

Thanks for Serving the Hungry

Hunger Coalition Volunteer Appreciation

Each month members of our parish help at the Ann Arbor Hunger Coalition to provide meals for the hungry. Members of our parish St. Vincent de Paul Society, organize this opportunity. We thank Bridget McGillicuddy, and all those who have helped to cook and serve the meals.

In October we, the volunteers came together to share stories about helping with the meals for the hungry, many of the stories shared were as heart moving as this poem that follows here. It is written by, Victor Wakefield, a faithful St. Francis Parish Volunteer.

Designated Driver

I picked up the guys tonight
In that All-American symbol of excess
My family terrorism-supporting
4-wheel drive capable
Jeep Liberty



They all hopped in
Excited to escape the same old, same old routine
Tired from a long day
Ready for a pleasant night
Ready just to go...

But this isn't your normal D D'in drunken barrage of party goers
This isn't Bobby, Greg, Goat, maybe Tick
No, this ride is much more
Well, much different

Larry, Tony, Jim and Hank are aboard tonight
Saturated in smoke and misfortune
Nah...Not high school'er feebreeze smoke
No, this is dunked coat smoke
Like cigs are the air these guys have been breathing
For the last 20 years

Tonight the Liberty is humbled
Because this land of opportunity
Is not always the glitz, glimmer dollar for the wealthy
These 4 guys don't have the luxury
Or economy
To possess that thing I've always taken for granted
Always expected
And neglected ever to think what it would be like to be without:
A Home

And as I'm doing an easy quick shuffle of community service
To these guys I'm a lifeline of survival.

-Parishioner *Victor Wakefield*, Pioneer High Class 2003,
freshman at Princeton University

Thanks for the

Family Shelter

St. Francis Parish & the Shelter coordinators are especially grateful for the work of these October 2003 volunteers: Yvette Atkinson, Herbert Black, Juliet Bogan, Susan Bright, Donald Cheatham, Jane Christman, Michelle Eiden, Georgette Giordano, Karen Holoka, Thomas Hungerford, Marty Javornisky, Chris Kempton, Bill LaCroix, Jane Levy, Tina Matter, Linda Matton, Jennifer Mohawk, Jill Ross, Beth Russell, Allen Sherzer, Victoria Turner, John Wagner, David Wesner, & John Wesner.



Two of our volunteers share their reflections on serving:

"As a family, we volunteer at the IHN Alpha House. It was really hard to find the energy in the beginning. We didn't like it, but now we look forward to going.

After we prepare the special order breakfasts, we take the children to the playroom, read books, watch videos or play games. The children melt our hearts, and we love to see them play and hear their hearty laughter. It is very difficult to go home when the children start screaming and crying as you leave, and there are always a few who steal our hearts.

One weekend, with warm and satisfied tummies and warm and satisfied souls, may be the very thing the children remember. It may be what influences them to become people of strong faith and value. Only with our help, does their rebuilding begin. "

Michael Turner, Sophomore at
Fr Gabriel Richard High School

"Providing a meal (or two) for the Inter-faith Hospitality Network (IHN) Alpha House is a simple and wonderful way to reach out to those who are less fortunate, right here in our own backyard. I am grateful for the opportunity."

God bless,
Bill LaCroix

The Elizabeth Ministry

began in the fall of 1997 with the intention of helping women but has since grown to reach out to all members of the parish and our community in need of short-term help at home. We try to offer several weeks of help with meals, transportation or laundry, depending upon need. In addition, we also offer prayer support for those who request it. So far this past year we have contacted over 100 parishioners and helped many of them with experiences ranging from difficult pregnancies, adoption, and new babies to depression, surgeries, death of family members,



house break-ins, and widow-hood. A person was so impressed with the outpouring of support that one of our families received from the Elizabeth Ministry this past year that they began attending RCIA classes this Fall to learn more about our parish and who we are. This is truly an example of how we act as Christ's presence in our world through our ministry to others.

This fall, the Elizabeth Ministry has undertaken a project to improve our ability to better serve others and fully utilize our many volunteers. A questionnaire was mailed to all members to help ensure that we contact them in the most convenient way and also that we only contact them for the types of assistance they want to supply. We are also exploring whether or not we can use e-mail to stay in better touch with some of our membership and let them know of our service needs, as well as the latest ministry news. Of course, this doesn't mean that we have abandoned the use of phone and personal contact where it is needed or wanted! Only, that we are searching for the best ways to help our ministry grow and serve others.

Without the assistance of our many devoted members acting as the Mystical Body of Christ it would not be possible to provide the many important services that Elizabeth Ministry delivers to our parish family and others in need. Perhaps the most wonderful thing that has come back on the questionnaires is the many comments telling us how very important and powerful this ministry has been to the lives of those it has touched.

If you have any questions or would like to be involved in this ministry, please contact Mrs. Therese Rhein at 434-5262. And, visit:

www.stfrancisa2.com/socialministry/elizabeth.htm

Social Ministry

St. Francis Parish Helps the Poor!

[Call Scott Wright 821-2121]

St. Francis Task Force on Respect Life

- ⇒ Did you know that last year 18,000 "clients" were provided "services" at the local Planned Parenthood facility?
- ⇒ Did you know babies are being murdered within a mile of St. Francis parish?

We joined with over 400 people who gathered together October 5th to show their support for life at the annual Washtenaw County Life Chain. This year's event, organized in part by our own St. Francis' Respect Life Task Force, was an opportunity for area Christians to do a little something to stand up for the unborn. Life Chain was a chance for the average person to obey God's word "*Rescue those unjustly sent to death.*"



Don't stand back and let them die." (Proverbs 24:11)



Missed Life Chain? There will be another chance to do something for the unborn at the ecumenical pro-life prayer service at St. Thomas on January 20th at 730 P.M.

We meet every month on the first Wednesday at 7pm in the Church New Library. Anybody can come join us as we discuss ways of increasing awareness of pro-life issues at our parish. Questions contact Gint (528-4060).

[PHOTOS above are parishioners: (left) Rosaleen Kirk, and (right) The Cesar Family & Ellen Rhein.]

Habitat Catholic House 2003

With the help of many volunteers and charitable service groups, the Catholic community once again built a wonderful house for a deserving family. Blessed and finished in November, the "Catholic House" will allow our partner family to spend many years in a safe and loving environment. Although the house is finished, donations are still needed to fulfill our monetary commitment to build this 2003 Catholic Habitat House.



Since my last report to you in May of this year, the number of capital projects undertaken has been small, reflecting primarily our concern over the level of Sunday donations. Our major project of 2002-2003, the renovation of the Church, is largely finished, excepting only a few punch-list items, which will hopefully be done by the time this is read. There remains only a tag-end balance of about \$37,000 owing the general contractor, which has not yet been billed, pending completion of those punch-list items. Again, we are very pleased with the way the renovation turned out, and hope that you agree that the changes make the Church more functional and welcoming than ever before!

About the time my last report reached you, indicating our intention to put the demolition of the house on our adjacent property on "hold" for financial reasons, sharp-eyed parishioners noted that the house was, in fact, demolished. This action was prompted by a letter we received from the City of Ann Arbor indicating that, unless we went forward, our demolition permit would be revoked, which would force us to go through a re-application process later when we wished to complete the demolition. Suffice it to say that the application process was quite difficult as it was, and we felt that we did not want to have to go through it again for the same purpose. We were able to find a contractor who had done some demolition work for another local parish, and that contractor gave us a very fair quote for the completion of the house demolition, and the decision was made to proceed at that time. We are very satisfied with the way the demolition turned out, including the re-grading and re-seeding of the land itself.

Also highly visible to all was the warranty-repair of the Church roof. Several sections of the Topcoat coating applied in 1996 had come off in recent months, resulting in at least one roof leak in the



Business Manager's Report to the Parish November 2003



Church. This project was completed in early October, before the weather deteriorated, at no additional cost to us.

We had also intended to put off for the foreseeable future the installation of high-efficiency fluorescent lighting in our Middle School classrooms, but received a bid which was several thousand dollars less than we had anticipated, perhaps reflecting some slowing of business for the electrical contractor. As a result, we decided that we should go ahead with that upgrade in August in order to realize the benefits of the favorable bid. That work was also done in a satisfactory manner, and many of our Middle School students and teachers (including those in Religious Education) have commented on how much better the rooms look (while saving on our electric bill!).

Unseen to most, if not all of you, are some improvements made to the steam system which heats our oldest classroom building, the K-3 building. We had to replace a condensate tank, as it no longer was in workable condition, and at the same time, integrated a water softener into the water line feeding the steam boilers, which should both enhance the efficiency of the boilers and lengthen their operating life. We are currently looking at the repair or replacement of our back-up hot water boiler (which services the Church and the 4-8 classroom building), as we would prefer to have the security of a back-up system should our primary boiler fail to function during the upcoming winter.

We would also note that, over the past several months, a number of improve-

ments have been made to our Memorial Garden, located off the lower outside entrance to the Chapel. These included landscaping, lighting, and the addition of a beautiful black granite bench. This was all accomplished through the efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers, including Ray Whiteman, Chris Erkkinen, and Marge Prybys. To them, and to any others whom I have neglected to mention here, "thank you" for all your efforts; they are much appreciated!

Projects which remain on our "to-do list" include the repair of the Bell Tower, upgrading of the Choir Room on the lower level of the Church, continuing roof replacement (School and PAC), and the eventual addition of air conditioning throughout our School buildings, all of which are contingent on improvement in the financial condition of the parish.

At the time of my last report, we were having difficulties with the timely delivery of Church offering envelopes. We changed our method of getting them into the postal system in July (for the August-September-October envelope packets), and it worked so well, that we delivered the November-December-January packets to the postal system in October in the same manner. It appears that the latter set was also delivered on a timely basis, so we hope that the problem has finally been solved. Thank you all for your patience during these delivery difficulties.

As always, thank you for your continuing support of our Parish, and our efforts to improve its facilities. We have come a long way in the past five or six years! Please feel free to call or e-mail me should you have any questions or comments.

Dave Barera, Parish Business Manager
Email: <dsbarera@catholicWeb.com>
Office: 821-2111



St. Francis of Assisi School

Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day ... A Faith-Filled Legacy

Hundreds of Grandparents and Special Friends shared in the learning experience of children at St. Francis of Assisi School on Friday, October 3rd 2003. The joyful day started at 8:15 a.m. in the Parish Activity Center with a warm welcome from Mrs. Linda Miller, Principal and Fr. Jim McDougall, Pastor. When Mrs. Miller read the following words from Mother Teresa, the bustling Parish Activity Center fell silent:

Be Kind

People are often unreasonable and self-centered.
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you.
Be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous.
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and
it may never be enough. Give your best anyway.

For you see, in the end, it is between you and God.
It never was between you and them anyway.

- Mother Teresa

During the half-day event, Grandparents and Special Friends visited classrooms and participated in fun, interactive activities such as tracing handprints and dancing the Virginia Reel in gym classes. The cheerful celebration ended with an uplifting mass presided by Pastor Jim McDougall. His thoughtful homily focused on the true meaning of being a real man or woman. As he said, *"Being a real man or woman is not about eating spiders or other outlandish things as displayed on reality shows like "Survivor." Rather, it is about being strong and humble enough to live in God's way. To act with honesty and integrity, to be concerned about justice for others and not only oneself, to recognize that all that you are and all that you have is from God and that we are called to be good stewards of our lives in this world."*

Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day 2003 featured the theme: "A Faith-Filled Legacy." With the loving example set by Grandparents and Special Friends each and

every day, the children at St. Francis School can build a deeper relationship with God. And, because of their ongoing support, the St. Francis community can continue to positively influence the lives of hundreds of young men and women today and in the future too.

As a grateful grandmother recently wrote: *"Thank you for a delightful morning Friday, October 3rd. Everything was perfect. I appreciate the time and energy that it took to prepare for such a happy day. I am thrilled that my granddaughter is in your care. She is growing beautifully. Keep up the good work."*

Thanks to everyone who attended this year's Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day. And, to all of the energetic helpers who volunteered to make the day a huge success ... GOD BLESS YOU!





New Happenings with the Middle SINGLES!

Since the first Middle Singles Committee meeting in October, the group has done several new things. The Middle Singles Group (those who are single and between 35-55 years old) has been seen



about town. "Dinner +" began on several Thursday nights with dinner out at a local restaurant followed by a movie, bowling, or other activity.

The group has also headed out to brunch after Sunday morning mass. One special activity was the trip to Kensington Metropark. Several of the Middle Singles met on a beauti-

ful Sunday afternoon to enjoy the fall weather and hike through Kensington Park. As always, the Middle Singles Group continues their monthly Potluck Social on the second Saturday of the month.



To see what the group is up to, check out the website at

www.stfrancisa2.com/middlesingles

Watch for our special events coming in December and January!

