



BLESSINGS

OUR LADY OF MERCY COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES, INC.

Fall 2011

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New Programs

Time to Get Crafty!

A very successful and exciting Arts and crafts program was added to the “Yes, I Can! After School Program” during the past school year. Volunteers donated their time and supplies to teach the children various crafts. The children worked on sculpting pottery, spinning yarn & weaving, print making, banner making, designing needlepoint ornaments, and making tie-up pillows.

The children and volunteers had a grand time and many new friendships blossomed. The program will be held again during the 2011-2012 school year. If you are a crafter and would like to lend a hand (and have fun, too!), please contact Sister Carol at the Outreach.



Students enjoyed creating pottery and showing off their tie-up pillows.



Starting A New Chapter



To get involved, call Nikki Grimball at Neighborhood House 723-7784.

Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach Neighborhood House at 77 America Street is expanding its educational opportunities. As we support Charleston residents who are economically deprived, we are also striving to create sustainable solutions to poverty.

To this end, we have created the “Front Porch Library”, a quiet and nurturing space for community members to come and sit in beautiful white rock-

ers under the fans and read or borrow novels, periodicals, or a book of poetry. Our prayer is that the library will literally open the doors of trust in our community and ignite a spark for continued education.

The Neighborhood House also provides a lunch daily to over 100 residents, a food pantry, clothing closet and emergency financial support as well as a variety of educational programs.

LETTER FROM THE Director



At the Outreach we are seeing many new faces: fathers who are experiencing cutbacks in their jobs, mothers who are caring for elderly parents and cannot adequately meet monthly rent payments, elderly persons who cut back on food because of medical bills. Financial constraints complicated by health issues, educational limitations and lack of employment challenge many of our neighbors.

As the demand for services grows, the need for sustainable support also increases. To address current and future needs and ensure the stability of the Outreach's services, the Board of Directors and Staff are expanding "The Circle of Blessings", our annual giving program. Donors commit to give financial support at their level on a yearly basis. Relying on the generosity of our supporters, I encourage your participation in this important effort. May God bless you for your on-going support as partners in our mission.

Sister Mary Joseph

ESL Student Spotlight Father Gabriel Cruz of Holy Spirit Parish



Father Gabriel (bottom left) enjoys an Easter celebration with his fellow ESL students.

Father, where are you from and what brought you to Charleston?

Answer: I am from Colombia, South America and came to Johns Island because there was a great need for a Hispanic priest in the area. The Hispanic community needs to be reminded about God and needs to strengthen their Catholic faith. I work primarily at Holy Spirit Church, but also with 6 other churches in the area and I lead Bible Study classes all over Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville.

How is your church connected to the Outreach?

At Holy Spirit Church, we can't always solve everyone's problems, so we are glad Our Lady of Mercy Outreach can

help. For example, if a family needs food, I refer them to the food pantry at the Outreach. We also refer our parishioners to the Outreach Wellness Center and encourage them to attend educational programs like English as a Second Language. The Outreach is often a second home for Hispanics here on Johns

Island. People find refuge at Our Lady of Mercy because there is always someone who is willing to help them.

Do you think that it is important for your Hispanic parishioners to learn English?

Yes, it is necessary in order to make our lives better here in the United States. A lot of people didn't have the chance to study in their home country or only studied for a few years, so this is an important opportunity for them. The Outreach not only teaches English, but also teaches about parenting, health, and other important topics. I encourage everyone to go forth and learn more English and learn about American culture.

Senior Food Boxes Help Feed the Need

Each month, ninety-seven senior citizens arrive at the Outreach to pick up a box of food that will help them get through the month without running out of food. This program is sponsored by the Lowcountry Food Bank and the

Department of Social Services. Seniors often arrive early and have a great time socializing with each other and those helping with the distribution. Along with canned goods and other food staples, the seniors also receive a box of USDA

cheese and a two piece pack of chicken, generously donated by one of our volunteers. The "senior food box," as it is often called, is a tangible way to show this otherwise vulnerable population that our community cares about them.



Sister Carol signs in a senior citizen who receives a monthly Senior Food box.



Volunteer Pat Colligan helps load food boxes in one of the senior's car.



Dave Schoenholz helps on distribution day.

Outreach Program Happenings

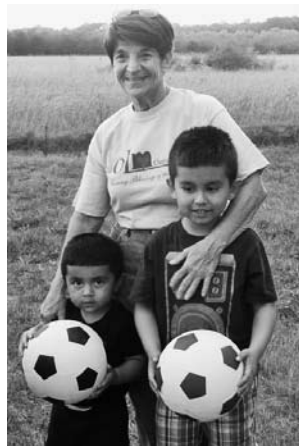
Migrant Health Screenings



Migrant farm workers wait in line to be seen by volunteer doctors and dentists



Dr. Howard provides a dental screening to one of the worker's children



Annette Maranville spends time with some of the children living in the migrant camp

Children Discover Learning is Fun!



Children (ages 18 months to five years) participate in the Early Childhood Development Program while their parents attend GED classes or the ESL Program.



Parents and their children enjoyed a complimentary visit to the Lowcountry Children's Museum.



OLM Celebrates Its Volunteers!



Volunteers who help with direct services, educational programs, and dental care enjoy a well-deserved luncheon in their honor



Many local volunteers enjoy a wonderful summer camp at the Outreach with children from the community.

If you would like to be part of the picture at the Outreach by volunteering, call Claire Bergstrom at (843) 559-4109.

Dental News...

Sink Your Teeth into This!



From July 2010– June 2011, The Wellness Center Dental Program had a record setting year!

Some highlights include:

- Over \$1,000,000 donated in dental services provided to uninsured residents of James, Johns, and Wadmalaw Islands
- 3,100 patient visits
- Approximately 10,000 dental procedures
- 28 volunteer dentists
- Dr. Rena LaMonte, previously one of our first dental student volunteers, now volunteers as a Dentist!
- Expanding partnerships with MUSC College of Dental Medicine and Trident Technical College School of Dental Hygiene
- We welcome a new partnership with Roper St. Francis HealthCare as they provide OBGYN and Women’s Health Services at the Wellness Center.

*“Mercy is twice blest – it blesses the one who Gives and blesses the one who Receives.”
-Shakespeare*

MERCY

Needing services for daily living
Mercy greets us at the door;
 Financials, education, health,
 self-sufficiency, self-esteem and more.

Needing to give of self to others
Mercy shows her face;
 Bringing communities together
 Across the socio-economic race.

-Jacqueline G. Jefferson



Mark Your Calendar!

OCTOBER 20th, 2011

“Great Expectations” At the Charleston Library Society, featuring designer tables, local artists, fine wine and food!

JANUARY 29th, 2012

Fifteenth Annual AUCTION! Marriott Hotel in Charleston

FOUNDATION GRANTS AWARDED:

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of SC, Wachovia, Schoenholz Family, Yaschik Foundation, Coastal Community Foundation, Blackbaud, Kiawah/Seabrook Exchange Club, Kiawah Island, Catholic Extension Society.



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