



St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter *For Homeless Families*

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

St Francis of Assisi

Winter Wonderings...

Here we are in the middle of winter! We've enjoyed some wonderful holidays which brought us considerable activity and once again enveloped us in the goodness and love of so many of our friends, sponsors and colleagues.

Dinners kept coming as the Christmas rush took over. The Churches who provide for us are amazing in the menu planning, cooking and serving. We couldn't do this without you!

Donations arrived for our homeless families. Once again our pantry, closets, and shelves are well stocked for the year ahead.

Friends visited with pizza night, play time with our children, movie tickets, a Christmas tree and so much more. The days were brightened by your thoughtfulness. Thank you! Along the way this year we've met new friends. Let me introduce a couple of them:



Left: Sister Bernadette with our new Kimberton Whole Foods friends.



Right: Villa Maria ladies helping sort out winter donations.

* **Kimberton Whole Foods** surprised us in December with the announcement that we would be the recipient of their holiday donations – 10% off any gift card sales during the month. We received an amazing donation from them which will assist us in providing the programming and the services needed to help each family find their way into independence.

* **Siemens Team** – not a new friend but a brand-new idea. These amazing women from Siemens came to St. Mary's last year and decorated our home for Christmas. This year they bumped it up a notch and not only decorated our home but also did a complete make-over of the day room for families. The room went from functional to comfortable and cozy. Our families were stunned and delighted with their new day room.

* **Villa Maria Students**. How can we best thank our generous and caring High School friends. We can surely do so each time we look out our nice clean windows, curtains and closets. Their time, energy and caring spirit have filled our home. We are so very thankful.

There are so many more people, ideas, events that we could focus on but space is limited and so I offer a general thank you and hope that all who visit and help us know that we hold you in our prayer with hearts filled with gratitude. —Sister Bernadette

News and Events at St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter.....Exciting Upcoming Events



Saturday March 11, 2017 (10:00 5:00 PM)

Place: Phoenixville High School Gym

In collaboration with Phoenixville High School

Mattresses at 50% off retail!!!

Be sure to visit, browse and shop!



Sunday April 30th, 2017 (1:30 pm-Doors at 12:30)

Place: Black Rock Fire Hall, 260 Green Tree Road, Phoenixville, PA

Want to get your girlfriends together for a fun afternoon? We have the perfect event! Please join us at our **Designer Bag Bingo**.

Check out www.stmarysfs.org & our Facebook page for more



Date: TBD

Place: Golf Course TBD

Keep an eye out for our upcoming Golf Event!!

Check out www.stmarysfs.org & our FaceBook page for more



Friday October 6, 2017 (1:30 pm-Doors at 12:30)

Place: Rivercrest Country Club

Saint Mary's is Turning 30!!! Save the Date!!!

Come and celebrate with us!!!

Details to Follow

Be Sure to Keep in Touch

Webpage: www.stmarysfs.org

Email: Info@stmarysfs.org

Go paperless.... Visit our webpage and sign up for the newsletter on line.



Help us Fundraise!

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your AmazonSmile purchases to St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.



Resident Highlight: Becky and the Girls

Becky came to St. Mary's just before this Christmas. It is a difficult time for anyone to experience homelessness, but for a mother of young children, this was the worst timing for a bump in the road.

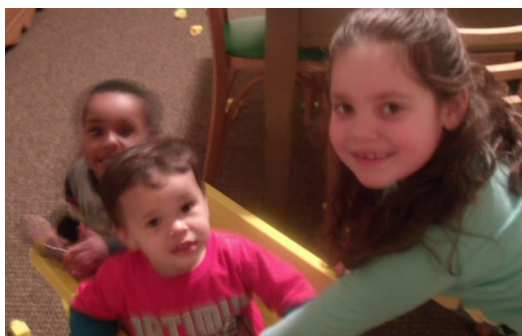
Becky's life had unraveled. She was married for 4 years and during that time she had two beautiful daughters. Unfortunately, the marriage came to an end and Becky was on her own with her young girls. She then moved into a mobile home, took a full-time job, and was able to work out a schedule with the girl's father in order to keep her daughters safe while she was at work.

Then things began to spiral out of control for Becky when she lost her job due to policy changes. She was able to collect unemployment for a short time, but it was not enough to pay the bills, so she lost her home. Becky stayed in a few places but, unfortunately, none of them could offer any type of stability for her and her daughters. Through the guidance of a family member living in Phoenixville, she called St. Mary's.

Since Becky has come to St. Mary's, she has been making great strides in regaining her independence and acquiring her own place. She has set up a babysitter for her girls before school so she can start work earlier and to have more hours. After a full day of work, she has been looking at apartments and also researching any programs that will assist her in getting back on her feet.

She is very grateful for the stability, safety and warmth that has been extended to her at St. Mary's, and we at St. Mary's would have to say that the feeling is mutual!

Becky would like to come back and maybe help out in our playroom as this is one of the girls' favorite things at St. Mary's. We, of course, would be very happy to have an "alum" return in this capacity. We wish Becky and her girls good luck and best wishes for a future full of hope and promise.



Becky and her children
at playtime with each
other (right)
and having fun with
others (left)



Welcome Nilanjana

We are delighted to welcome Nilanjana Chowdhury as our new Business Office Coordinator at St Mary's Franciscan Shelter. Nilanjana has joined us on January 24, 2017 and is currently going through orientation and getting acquainted with various programs and practices at the Shelter. She will be looking after the communications, social media, and volunteer management for us. Nilanjana brings her experience of working on these aspects from her previous employments with various non-profits in the United States and abroad. You can expect to hear from her more regularly through our communication channels in the near future. We encourage you to get in touch with her directly for Social Media, Events and News related information at nilanjana@stmarysfs.org.



Almost 30 years....

In October 1987 the Evening Phoenix reported that the Sisters of St. Francis would open a shelter for homeless families but needed help from the Community. The article stated, the Phoenixville Ministerial Association, a collaboration of 24 churches, “are gearing up for what could become one of their most crucial united efforts: they will provide the evening meal served at the shelter.”

This “tentative plan” is now in its 30th year. The Providence of our early founders continues to bless us each day. Our thanks to the Churches who continue this “crucial united effort”!



Deacon Dennis with the children

Bethel Baptist	St. Eleanor Church
Centennial Lutheran	Saint John's Lutheran
Charlestown United Methodist	St. John's UCC
East Vincent UCC	St. Matthew Lutheran
First Presbyterian Church	St. Michael Archangel
First United Methodist	St. Peter Episcopal
Grace Lutheran	St. Peter Lutheran
Holy Ghost Church	St. Teresa of Calcutta
Quaker Meeting House	St. Vincent UCC
Royersford Baptist Church	United Methodist VF
Sacred Heart Royersford	Zion Lutheran
St. Ann Church	THANK YOU ALL!
St. Basil the Great	



Dinner Time with residents



209 Emmett St
Phoenixville, PA 19460