



BLESSINGS

OUR LADY OF MERCY COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES, INC.

Winter 2009

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

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Christmas Blessings

The month of December is filled with many blessings for Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach! During this holy season, we reverence the gift of our faith and the many blessings of family and friends. We are also conscious of the difficulties



for distribution through the Outreach. Hosted at the homes of Colin and Sally Cuskley and Jeff and Terri Mann, the "Toy Party" provides gifts for all the participants in the Outreach programs!

faced by people who are struggling to meet the basic needs of their families. Thanks to our generous donors, extra food items, new children's clothing and gifts, and contributions to the education and health programs arrive daily to complement our service to our neighbors



Steve Koenig as "Santa"

The wonderful spirit of giving is alive and well and it is shared with the Outreach by so many of you. Thanks to the members of St. John's Rotary Club, 80 plus senior citizens enjoyed a special home-cooked "Christmas meal". The Rotarians served the dinner and gifted the guests with a Christmas treat.

At the Annual Christmas gathering sponsored by Steve Koenig Construction, Jennifer Rhodes Interior Design, The Mill, Crest Industries and Island Express, guests brought an outstanding collection of toys

Numerous churches, Social Club members, as well as St. Francis Hospital, collect presents by way of their "Angel Tree" for distribution to the residents served by the Outreach. Turkeys, hams and baskets of canned items arrive from schools and businesses. By December 24th, the spirit of giving has reached far and wide into the community!



"This is a blessing – an Outreach that is truly in the community and for the community; This Outreach is an ASSET not just in times of need but at all times." Anonymous

LETTER FROM THE Director



“How beautiful on the mountain top are the feet of those who bring good news”

During this special season of Christmas, Hanukkah and other religious celebrations, this Old Testament quote from Isaiah always reminds me of the goodness of people throughout the world who reach out to their neighbors in need. Our Lady of Mercy Outreach witnesses this giving on a daily basis.

Reflecting on the events of the past 20 years of service through the mission of the Outreach brings to mind so many wonderful experiences of generosity. From simple beginnings, the Outreach has partnered with local schools, service and social clubs, churches, neighborhoods, health facilities and a host of organizations. These partnerships have enabled us to develop new programs of service, meet emergency needs and expand our physical space.

So often we are overwhelmed as contributors offer blankets, food, toys for the holidays, dictionaries for literacy classes, baby items for the pre-natal services and of course monetary support for residents facing financial crisis. Match these and so many other gifts with the many, many hours of volunteer service and you can appreciate why we know we are blessed!

As the New Year begins, we are grateful to God and to you for the many blessings we have received. May your New Year also be richly blessed and filled with peace!

Sister Mary Joseph

Celebration Craft Fair



In October the Outreach hosted a “Celebration Craft Fair” to honor the many talents of local crafters and to celebrate 20 years of faithful service to the Islands. The day was filled with music, good food and a wide variety of homemade crafts. Joan Avioli, Board Member in charge of publicity, called the event a “Friend Raiser” and indeed, many new friends were made throughout the day. If you missed this event and would like to visit the Outreach to see the “Mission in Action”, call Sister Mary Joseph, Director for a tour.



Students from Angel Oak School perform at Craft Fair.

Plan Ahead!

With the New Year right around the corner, mark your calendars for the Annual Auction, January 31st at the Marriott Hotel on Lockwood Blvd. in Charleston. Starting at 1:00 pm this 13th annual fund-raiser is guaranteed to be a “Lucky” one for all of the participants! If you need an invitation or wish further information, contact Margaret Berard at 559-4109 or mberard@olmoutreach.org.

Begin the New Year with lots of fun and lend your support to a great organization!



SHARIN

"I am blessed that the Outreach helped me to become the person I am today; God has given me this chance to be part of a family like Outreach."
Deborah

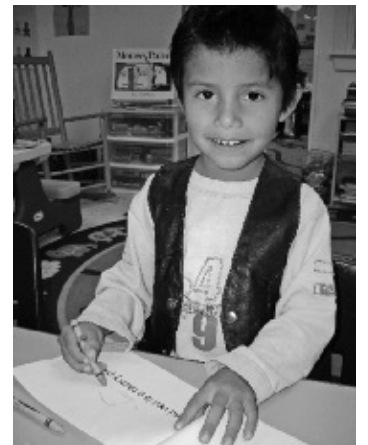
"I am blessed to be a part of the Outreach so I can help in the food and clothing room; I also get to help serve food at the Neighborhood House through the Life Skills program. I'm so grateful for the dental care I receive and the quilting sessions. Thanks for reaching out to me and so many others!" Cat

Recently a new traffic light was installed at the corner of Brownswood Road and Main Road on Johns Island. Pausing at the light, many people read the sign for "Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach Services" for the first time. "I didn't know you were here", commented a recent visitor. "This place is a well kept secret"!



This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Outreach which has served as a place of hope, healing,

encouragement and new beginnings for many people including 12,000 throughout this year! Struggling to rise out of situations of poverty, local



G PRAISE

residents participate in diverse programs of education, health and direct emergency services. Dedicated volunteers arrive each day to support the staff and serve the community.

“I bring food to the Outreach each week to share what I have and I enjoy stocking the food pantry. I can’t imagine not having enough food to feed my own family.”

Through the lens of the camera, a brief snapshot of the daily mission of the Outreach is uncovered. We dedicate these articles to those we have humbly served over the past 20 years and to our exceptional staff, Board of Directors, generous donors and volunteers who are our partners in this blessed undertaking. We offer grateful thanks to you and to God for our many blessings!



“I am blessed by the compassion and care shown to me here.”
Vicky

“I am blessed by the dental care, the food and clothes and warm socks for winter; the people I’ve met help me to be happy!”
Anonymous





“I am blessed to be a part of the Outreach’s Family Literacy Program where we share with the Parent Anonymous organization and learn about family life together. I have found friends and receive help from other parents - we share with each other to make our families happy and strong.” Aurelia



Neighborhood House

In 2005, the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy initiated sponsorship of the Neighborhood House in Charleston under the umbrella of the Outreach. Located at 77 America Street, this ministry began in 1915 as the first Catholic Social Service agency in South Carolina.



Building on a rich history, the Outreach now incorporates this center of hospitality and support to those who live on the east side of Charleston. Sister Pat Keating, Director, a small staff of five and countless volunteers provide a hot meal daily to about 150 residents, many of whom are homeless. Building

on these relationships, the Neighborhood House is becoming a Community Center and now provides programs for senior citizens, sewing classes, GED preparation and parenting sessions. A generous grant from the Franciscan Sisters of Philadelphia helped to facilitate this new direction. You can become involved as a volunteer in the soup kitchen or a tutor in the education programs. Donations of food items for the pantry, clothing for the clothing closet and gifts for seniors are always needed. Contact Sister Pat at 853-8329.



Ways to Support the Outreach and the Neighborhood House

Griff Hogan, Director of Development, is always available to answer your questions!

- The Annual Giving Program, called the “Circle of Blessings”, invites you to make a yearly contribution to the Outreach.
- Making a Planned Gift is possible through “The Sister’s Circle”, named in honor of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy who first endowed the Outreach in 1989.
- Food donations to the pantry and Clothing for the clothing room
- Education supplies for our many educational programs
- Newborn baby items for the Pre-Natal Services
- Sewing supplies for quilting and sewing sessions
- Participate in the Annual Auction Event and the Golf Tournament

Contact Griff Hogan at 559-4109 or griff.hogan@olmoutreach.org

Volunteering your time and talent is a wonderful way to contribute!

Contact: Claire Bergstron, Outreach Services Volunteer Coordinator, 559-4109

Annette Maranville, Wellness Center Director, 559-4493

Sister Pat Keating, Neighborhood House Director, 853-8329



Staying Connected

We are happy to provide you with the Newsletter via e-mail. Please contact the office and share your e-mail address with Margaret at 559-4109 or info@olmoutreach.org

The Web Site is active and changing so stay connected and informed. You can read the ANNUAL REPORT on the Web Site or call the office for a copy (559-4109).



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Outreach Services, Inc.**

P.O. Box 607

Johns Island, South Carolina 29457

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TO OUR ISLAND NEIGHBORS