



# St. Mary's

Franciscan Shelter  
For Homeless Families

## NEWSLETTER

### Remembering and Rejoicing: 2020-2021 (A Sneak Preview)

In 2020, we broke ground for our new apartments for homeless families. Our dream of years past, is now remarkably close to becoming a reality!!

**Looking back....**We had no idea that we would take on such a grand project in the midst of a pandemic. We cautiously took one step at a time, addressing issues as they arose, and accepting the challenges on a day-to-day basis. The timeline had to be extended due to closures, delays in construction materials, and concerns with following all the added regulations that resulted from the CDC directives, and of course, winter snow.

Our century old schoolhouse is now four amazing apartments. The new residences include a grand entrance, a large meeting room, an in-house laundry room, a gathering space and staff office as well as a Lift for handicapped access. Each two-bedroom apartment has its own hot water heater, individually managed ductless heating and air-conditioning, an all-new electrical system and state of the art appliances. The building is in-line with all safety components including sprinkler system, security cameras and Ring system for access.

**Looking ahead....**We are hoping to welcome our first resident families into their new apartments by this summer. The final challenges will include restoring the parking lot, replacing the fencing around the property, landscaping the new areas, and enlarging our South street entrance to provide easier access to the facility for our guests, visitors and delivery vans and trucks. *Stay tuned as we take these final steps knowing that the finish line is very close at hand.*



*The ache for home lives in all of us,  
The safe place where we can go as we are and not be  
questioned.*

**-Maya Angelou**



## **DOOR DASH...ST. MARY'S STYLE**

Every day St. Mary's receives a warm home cooked meal ready to serve. Sounds a lot like Door Dash, right? Well, it's a wonderful group of volunteers that prepare and deliver meals to St. Mary's every week. Between all the local churches and many individuals, we have meals every day to serve to our families and staff.

One person is contacted at the church or organization and they arrange for the entire meal to be delivered each day of their specific week. We receive salad, bread, entrée, sides and of course, no meal is complete without dessert.

The meals are cooked and ready to serve. Our biggest job is to keep the meals warm and sometimes make a salad. It is a huge help to the staff person on duty. The most amazing part is many of the local churches have been assisting us since the shelter opened, 34 years ago. Talk about dedication! We are truly blessed.

The most enjoyable part is that they are all home cooked meals. We are the lucky samplers of many new and wonderful recipes.

To all of our organizers, chefs, bakers and delivery folks, we thank you so much for your outstanding service and dedication. May you be blessed in all the ways you have blessed us.

### **Groups that Provide Meals!**

Glaxo Smith Kline  
Charlestown United Methodist  
First United Methodist  
St. Ann's Church  
St. John's Lutheran  
First Presbyterian  
St. Peter's Lutheran  
Sacred Heart - Royersford  
Providence Corner  
Well Springs UU Congregational  
St. John's UCC  
Centennial Lutheran  
Anna Marie Hulstine  
St. Peter's Episcopal  
St. Eleanor's  
Bethel Baptist  
St. Michael the Archangel  
Valley Forge Methodist  
Iron Works Presbyterian  
Zion Lutheran Church  
St. Basil the Great  
Interfaith  
Grace Lutheran  
St. Teresa of Calcutta  
Royersford Baptist  
Holy Ghost

### **Weekend Groups**

Maryanne Bursich  
Amy Snyder  
St. Ann's Men's Group  
Iron Works Church  
Eileen Gallagher  
Knights of Columbus  
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church  
Amanda Jamnicky



Our faithful and loving dinner providers arrive each day with food laced with love and many good wishes.

Look who is ready for dinner!





## PEACE, LOVE, AND GRANDMOM

Latoya and her two grandchildren came to us late in 2020. They had become homeless due to extended family circumstances, as well as the pandemic. Her granddaughter, Zoey, was getting ready to complete her senior year in high school and grandson, Tyler, was getting ready to go to kindergarten in September. The pandemic complicated these things and so many more in Latoya's life. She came to St. Mary's both nervous and hopeful.

Latoya set to work on her goals with housing being number one. She needed a permanent place for her grandchildren, somewhere they could call home. Zoey began learning virtually. She was a good student and jumped right into her school work with plans to attend college after finishing high school. Tyler got registered and began his kindergarten classes as well. Latoya wanted to make sure they both were getting the education they needed.

The section 8 voucher housing assistance program was a perfect fit for a grandmother raising two grandchildren. We set to work getting her on the housing list. Meanwhile, Latoya was housecleaning throughout the pandemic so that she could have some savings when they found their new home. Each family member did their part daily as they waited for their new home to be located.

It took a little longer than expected, but finally Latoya found an apartment that fit their criteria and they were ready to move. It is a tribute to Latoya that she kept moving forward with hope as she waited for her home to be found. The road was a little long and arduous, but it finally happened for this lovely family. They moved happily into their home and we wish them great success in the future!

*Hello Sister Bernadette  
and Staff,*

*I want to thank everyone for  
your love and caring support  
extended to me and my  
grandchildren. We were in  
desperate need of shelter and  
your welcoming arms were a  
complete blessing. We are  
starting our restart in a new  
apartment and thanks to your  
generosity with the lovely  
houseware items, we are in a  
good place with a good start.  
Thanks so much.*

*Love, Latoya and  
guests in room 4*



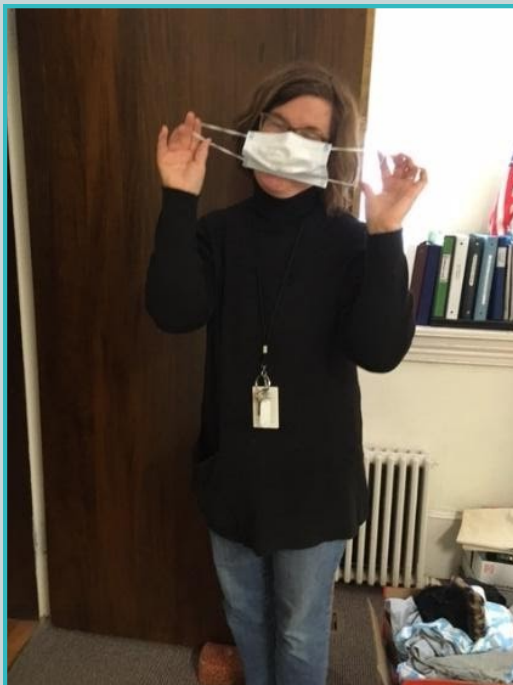
## THE YEAR(S) THAT WAS: MARCH 2020 TO APRIL 2021 AND BEYOND....

Pandemic safety continues. Here at St. Mary's our masks, handwashing, sanitizing and social distancing continue to keep us safe and protected from the virus. We are so happy to say that so far, we have had no incidents of illness and no need to quarantine during this 14-month pandemic.

We did keep the number of residents down to 3 families instead of 5 and have made the food service limited to one family at a time. Cleaning and sanitizing is always a priority for us but this year we have actually kicked it up a notch!

We are proud and grateful for the support and kindness of so many of our friends during this time. Your thoughtful and kind gestures of concern for our homeless families made a big difference during these difficult days.

Blessings and all good wishes from our home to yours. Be safe and enjoy the great and safer outdoors!





## St. Mary's

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For Homeless Families

- *Donations by check can be made out to: St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter for Homeless Families*
- *Online donations can be made at:  
[www.stmarysfs.org](http://www.stmarysfs.org)*
- *United Way Donor Option #9208*



Simply login to shop through [AmazonSmile.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) and choose *St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter!*

## Let the Fun Begin...

The final steps are upon us! The staff is receiving all the necessary training; how to secure and operate the Lift, smoke detector, security system, and Sprinkler System trainings. Beds are being made, and closets are being organized. Coffee pots, dishes, pots and pans, towels and silverware are ready to be placed in each apartment.

Final checks on heating, plumbing, electrical and security systems are all taking place during these weeks. Very soon, we will welcome Colonial Gardens onto the property to create a bird and butterfly friendly arrangement of bushes, plants, and colorful flowers.

We are amazed and very grateful to so many for the donations and gifts for our families. We want to give special thanks to Denny's Derby who provided most of our kitchen supplies for the four apartments, a big thanks to our friends at St. Matthews Lutheran in Chester Springs for their gifts of blankets, sheets, mattress covers, trash cans, towels, wash clothes and so much more. The gifts keep on coming and the surprises never end.

To our friends from St. Elizabeth's Mission Day and Quest for the Best, a big thank you for helping us to place all of these beautiful things in the new building. They are now sorted, saved and secure in their new closets. ***To all of our amazing donors, THANKS SO VERY MUCH!***

