



BLESSINGS

OUR LADY OF MERCY COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES, INC.

Fall 2010

P.O. Box 607 • Johns Island, South Carolina 29457

Telephone (843) 559-4109 • Fax (843) 559-8819 • E-mail info@olmoutreach.org • www.olmoutreach.org

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Wellness Center

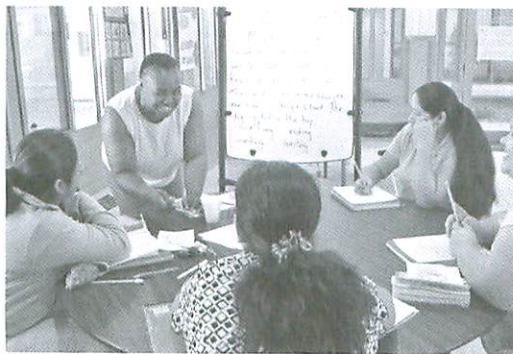
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Opening the Doors to Learning

Since 2005, the Outreach has fostered learning opportunities through the **Family Literacy Program**. One of the components of the **Mission Statement** of the Outreach is **EDUCATION**. The Board of Directors, staff and volunteers recognize that education is the **KEY** that opens new worlds of possibilities for adults, children and the entire family.



English as a Second Language Class

"The purpose of this creative learning program," says Sister Mary Joseph, Outreach Director, "is to promote English Literacy, expand the social and educational development of children within families and assist adults to develop greater skills as parents and future employees." "The learning sessions also accent the parents' role as the first and most influential teachers of their children". One of the participants commented that "this is the best program for me to learn many subjects while my child learns too!"

Classes are held Monday through Thursday from 9:00 – 12:00 and Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00 – 8:00 pm. The Adult Literacy section of the program includes three different components: **Adult Basic Education (ABE)**, **English for Students of Other Languages (ESOL)** and **General Educational Development (GED)**.

Aside from participating in one of the three components, all students study various topics including parenting and health, and participate

in community building experiences for support and development of life skills.

While parents study, the children are enrolled in the **Early Childhood Learning Program** on site. The youngsters learn developmental skills in a caring environment while interacting socially with other children.

"...to promote English Literacy, expand the social and educational development of children within families and assist adults to develop greater skills as parents and future employees."

A special time is set aside each week to allow parents to sit with the children and all of the instructors for an integrated, holistic approach to family learning. Taking time to read to their child is a great experience for many parents who previously lacked adequate educational skills.

Last year 173 adult students attended a variety of the classes and upon testing received scores 13% higher than the state's average. 73% of the students advanced more than one level in their



"Yes I Can" after school students

academic program! 14 adults completed the general literacy sequence and three of them successfully completed their GED exam, receiving their high school equivalency diploma. Many new doors continue to open for these students!

LETTER FROM THE Director



Every summer the Outreach staff and many volunteers visit the local migrant camps to deliver supplies (shirts, hats, fresh fruit, toiletries), provide medical and dental screenings and generally inform the workers about our programs. As I was passing out some bananas, I noticed two men who are regular participants in our evening English classes.

I was surprised to see them, thinking that they were living in the camp. When I asked them about this, one of them replied:

"No, Sister. We heard the Outreach was coming here and we thought we'd come to help interpret for you. Besides, our Spanish is better than yours!"

I laughed, recognizing the truth of their observation. I also realized that these students were generously giving back to a community of people in need. "I'm glad you are our partners," I responded to them as we all pulled together to greet the farm workers.

This encounter reminded me that education is a tremendous gift, full of power for good. These young men were already sharing what they had learned and inviting others to become learners as well. So often we meet former students who have changed jobs because of acquiring new skills, become active participants in the school community, applied for college, and returned to the Outreach as proud volunteers.

All of the services and opportunities provided through the Outreach are made possible because of the generosity of our volunteers, donors and event supporters. "Thank You" to all of you - our outstanding partners!

Sister Mary Joseph

VOLUNTEERS Make a Difference!

Calling all interested volunteers!

The Outreach Center has many exciting opportunities for you to share your time and talents. Just ask Claire Bergstrom, Volunteer Coordinator, and she will give you a most informative list of all the possibilities to share in the mission of the Outreach.

"Residents new to the area don't know about this great place", says long-time volunteer Edith Dixon. "The ways for giving back to our community are endless!"



A quick tour introduces you to the afternoon volunteer receptionist, men and women who assist in the food pantry and clothing room, tutors guiding young minds and challenging adult learners, folks assisting with the golf tournament and the annual auction, dentists sharing their professional skills at the Wellness Center, strong men carrying boxes of food to the cars for seniors on distribution day, students stocking the food pantry with donated can goods and the giving goes on and on!

"I've been helping in the child learning program for many years. It's so much fun to watch the children develop over the years. We make it possible for the moms to learn while we teach their little ones. I love it here!" says Kathy Murray.

As the fall approaches, check your calendar and see if you can make a commitment to be a vital part of the mission of this organization. You will be doubly blessed!

CONTACT Claire Bergstrom or Sister Mary Joseph at 559-4109.

Summer Fun and Learning

"I'm coming to the 'Yes I Can' summer camp! It's the best part of vacation!"

For three exciting weeks, twenty-four elementary school children from the neighborhood participated in learning activities. Sister Carol developed an integrated program of reading, math, science and arts and crafts around the theme "Learning is Fun". And yes, they did have lots of fun!



"So often children experience the 'summer slide' as it is called, simply forgetting what they've learned because of lack of practice", said Sister Carol. "Along with the Outreach staff and many generous volunteers, we made sure the children had some continuity in their learning process while enjoying lots of creative activities."

For 10 years, the summer camp called "YES, I CAN" has offered over 260 children an opportunity to stay focused on learning in a fun-filled environment. Graduates of the program often return to assist as volunteers and re-live what had been a positive experience for them.

"I remember reading with a buddy and receiving prizes from the library as a reward for my efforts. I still love to read!" said a 'graduate' volunteer.

*"The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children."
-Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

SNAPSHOT of the Outreach

As the hectic pace of summer slows down, the programs at Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach Center continue serving human needs through a myriad of services and resources. Often we hear that new residents in the area do not know about the Outreach. Here's a brief snapshot of information!

Over the past year, local residents numbering 8,800 received emergency assistance of food, clothing and financial support as they struggle to provide for their families.

"I'm grateful someone helps me manage and plan for my financial obligations", comments a participant. "I don't feel so helpless."



A healthy community is also a more productive community. Last year visits numbering 3,190 provided comprehensive dental care to uninsured residents. John Howard, Dental Director, calls the

commitment by volunteer dentists "extraordinary!" Roper St. Francis and MUSC Health Systems team with the Outreach to provide 1,396 patient visits to women needing pre-natal and women's health care.

"The basic needs of many of our local neighbors are on-going, challenging the Outreach Board and Staff to evaluate programs and seek ways to be more effective", says Sister Mary Joseph, Director. Visitors are always welcome to "come and see" the Mission in action. Together we can make a difference!

VISIT www.olmoutreach.org.



Budgeting Class

"Having my diploma is the BEST thing that has happened to me! I am so proud and grateful!"

-GED Graduate



"My children enjoy coming to the tutoring offered at the Outreach. The tutors make learning fun and really help them stay focused. Thank you, Our Lady of Mercy!"

-Parent of summer camp student



"This place is incredible! I feel peace and I know I can and am learning! I want to give back whenever I can as a volunteer. Thank you for teaching me so many new skills. I enjoy being a 'learner'."

-ESOL Student



Child Learning

Upcoming Events Mark Your Calendars!

GOLF TOURNAMENT RAIN DATE

Due to the recent Tropical Storm, we have changed the golf tournament date to Wednesday, October 20, 2010 – the Golf Club at Briar's Creek.



Blessings of the Heart

February 13, 2011
Marriott Hotel at 170 Lockwood Blvd. Charleston. CALL 559-4109 to receive an invitation

A U C T I O N

Good News These Foundations are wonderful partners in our mission!

- Rite Aid Foundation awarded the Outreach a grant for \$12,000!
- The Dental Program and Women's Services at the Wellness Center will benefit from this generous grant.
- The Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina presented a 3 year grant award of \$75,000. to support on-going outreach services.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wish List

- ✓ **FOOD PANTRY ITEMS**
Cereals, canned meat, fruit, vegetables, spaghetti sauce and noodles, tuna, beef stew, soups, macaroni and cheese, grits, rice, peanut butter and jelly
- ✓ **BABY NEEDS**
Diapers, Diapers, Diapers sizes 3, 4 and 5!
Infant clothing
- ✓ **TOILETRIES**
Soap, toothbrushes and tooth paste, shampoo, deodorant
- ✓ **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**
Lists are in office supply stores!
- ✓ **ADOPT a SENIOR**
Visit, purchase groceries, telephone
- ✓ **PRAYERS**
Always, we need them for our staff and those we serve!

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TO OUR ISLAND NEIGHBORS