

# DIALOG

*A publication of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries*

*Spring 2012*

## Painting inspired by distant memories now inspires others in special calendar



■ Five ovals of color line up across the top of the page. They look like a row of spring flowers, but the artist will tell you they are something else, something special to her.

“They are my children,” Loretta Amspacher says with a grin. “The colors are their different personalities.”

The 88-year-old lives at Frey Village, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Middletown, Pa., where she created the painting during her first session of Memories in the Making®.

A program developed by the Alzheimer’s Association, Memories in the Making gives people with memory-related illnesses an outlet for creative expression. The session leader gives participants a verbal cue or an object to stimulate personal memories.

“I asked Loretta what is the most important thing in her life,” says Courtney Singleton, activity assistant at Frey Village. “She said, ‘My children,’ and that sparked her painting.”

Amspacher’s painting was selected to be part of a 2012 calendar created by the Greater Pennsylvania Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association. Fittingly, her painting was paired with May, the month of Mother’s Day.

“I enjoyed painting with the pastel colors,” says Amspacher, whose family includes 12 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren, along with her four daughters and one son. “I guess somebody thought I did a good job.” ■

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*Loretta Amspacher shows the 2012 Alzheimer’s Association Memories in the Making calendar. Her watercolor, titled My Inspiration, was chosen to represent the month of May.*

# OUR MISSION

In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries will demonstrate God's command to love the neighbor through acts of service.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries is a leading provider of senior living accommodations and social services, including adoption, counseling, home care, and youth programs in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. With many hands and one heart, Diakon staff members each year touch the lives of more than half-a-million children, families, and older adults. We are proud to continue a nearly 150-year tradition of hospitality and care for people of all faiths.

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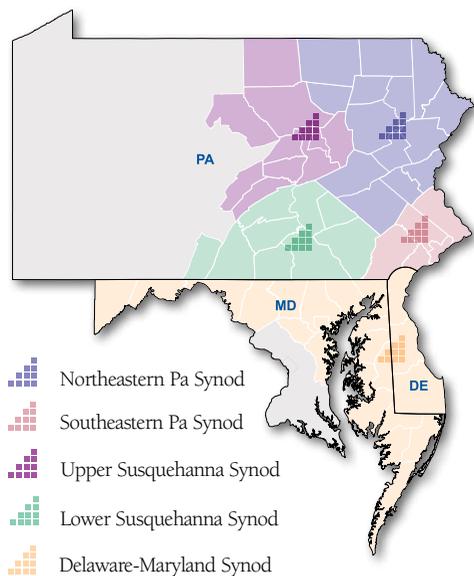
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# THE PRESIDENT'S DIALOG



Mark T. Pile, MSHA, MSW,  
Diakon President/CEO

In the midst of the environment that non-profit organizations, Diakon among them, face today, it's sometimes easy to get caught up in the daily challenges.

Declining reimbursements in the midst of rising need—and increasing regulation. A housing market that continues to make it difficult for older adults to sell their homes and move to the senior living community they desire. The need to do as much as you can with limited resources.

We've faced these challenges in a number of ways, including time-limited special offers on senior living accommodations, an emphasis on growth of what we call our "core services"—for example, looking at how we can expand our Diakon Youth Services and Diakon Adoption & Foster Care programs—a recent decrease in the size of our Ministry Support administrative operations, and the difficult decision to end or realign certain smaller or "non-core" programs (such as closing Diakon Adult Day Services at Mountain Glade in western Maryland and transitioning Diakon Inroads Employee Assistance Program to another service provider).

Yes, in the midst of such decisions and changes, it's easy to get caught up in the challenges . . .

And then you end up at breakfast with three young men.

The occasion of that breakfast was the 13th Annual Non-Profit Innovation Awards, held in late February at the Hilton Harrisburg.

Our Diakon Flight Program had been nominated for an innovation award in the category of programming and we had been named a finalist for the award.

As we waited for the winners in the various categories to be named, I enjoyed eating breakfast with three young men who are current participants in or graduates of the Flight Program, based at our Diakon Wilderness Center near Boiling Springs. We talked briefly of their current educational pursuits—all three are in college—and plans for the future.

When you consider their pasts, you quickly understand that the transformation Flight has brought to their lives is truly amazing—as is the determination each of these young men has to succeed in life, education, work, and community service.

One of the young men, for example, had found himself standing outside the jail from which he'd just been released with no one to whom to turn. That is, until Flight came into his life. Now, he's in college and doing very well.

That story tends to be the norm rather than the exception in Flight. All current members of the program are either employed full-time, attending college full-time, or are both employed and attending an institution of higher education.

That status is even more amazing when you consider the young men take part in Flight *voluntarily*—quite different from their pasts, when they had been court-ordered to participate in various youth programs.

In fact, it's their past association with juvenile justice or children and youth services that brought them to Flight. The program was formed to provide mentoring and other support to young men who have aged out of the juvenile-justice system, for whom there are few other resources, and who need assistance to stay on track for success in work, school, family life, and the community.

Supported in part by an initial grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Flight launched in 2009 as a 52-week program focused on helping young men obtain and maintain employment, meet academic goals, and discover and practice true independent-living skills while staying drug-free.

The youths in Flight rely on one another and on Diakon Wilderness Center staff members, such as Diakon Youth Services... **Continued on page 7**

## Flood brings devastation; Diakon Disaster Response brings some relief

■ Mother Nature is powerful, but community volunteers coupled with Diakon support are even stronger.

Tami Brown-Myers and her family know this all too well. Losing everything they owned during a devastating September flood that affected central Pennsylvania and surrounding areas, the family would have never made it through the disaster without the help of volunteers.

“They were completely there for me on a personal level,” says Brown-Myers when discussing a group of community volunteers based out of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Montoursville, Pa. The group’s efforts were supported by Diakon Disaster Response.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries reaches out during times of need by serving as a partner with Lutheran Disaster Response. As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s primary organization for disaster response in the Delaware-Maryland and Upper Susquehanna synods, Diakon also works in partnership with other lead Lutheran social ministry organizations in other regional synods as needed during disasters.

The Lutheran program collaborates with disaster response agencies by providing support and financial resources to meet the needs of disaster victims while focusing on longer-term recovery and not duplicating other organizations’ efforts.

“For two years, within the Upper Susquehanna Synod, we have been working to be on the forefront of preparedness,” says the Rev. Cindy Camp, director of Diakon Disaster Response. “Coordination is the key to it all.”

Diakon’s planning aided disaster victims such as Brown-Myers.

“The week before the flood, we got warnings about Irene, but we didn’t get warnings about Lee,” says Brown-Myers. “Before I knew it, we were knee-deep in water and the only things we could save were our kids and animals.”

Trapped in Barbours by the rising flood waters, Brown-Myers, her husband, and their three children were forced to spend the night in their minivan, while their animals stayed in the family car. They had to move their vehicles to higher ground as they watched water consume their home.



*This bridge in Lycoming County was completely washed out by Mother Nature’s fury.*

“It was like an ocean current. Water knocked over trees that slammed through our house. Everything washed away—our antique piano, dining room table, precious keepsakes the kids made. . .” says Brown-Myers. “I know I was alive but I felt like I was dead. We lost everything.”

Having only the clothes on their backs, the family had no idea how to begin to pick up the pieces of their lives.

“Help found us,” she recalls. After the flooding receded, volunteers arrived handing out essential living supplies such as food, water, and clothes. They also offered guidance, emotional support, and physical help.

Judy DeGregorio was one of those volunteers. “It was a team effort. We call it a community of volunteers, because it was truly that,” says DeGregorio.

The Lady of Lourdes Church transitioned into a shelter and became a command center for flood victims and volunteers.

“In the midst of it all was Gary [Hutchinson]. He helped us organize the outpouring of community support and need,” says DeGregorio. “He was a trained leader with a vast wealth of knowledge to share with volunteers who had never before worked in a disaster situation.”

Formerly the Lycoming County public safety director, Hutchinson serves as Diakon’s disaster response coordinator in the Upper Susquehanna Synod.

“Diakon provided immediate help. It expedited services and made community efforts more efficient,” says Hutchinson.



*At Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Montoursville, Cindy Camp, left, and Gary Hutchinson look over the piles of clothing and other items generously donated by members of the surrounding communities.*

“I coordinated efforts with the Upper Susquehanna Synod’s bishop—Bishop Driesen and his assistant, the Rev. Karl-John Stone. We didn’t want to leave any need unmet.”

Through the support of Diakon and Lutheran Disaster Response, Hutchinson helped obtain equipment to clean basements, organized volunteer crews, secured donations of personal care items from Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset, educated victims on services available, and assisted with the Big Day of Serving—a church-based effort that rallied hundreds of volunteers to clean and rebuild affected areas.

“If we needed something, Gary found a means to get it for us,” says DeGregorio. “I don’t know where we would have been without him.”

Diakon Disaster Response touched many lives, says Hutchinson. “Diakon’s efforts restored people’s faith in people helping people.” ■

## World War II parachute transformed into one-of-a-kind wedding dress

■ Marriage proposals are made in a variety of ways. There's the traditional proposal where the man gets down on one knee and asks for the woman's hand in marriage. There are also the more modern proposals of airplanes pulling a banner with the message, "Will you marry me?" to popping the question on an electronic sign at a sporting event.

But the late Major Claude Hensinger had his own, unique way of proposing to his girlfriend, Ruth.

Hensinger was returning from a bombing raid over Japan in 1944 when his B-29 was shot down over China and he was forced to bail out of his plane. Fortunately, his injuries were minimal, and he survived the night using his parachute as a blanket.

*Ruth Hensinger's wedding dress, made from a World War II parachute, is now on display with the Smithsonian Institution.*



Shortly after returning to the U.S., Hensinger began dating Ruth, whom he had known since childhood. After a year of courting, Hensinger proposed to Ruth by giving her an unusual gift—his parachute.

"He said, 'This is the parachute that saved my life. I want you to make a wedding gown out of it,'" says Ruth, a resident of Luther Crest, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Allentown, Pa.

Ruth was overwhelmed by the parachute's massive size. "I thought to myself, 'How am I going to make a gown out of 16 gores of nylon and all that bias?'" she says.

Her inspiration came from a dress she saw in a store window; the dress was based on a gown from *Gone with the Wind*. Hensinger made the skirt herself by pulling up the strings on the parachute so that the dress would be shorter in the front and have a longer train in the back; she then hired a local seamstress to make the bodice and veil.

The gown was worn for the first—but not the only—time in 1947 when the Hensingers were married at Neffs Lutheran Church in Neffs, Pa., where the couple had met as children. "My husband didn't see the gown until I walked down the aisle," she says. "He was happy with it."

Twenty-five years later, the gown was used by



*Ruth Hensinger holds what is left of the parachute that saved her late-husband's life.*

their daughter, who wore it on her wedding day, and then later by their daughter-in-law. "It went down the same church aisle three times."

In the early 1990s, Hensinger learned the Smithsonian Institution was looking for artifacts made from World War II-era parachutes. She contacted a curator, who requested that she send the gown and veil to the museum.

Hensinger sent it without a second thought. "What was I going to do with it? I don't have granddaughters to wear it," she explains. The museum has since displayed the gown at a number of exhibits, including most recently at the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Of course, that unusual proposal brought her more than a parachute: She and her husband, she says, "had a great 49 years together." ■

## Twining Village residents give back to community through craft project

■ Residents of Twining Village's health care center gather monthly for a special purpose. Whether hearts for Valentine's Day, snowmen for Christmas, or leprechauns for St. Patrick's Day, holiday décor adorns napkin holders the residents decorate for Woodside Meals on Wheels in Bucks County, Pa.

For each holiday of the year, health-care residents of the Diakon Senior Living Community in Bucks County decorate up to 50 napkin holders with ornaments relating to that celebration. The napkin holders are then placed on meal trays for the older adults who cannot leave their homes or prepare their own meals.

Village Assistant Activities Director Patty Phillippi says that day-to-day activities brighten residents' spirits, especially if the activity occurs on a regular basis.

"Not only are they creating something for others to enjoy at mealtime, but they also are having a chance to socialize. We play music while they are crafting, which the residents love, and it is meaningful for them to be participating in community giving. They also help each other make the holders, which is so nice to see."

Valerie Evans, resident, enjoys making the holders for each holiday. "Knowing that the people receiving these are enjoying them on their

meal trays puts a smile on my face. I look forward to getting together with other residents and having a good time, while at the same time, what I am working on is benefitting people in the community. It brightens my day and theirs as well."

Woodside Meals on Wheels Volunteer Sandy Leggieri always looks forward to seeing what Twining Village has created, and her clients have shared how much they enjoy these festive items. "For clients who live alone and may not get much company, these thoughtful gifts make them feel special and cared for," says Leggieri. "Woodside Meals on Wheels and our clients are so appreciative of the residents and staff at Twining Village who share their talents with homebound seniors in Bucks County." ■

*Residents of Twining Village make napkin rings to accompany meals delivered to Meals on Wheels clients. From left are Anne Delo, Dot Boyce, Catherine Burman, and Valerie Evans.*



## Mother and son, if only for a moment

■ ■ ■ My name is Dominique Watts, and I am a mom.

I had thought about those words for years, since I was a child. When would it happen? How would it happen? What would he or she be like? All I knew was that I wanted a healthy child to whom I could pass on my love of sports, music, and words.

I always knew I would adopt. I have an older sister who was adopted, so it was always part of me.

Matt Shaffer, of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, contacted me about a little boy who needed a home.

Matt spoke about his needs and we agreed to meet. I was very hesitant. But to Maryland I went with my friend, Jenna. I had never really thought that I would adopt a child with special needs.

My life forever changed on March 17, 2010.

I don't know how to explain it. But the first time I met Dovid, it was over for me. I knew in my heart—he was my son.

My medical experience to that point was that I had put on a few bandages. So, obviously, I had a lot of learning to do. So I learned. I learned how to suction, change a trach, give medication, feed him, and everything else I had to learn. I learned all those things from his nurses and from Jenna, who was extremely knowledgeable already.

But all of that was nothing compared to what I learned from Dovid.

After months of back and forth travel to Maryland, I finally got to bring my little man home in January [2011].

Most people would think all those dreams I had of having a child with whom I could share my love of sports, music, and words were not going to be realized with Dovid, given his extensive needs. Well, they would be wrong.

I sang Dovid almost every song I know, taught him how Prince makes me want to move, and that even though he was probably too young, everyone should listen to hip hop at least once—so I made an exception to his age and let him (the edited version, of course!)

When we were alone in the early mornings, I would read to him things that I wrote—and a few of my favorite pieces from other writers.

In March [2011], Dovid became very ill.

It got to the point where we knew it was almost the end for him. It was, and still is, the hardest thing I have ever had to go through: To watch my child be in pain and not be able to help. To know that we wouldn't be able to do the things I had planned for us to do.

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*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. James 4:14*

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But I still had one more passion of mine left to pass on to him. March Madness was in full swing. So on March 27 Virginia Commonwealth University was playing the Goliath of college basketball—Kansas.

I joked with some of the nurses at the hospital that Dovid had picked VCU for the upset. So there we were watching the game. To every single person in the world's surprise, VCU won. I had a sports moment with my son. But more than that, I had a sports

moment that was a perfect metaphor for his life. His short life.

He died the next day.

Dovid was always the underdog. The struggles most kids face pale in comparison to what Dovid endured. Every day was work. Every breath was a fight. You know what, though? Dovid won.

In five years, he taught more people about love, compassion, and perseverance than I think anyone could. That is his victory. That is his legacy.

It breaks my heart that I can't hold him anymore, but I carry him with me every day. Though it's hard, I share his story with as many people who ask or will

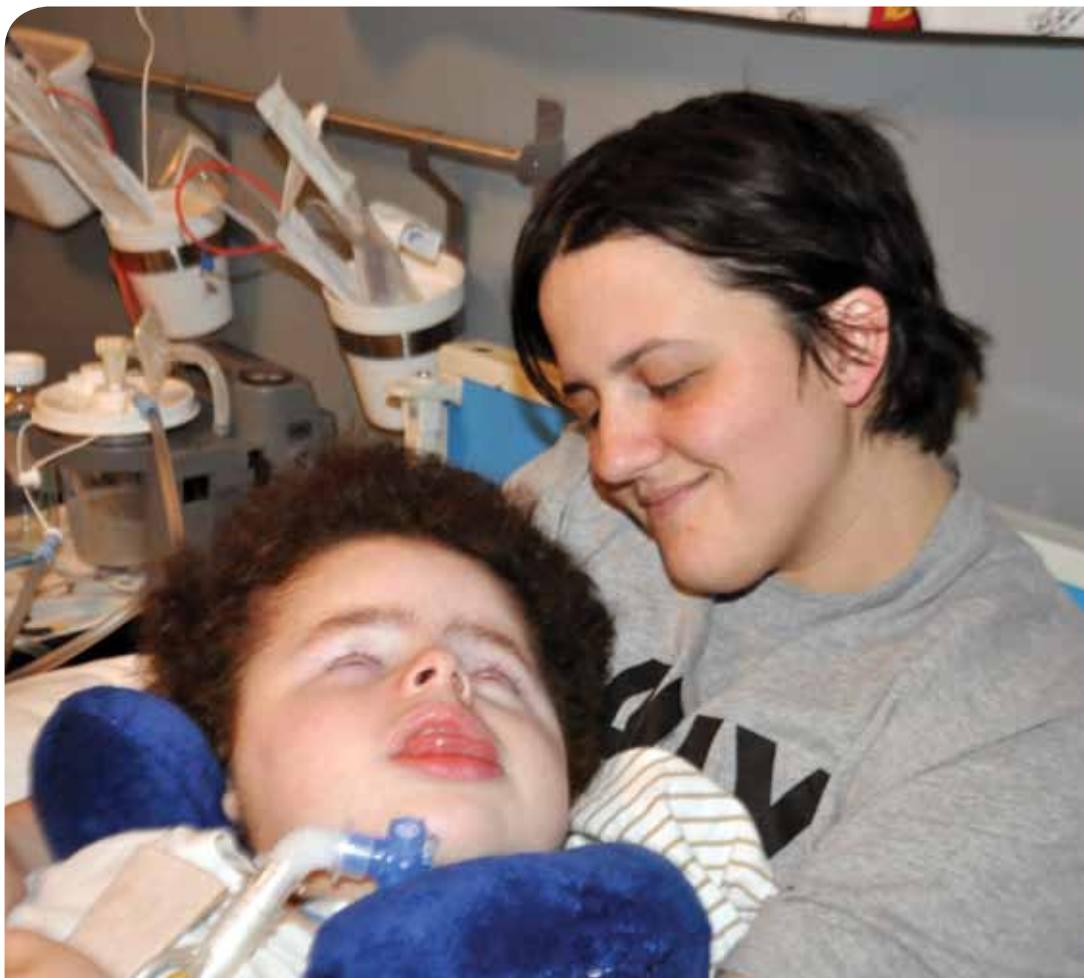
listen. My hope is that more people, people like me who had never considered special needs adoption, will open their minds and be taught that the "special" part of "special needs" is not at all what they think it means.

A lot of people think I chose Dovid.

Dovid chose me. And I am forever grateful.

■ ■ ■

*Dominique shares a quiet moment with Dovid.*



# Children amend bad habits, adopt healthier ones

■ Three or four decades ago, most people led lives that kept them at a healthy weight. Kids walked to and from school every day, ran around at recess, and played for hours after school. Meals were homecooked with moderate portion sizes and there was always a vegetable on the plate. Eating fast food was rare and snacking between meals was an occasional treat.

Today, children have a very different lifestyle. They travel by car or bus to school, spend less time in gym class and at after-school sports, and spend their after-school hours watching TV, playing video games, and surfing the Internet. Parents are busier than ever and families eat fewer home-cooked meals and more snacks.

Because of these lifestyle changes, childhood obesity rates in America have nearly tripled since the 1980s. Today, nearly 20% of children in America are overweight or obese. The numbers are even higher in African-American and Latino communities.

In the late 1980s, a California-based pediatric endocrinologist recognized the increase in the number of overweight children and decided to do something about the problem. She, along with colleagues, established the first program using the power of the entire family to bring about permanent change in overweight children. They called it KidShape®.



*After nine weeks of hard work amending bad habits and adopting healthier ones, these students celebrate their confidence to put into place the tools and strategies they learned at KidShape.*

## Dialog Digest

### Senior living homes available at Robinwood

Diakon can now sell occupancy of senior living homes on the Robinwood campus of Diakon Senior Living – Hagerstown, the result of recent receipt of state licensure of the Robinwood and Ravenwood campuses as a single Continuing Care Retirement Community.

### Groundbreaking at Buffalo Valley

May 1, 2012, will be the groundbreaking for a new nursing care center at Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village. The center is set to open the summer of 2013.

### \$90,000 in scholarships awarded to youths

Twenty-six scholarships totaling \$90,000 were awarded in 2011 to youth who are currently participating in or have previously participated in one or more Diakon programs. A luncheon to honor the recipients was held at Cumberland Crossings, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Carlisle, Pa. Some of the recipients, back row, left to right, are Derek Zug, Kevin Gilbert, Chris Chilton, Anthony Yates, and Trey Faust. Front row, left to right are Kaitlyn Fredo, Ambrosia Thomas, LaTrecia Thomas. For more information about the scholarship program, please call (717) 960-6700.



KidShape is a family-based pediatric weight-management program designed for families with children ages 6 to 14. The goal of the nine-week program is to promote healthy lifestyles, nutritious eating habits, physical activity, and positive self-respect for the entire family. “We want them to feel good inside and outside,” says Kate Kennedy, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries’ KidShape site coordinator. “We want them to think about things that make them feel good.”

Because many obese and overweight children and adolescents have a greater risk of social and psychological problems, they often suffer from depression and low self-image.

Nine-year-old Brody Weitzel, who attended a Kidshape class in Reading, Pa., didn’t feel good about himself before attending the class. “I would criticize myself in my head,” said Weitzel. He says the classes taught him to be more self-confident and have fun while getting fit and learning better eating habits. As a result of these lessons, Weitzel has lost weight. “This shirt used to be snug,” says Weitzel’s mom, Terry, as she tugs on her son’s t-shirt.

Taking the first step is always the most difficult, as 10-year-old Sienna Cowley knows all too well. “I didn’t know what the program was about. I thought they would embarrass and talk down to me,” says Cowley. “They didn’t. They made it fun.” After five weeks in the program, Cowley said she “feels stronger and can run without getting out of breath.”

Of the more than 10,000 children who have attended the KidShape program nationwide, 87 percent have lost weight and 80 percent of those who returned for a follow-up had kept weight off for at least two years.

Weitzel and Cowley and their mothers hope that they will be part of these statistics; they also encourage other children and their families to attend KidShape classes, which Diakon holds twice a year in Berks County.

For more information, readers may call (610) 682-1337 or, toll-free, 1-888-449-2699; they also can use the email [kidshape@diakon.org](mailto:kidshape@diakon.org). KidShape is made possible through funding by a children’s health promotion initiative of the Highmark Foundation. ■■

## Difficult economy provides opportunity to save money with coupons

■ Robin Snook recently paid \$150 for \$800 worth of groceries. And the purchase was perfectly legal.

Snook, a licensed practical nurse at Ohesson, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Lewistown, Pa., has perfected the art of “couponing.” For four years she has gathered, clipped, and organized coupons of all kinds to feed, clothe, and basically entertain her family of six.

Attracted by the area’s lower cost of living, Snook moved to Lewistown from Nevada nearly 13 years ago. “When I came here, because of the price adjustment, I thought I didn’t need to coupon,” says Snook, who lives with her husband, mother, and three children. “That is so silly. I can’t believe I thought that. Who doesn’t need to coupon?” Snook returned to school and expenses were tight. She turned to clipping coupons to supplement her budget. But it wasn’t until her neighbor stepped in and showed her the “right way” to do it that her savings multiplied.

“She pulled out this binder and every sleeve was dedicated to the aisles in the grocery store,” she remembers. “I started making a binder based on what she had taught me.”

Snook says it initially took a lot of calculating to know what to buy and what coupons to use to gain the most value. “You also have to know the store’s coupon regulations,” she says. “I immediately head up to a store’s customer service desk and ask about the coupon policy.”

Snook spends four hours a week cutting and clipping coupons before she ever sets foot in a grocery store. She divides her coupons

into categories: canned goods, baking, cereal, frozen, refrigerated, and so on.

“We usually spend—at the shortest—two-and-a-half hours at the grocery store,” she says, admitting at one time it would take six hours. “I cut it down to two-and-a-half by knowing the rules and regulations of the transactions.”

Knowing a store’s coupon-doubling policy, limits on using the same coupons in one day and the ins and outs of rewards programs are just a few tricks of Snook’s coupon trade. Another is shopping during the evening.

“I don’t like to go during the day. I find that a lot of couponers have already hit the shelves and they are wiped out,” she says. “In the evening, it is calm. They are stocking shelves and they are more willing to help if I have a question.”

Snook’s efforts have garnered her deep discounts on everything from toiletries and dry goods to frozen foods and drinks. But her effort doesn’t end there.

“People think you can’t get meat and produce. That is so far from the truth. You can always use your overflow,” she says. “When you look at the back of a [grocery-store] ad, they [often] have categories where if you buy so many items you get money off. Usually you have coupons for those products. That money can then go to meat and produce.”

Now a seasoned coupon shopper, Snook finds it hard to buy anything beyond a certain price point. “I’m a little spoiled,” she says. “When I first started, a dollar was a good deal. But now I’ll say that isn’t such a good deal.” ■



Robin Snook’s well-stocked pantry is the result of many hours spent clipping and redeeming coupons.

## THE PRESIDENT’S DIALOG CONTINUED

Executive Director Corey Carothers and program Supervisor Rob Kivlan, for support and guidance. Collectively, program participants have faced homelessness, addiction, release from juvenile placement or adult prison with no support plan, unsupportive or unhealthy families, negative peer groups including gang-membership, unemployment, the inability to provide consistently for their basic needs, and the lack of a plan to become a successful, contributing member of society.

When you balance those pasts against their current efforts at work, college, and in community service—the youths have spent time volunteering in state and federal parks, for the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater (which involves sailing the Hudson River and teaching third- and fourth-graders about the environment), the American

Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and many other groups—their transformation truly becomes apparent. Their change and commitment to responsibility and to service to others admirably reflects Diakon’s faith-based mission of transforming the life of the neighbor.

These young men really are soaring in Flight.

*Mark T. Rie*

P.S. And, yes, Flight won! The judges in the Non-Profit Innovation Awards program—a partnership of the Central Penn Business Journal, regional community foundations, and area business and industry—selected the program for “its originality, effectiveness, measurability, and potential to be used as a model by other organizations.”



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## New experience offers learning opportunity

### Volunteer shares his love of birds of prey with Diakon Wilderness Center students

■ Michael Kuriga was hunting when a Peregrine falcon slammed into a flock of ducks. It was a defining moment for the 14-year-old, the moment a lifelong interest in birds of prey was born.

Here was a subject to fascinate the boy, who struggled throughout junior and senior high school to pass each grade. He wasn't a bad kid, he says; just a disinterested one. It's a trait he shares with many of the youths served by the Diakon Wilderness Center.

"There are lots of kids out there like I was," says Kuriga, who is a member of the North American Falconers Association. "You have to find out what interests them. Birds are what turned me around." Kuriga recently did a presentation on falconry to youths in Diakon Wilderness Center programs, a presentation that made the young people visibly uncomfortable. He believes they showed their insecurities because the bird is something alien to them.

The reaction is normal for the youths, says Corey Carothers, executive director of Diakon Youth Services. "When confronted with an unfamiliar situation, the kids tend to react emotionally."

Located on 170 mountainous acres near Boiling Springs, Pa., the wilderness center provides outdoor-based programs that focus on experiential learning, competency-development, education, and family development. The programs serve young people who have been adjudicated delinquent or dependent by county juvenile courts or children and youth services.

"We know that the youths can react in self-destructive ways to unfamiliar situations," says Carothers. "Mike Kuriga's presentation did just that, providing us with a good teaching opportunity." Center programs teach youths to manage and deal with emotions, make better decisions, and effectively communicate with others, often by putting them in situations that take them out of their comfort zones.

Over the last five years, 70 percent of Diakon Wilderness Center graduates have reported they are on track for success, compared to a national average of 30 percent. ■

■ Diakon is thankful for the generosity of donors who financially support the Diakon Wilderness Center. To ensure the continued success of the center, funding and volunteers are needed. To learn how you can help, please email [carothersc@diakon.org](mailto:carothersc@diakon.org) or call (717) 960-6700.

*Michael Kuriga gives a presentation on birds of prey to Diakon Wilderness Center students.*

