

Your Treasure Is Blessing to Us

We are grateful to all of you who helped us expand our funds by your monetary and food donations to our **Feinstein Challenge** between March 1 and April 30, 2010. Thanks so much!

Cash Gifts

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George & RoseMary Alexander
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Sr. Shaun Marie Fattal
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St. Clare Hall, Sacred Heart Convent
St. Dorothy Parish
St. John Chrysostom Youth Group
St. Joseph's Guild
St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Church
Veronica Stengel
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Rita Visco
Lori Wilson
Ali Wimer

Inkind Food Donations

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Curves-Havertown
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Phyllis Lucas

Mr. & Mrs. Mark Lynch
James McCabe
N.J. Bernardine Associates
Ohev Shalom Synagogue
On A Roll Restaurant
Our Lady of Angel Convent
Our Lady of Charity Parish
Philabundance
Dennis & Marly Riehle & Family
Mr. & Mrs. David Lemmerman
Sr. Maria Korick

St. Anastasia / Vincent de Paul Soc.
St. John Chrysostom Parish
St. Kevin Parish
St. Madeline Parish
St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish
St. Mark Catholic Church
Thomas Weber
State Government Food Program
TEFAP - Government Program

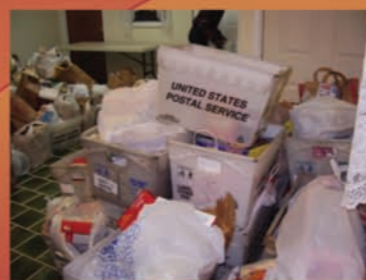
Want to donate to Bernardine Center through the United Way Campaign?

United Way of Southeast Delaware County, designate to: **Bernardine Center or 44950**



More Than Delivering the Mail

The annual Post Office Food Drive inevitably is during Mothers' Day weekend. Bernardine Center staff and volunteers reserve this Saturday afternoon, Sunday and Monday of the week to pick-up food from several local post offices, unload bags and boxes of food, and separate and shelve the collected food that had been donated by neighborhood families and picked up by the already overworked postal carriers who deliver it to their local post offices. This year Bernardine Center benefitted from the Chester and Media Post Offices and received 4,880 pounds of food donations. This is a great asset to our families-in-need. In 2006, our peak year for the Post Office Food Drive donations, we received 15,000 pounds of food. With the downturn of the U.S. economy, more individuals and families are in need, leaving fewer families able to contribute. We are grateful for all families who respond to the post office food donation date with a diversity of staple foods that our Food Pantry can add to its other donations to meet the needs of hungry and struggling families. We are here when you need our support. To the postal service workers – we thank you for your extra efforts at picking up the food donations left by families' mailboxes.



The Bernardine Center's hospitality room becomes the drop-off site for all Post Office food donations



Sr. Carolyn, Bill (Volunteer), and Walter (Goodwill Trainee) begin the unpacking and sorting process



Terry, B.C. Volunteer Coordinator, finds her own little niche and plans out her approach to sorting donated foods



Bernardine Center
2625 West Ninth Street,
Chester, PA 19013
www.bernardinecenter.org

Stamp



2625 West Ninth Street,
Chester, PA 19013
P: 610.497.3225
F: 610.497.3659
director@bernardinecenter.org
www.bernardinecenter.org

SUMMER 2010

THE Bernardine Center

TIMES

A Ministry of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters

Advocacy for Hungry Families

On April 15, 2010 Bernardine Center staff and Volunteer Coordinator traveled to Washington, D.C. as members of *Bread for the World* to advocate for the needs of poor and hungry families in the U.S. We carried with us 715 letters that had been signed by Bernardine Center's food pantry clients, volunteers, Widener University students providing service at the Center, as well as members of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish.

The *Earned Income Tax Credit* (EITC) is an anti-poverty program that supplements the wages of low-income workers. The EITC was initially enacted in 1975 by President Gerald Ford to bridge the gap between low-wage earnings and the cost of meeting basic family needs. Ronald Reagan called the EITC "the best anti-poverty program ever created." It has been expanded four times under both Democratic and Republican administrations – in 1986, 1990, 1993 and 2001, and was temporarily expanded with the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The EITC is a refundable tax credit. The more wages a person earns the more benefits a family receives until it reaches a specific income threshold. At such a point the family sees a decrease in its credit but does not experience a complete loss. While wages increase and EITC benefits decrease, each additional dollar continues to make a valuable difference. At its peak, the EITC provides a forty percent boost in family earnings. In 2009, it is estimated that the EITC lifted 6.6 million people, including 3.3 million children, above the poverty line which was \$21,834 for a family of four in 2008.

Legislation in 2001 and in 2009 that expanded the EITC sunsets at the end of 2010. We urge Congress to extend the provisions of the EITC to prevent low-income workers from losing crucial benefits.

From: *Bread for the World*: "Earned Income Tax Credit" handout



Having provided service in the Bernardine Center food pantry, Widener University students realize the importance of advocating for our clients by writing letters to their Congresspersons urging them to extend the provisions of the EITC.



Mission Statement

The Bernardine Center provides a helping hand to low-income Chester area residents by distributing emergency or supplemental food and supplies.

The Bernardine Center also offers educational, spiritual and advocacy programs to help clients build better lives for themselves, their families and communities.

All the ministries of the Bernardine Center are rooted in Franciscan hospitality and the social teachings of our Catholic Christian tradition.

Bernardine Center's Interior Transformation



Robert and Richard do final paint touch-ups on second floor



Robert installs new flooring in Marylou's office with the help of Richard and Brian



Robert diligently arranges and glues tiles in Hospitality Room



Brian's job is grouting between tiles

Bernardine Center underwent a series of interior renovations during this past winter and spring, being outfitted with a fresh paint job and new flooring on both the first and second floors. Skilled volunteers - Robert, Richard and Brian - assisted with the planning and efficient purchase of materials and then with the installation of flooring. January and February were busy months that saw the dusty, sneeze-inducing tearing up of years-old carpet and then the transformational laying down of laminate wood flooring throughout much of the second floor. What a transition for the second floor education and computer lab areas!

March and April heralded the first floor transition from overworn, food-smudged carpet to thick shaded green squares of ceramic tile throughout the Hospitality Room and associated food-use areas of the first floor. What a difference in the ability to keep it clean and welcoming!

We thank our volunteers Robert, Richard and Brian for their skill and teamwork in achieving a job well done!

We are grateful to *S.S.C. Distributors, Lumber Liquidators, Home Depot, and Joe's Building & Plumbing Supplies, Inc.* for their gracious assistance.

The tile was purchased through NAEIR, a merchandise redistribution center for non-profits which significantly lowered the cost of the tiles and expanded the capacity of our funding.



Richard wet-cuts tiles as needed and provides water for cleaning grout from the tiles



Sister Carolyn delights in the new brunch room tiled floor!



FIX-IT FOR WOMEN



Have you ever telephoned a plumber, electrician, or fix-it person and waited forever or when it was finally done had to pay much more than your budget would allow? We've probably all experienced that situation. Well, in July Bernardine Center offered a day of **Fix-It-For-Women** to help alleviate some of the stress that accompanies waiting for husband, friend, or repair person to get the job done. The day's agenda prepared by Michael DiFurio, our own Bernardine Center "handy man" volunteer, incorporated safety and minor electrical repairs for changing fuses, replacing light switches and electrical wall outlets. He provided hands-on experience with plumbing aggravations from leaking faucets and drain traps to toilet tank repairs



with equipment used for hands-on experience donated by a local *Home Depot*. Michael provided suggestions and rationale for replacement of door hinges and doorknobs. The day wound down, although feminine learning energy heightened, with a visual assessment of the quality of automobile belts and the safe checking and changing of oil and other automobile fluids. The women in attendance felt empowered by their new knowledge and set out for home ready to do long-needed repairs. Marylou, our Food Pantry Manager, participated in the class and took home the door prize consisting of a sturdy Bernardine Center bag of handy home tools applicable to the skills she learned during the class.

Upcoming Educational Programs at Bernardine Center



Anger Management Class \$ 10.00/series

Series 1 - Wednesdays - September 8, 15, 22, 29, 2010; 9:30 - 11:30 am

Series 2 - Wednesdays - October 6, 20, 27; Thursday - October 28, 2010; 9:30 - 11:30 am

Parenting Class \$10.00/ series 9:30 - 11:30 am

Series 1 - Tuesdays - September 7, 14, 21, 28, 2010

Series 2 - Tuesdays - October 5, 19, 28, & Thursday October 21, 2010

Babysitting Class - 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Level I - Monday, November 22, 2010 \$10.00/class

Level II - Tuesday, November 23, 2010 \$10.00/class

English As A Second Language

Ongoing on Tuesdays and Thursdays - Classes are 1.5 hours twice each week -no cost

Basic Computer Program

Next seven-week series begins September 13th, Mondays and Fridays 10:00 - 12:00 noon - no cost



To register for any classes, call 610-497-3225, ask for Sr. Sandra

Computer Lab Provides Learning Satisfaction

Computer programming is a big draw at Bernardine Center these past several months. Maria, our volunteer tutor, developed a formal Basic Computer Program of seven-week sessions held on Mondays and Fridays. Clients engaged with tutor guidance in computer games to practice mouse coordination, exercised fingers while achieving keyboarding skills, reproduced fliers and recipes to practice "cut and paste" and typing skills, sought out historical facts and found their favorite music while learning to browse the Internet, and connected with family and friends after setting up their own free e-mail account. Two series of seven-week programs this past spring engaged 12 individuals who expressed feelings of accomplishment at learning new skills and being able to communicate easily with long-distance friends. Students who have completed a Basic Computer Program are free to return to the Bernardine Center computer lab for ongoing practice or to learn additional skills when they arrange a private tutoring session with staff. Interested individuals advanced to seeking employment opportunities and applying for jobs on-line.

Students learning English as a Second Language with our ESL tutor, enhance their speaking and listening skills using the Computer Labs' English Language Programs besides having their classroom sessions that provide grammatical theory for sentence structure and vocabulary practice. Classes are every Tuesday and Thursday with small classes or individual sessions for 1.5 hours each to meet the needs of students at various levels of learning.

Bernardine Center has recently received a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), its Chester "Weed and Seed" division, to assist adult learners in local continuing education opportunities.

Below: Students in English As a Second Language Classes practice listening and speaking skills on ESL computer program



Above: Debbie, Brenda, Verla and Paul engage in mastering basic computer skills and even enjoy the process

Interested in volunteering to tutor Basic Computer skills or ESL, Contact Sister Sandra Lyons at 610-497-3225 director@bernardinecenter.org