experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania were part of a family unit, higher than the 37 percent national number
4. Homelessness is up 2 percent statewide. Down most: Chester County, by 21 percent. Our hard work and caring communities are succeeding. Congratulations to Chester County!!



Celebrating our Volunteers

Without our volunteers – millennials to baby boomers; elementary, high school and college students; eagle scouts; professionals, with so many areas of expertise; and all the day to day caregivers that come to our aide, without these volunteers we could not be such a vibrant presence in our community. The names and faces are beyond our reporting here but each person's willingness to invest in St. Mary's families hopefully allows them to experience a blessed sense of peace and fulfillment. Whether volunteering or offering us financial support, one thing is certain – together we can make this sometimes tumultuous world a safer place for all of us.



From left to right, Eagle Scouts Group helping clean the basement, Kathie & Joan doing office work, Eagle Scout creating new shelving, and a group helping from Ursinus College. Thank you all!

Annual Report—Fiscal Year 2015-2016

CENSUS fiscal year 2015-2016:

Number of Families served: 28

Adults: 34

Children: 52

Total number of beds in use: 86

MAKE UP OF FAMILIES SERVED:

Gender of Heads of Household

Couples with children: 5

Single Fathers with Children: 3

Single Mothers with Children: 20

Racial Make-up of Families

Caucasian: 12

African American: 8

Latino : 2

Biracial: 6



Total numbers for this year:

Bed usage: 4965

Total meals provided: 14,895

Discharge location

Private home/Apartment: 7

Returned to living with family: 6

Gateway Program: 6

Section 8 Vouchers: 2

Path Certificate: 1

Dismissed for cause: 2

Other: 4

One hospitalized

Two unable to locate

One separated – children to one location, parent to another

**St. Mary's**

Franciscan Shelter

For Homeless Families

209 Emmett St
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Non Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No.129
19464

S T M A R Y ' S S H E L T E R



Needs List/Wish List

We Need Your help!

We are always grateful for your support and kindnesses to us. We only hope that we are adequately thanking you. We do not take your thoughtfulness for granted!

Sometimes we have specific needs and use this newsletter to communicate this to you. This time we ask that you consider St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter when you make your Christmas donations. These monies support our families during the winter months. Another way to help us is to forward your workplace donations to St. Mary's. These funds are a very significant and necessary part of our budget. We are thankful to each of you who consider us in this way.

Please remember us. Our United Way Donor Option # is 9208.

