

DIAKON CONNECTION

SUMMER 2004

U.S. offers therapists hope

It was post 9/11 and the return to the United States was more challenging than they had expected.

Physical therapists Konrad and Jolanta Gorski wanted a better future for themselves and their two children. That future hinged on coming back to the U.S.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries helped to make that return possible, and residents in two of its retirement communities are benefiting as well.



Jolanta Gorski

“The Gorskis worked in the United States a number of years ago and returned home”—to Golezow, Poland—“with the hope of eventually returning in the future,” says Alice Clark, Diakon’s vice president for human resources.

The couple worked in the U.S. from 1995 to 1997 following their graduation from college, but then returned to their native country. For nearly seven years, they worked in Poland until finding themselves at a turning point in their lives.

“We were working for my wife’s family’s company. We were doing physical therapy for disabled employees, but it was small,” says Konrad Gorski, 35. “We wanted . . . a better future for our children.”

Jolanta Gorski, 36, says she wanted her children to have ample opportunities. “I want them to be fluent in Polish and in English,” says Jolanta. “And I wanted them to experience the American culture.”

“In the European states, we have small countries and if we travel, we get treated differently just because we’re from Poland. It doesn’t matter here. Most everybody came from somewhere, and people are accepting. Our kids have a much better future here and a much safer place to live,” adds Konrad.

The couple began their search for American jobs using the Internet. Not knowing their future was only a click away, they stumbled upon the Web site of Recruitment Alternatives, based in Doylestown, Pa.

“We were looking at offers from other places, but John Early [president of Recruitment Alternatives], was the first to get back to us. He was very timely and professional in comparison to other offers we had,” says Konrad.

According to Clark, Diakon used Recruitment Alternatives to fill a need.

- Cumberland Crossings Retirement Community**, Carlisle
- Diakon Adoption Services**, York
- Family Life Services – Capital Region**
- Frey Village**, Middletown
- Perry Village**, New Bloomfield
- Refugee & Immigration Services**
- Senior Centers** (Cumberland County)
- Susquehanna Lutheran Village**, Millersburg
- TresslerCare Youth Services**
- Volunteer Home Care**, Upper Dauphin County

HEADLINES

- Frey Village system**
tracks resident care 2
- New food program**
helps to renew appetites 3
- Diakon hosts second**
legislative breakfast 4
- SLV admin makes bold**
ah, bald, move 5
- Parents PROSPER**
in Perry program 6
- Wilderness Center**
expansion continues 7
- Cumberland Crossings**
resident honored 8



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 serves nearly 60,000 persons annually in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware through adoption, foster care, refugee services, volunteer home care, retirement villages, housing accommodations, congregational ministries, hospice services, and more.

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Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries is committed to a diverse workforce. As a result, qualified applicants are considered without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or the presence of a non-job-related medical condition or handicap.



Queen Amaike, CNA, left, and Tammy Murlin, CNA, use Frey Village's new Caretracker system to enter information about how much assistance a resident needs when completing daily activities, such as bathing, dressing, and eating.

New Frey system tracks resident care

Nursing care staff can easily monitor and respond to changes in residents' conditions, thanks to a new tracking system installed at *Frey Village*.

A Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries project team is introducing the new Caretracker® system at six nursing care facilities this year, with plans to complete installation throughout Diakon by the end of 2005.

The program revolves around computerized kiosks strategically placed so that nursing staff can easily access them to input resident information. With a successful test installation at Diakon's *Manatawny Manor* in Pottstown last fall, Frey Village was selected as the next facility to receive the system, which features touch-screens.

"Frey Village has always been a pillar of the community and the organization, and we wanted to be one of the first ones on board with the system," says Carol Keister, director of nursing. "We wanted to confirm the accuracy of our documentation and more easily track changes in a resident's condition."

Kiosks are located in hallways, dining rooms, therapy areas, and in activities rooms. The ready availability allows nursing and therapy staff immediately to document care provided. That information is then accessible to supervisors from their workstations.

"We have been running, for the most part, 100 percent compliance with our docu-

mentation," Keister reports. "It is triggering significant changes for the registered nurse assessment coordinators. They can pull up a multitude of reports at their fingertips whenever they want. They are able quickly to identify when a resident has had a decline in their activities of daily living."

Before the installation of Caretracker, not every supervisor had access to a computer, Keister says. "Now we are linked by e-mail, the kiosk, and the workstations. Caretracker brought everybody up a notch. Now every supervisor can look at the reports before the end of their shift."

Reaching this point, however, has had its challenges, says David Baker, Diakon's vice president for Technology Services, who more than two years ago met with the vendor that developed Caretracker.

"This started as a desktop program, but we wanted a Web-based version that would be robust enough for us to use at all our facilities," he says. "After about one and a half years, they came up with this version. Last fall we beta-tested it at Manatawny Manor and it was very successful."

Diakon's project team "had a rollout program put together for us with specific steps and dates of what would occur. It was very well organized," says Keister. "I thought it would be good, but it is better than I anticipated it could be."

Residents experience renewed appetites

For many Diakon nursing facility residents who have difficulty chewing or swallowing, a puréed diet is the only way they can receive the nourishment they need.

But when the puréed entrée resembles baby food, the effect can be a diminished appetite.

In an effort to put “excitement” back into mealtime, CURA Hospitality—which provides food service for Diakon—is training dietary staff at each facility to use scooping, molding, and piping techniques that give puréed food the appearance of solid food.

“Half the enjoyment of a meal is how it looks,” says Franklin Oiler, general manager of dining services at *Susquehanna Lutheran*

Village in Millersburg, where dietary staff completed the training in March. “Since you ‘eat with your eyes,’ when you see something that actually looks like the real thing, it helps stimulate the appetite.”

By the end of June, dietary staff at all Diakon nursing facilities had completed the six-hour Purée Creations training.

“The training is specialized for each facility’s space. I show them how to overcome restrictions and any challenges the staff may encounter,” says Will Sanders, CURA’s operation support manager.

“The number of residents they serve is different, their equipment use is different, and the production is different.”

During the training at *Susquehanna Lutheran Village*, where approximately 50 residents require a puréed diet, dietary staff focused on the three techniques that take puréed food and re-form it to its original shape.

“With the scooping technique, you thicken the food and use different-sized ice cream scoops to give it a shape,” Oiler explains. “An example would be meatballs. Instead of a puréed meatball, you thicken it and use the scoop to give it shape.”

The piping technique incorporates the use of a pastry bag and various tips to re-form such foods as spaghetti. Molding, the third technique, uses plastic food-molds to lend shape to puréed food. “You put it in the refrigerator for about two hours to set up. The food then looks like whatever the mold is [shaped like]—peaches, corn, meat loaf,” says Oiler. “There is quite a variety.”

Residents’ reactions have been positive.

“During the training class, we select five residents and make their meal under the new guidelines. The staff then . . . gets to see the reaction on the residents’ faces,” Sanders says. “The residents no longer have to guess the identity of their meal. What motivates the staff are the positive reactions from the residents.”

“Since you ‘eat with your eyes,’ when you see something that actually looks like the real thing, it helps stimulate the appetite.”



Perry Village dietary staff members appreciated Will Sanders’ input during the Purée Creations training, saying it helped answer a lot of questions and showed them easier ways of working with the new program’s techniques. Sanders is a CURA Hospitality staff member.

Residents of *Perry Village*, where the training was held in April, were thrilled with the new style of food, says Milton Shepley, director of dining services.

“We had one resident who was concerned because she thought it was a regular piece of meat,” Shepley says. “We have two residents on puréed food whose spouses are residents here as well. [The spouses] were astonished at how it looked. One said it looked as good as what he had on his plate.”

Perhaps most important are preliminary results from a tracking system CURA implemented to measure the initial impact the program had on six residents. “Sixty percent of the residents had a positive weight gain. One resident went from needing extensive assistance at mealtime to being able to feed himself,” Sanders says. “They were eating better and getting more nutrients in them.”



Marguerite Shope, participating in the taste-testing during the Purée Creations training, was astonished at how much the food resembled its original form.

Diakon hosts legislative breakfast



For the second year in a row, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries recently held a legislative breakfast in the state capitol building in Harrisburg to help acquaint Pennsylvania representatives and senators with the organization and the various challenges it faces in the health care and social services fields. At left, the Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D., Diakon president and chief executive officer (left), talks with state Rep. Allan Egolf (R-86), whose territory includes Perry and Franklin counties.

Pennsylvania legislators visited with Diakon staff members during the agency's recent legislative breakfast, held to acquaint lawmakers with Diakon—which served some 50,000 state residents last year—and the issues the organization faces. Here, Garry Hennis, left, senior vice president for Diakon's Retirement & Health Care Services, and Tama Carey, vice president for Diakon's Continuing Care Retirement Communities, center, speak with Will Gabig (R-199), who serves Cumberland County.



Therapists find U.S. offers hope for future Continued from Page 1

“With the current situation in health care, recruitment extends beyond the typical. Many hospitals and health-care facilities are working with recruiters to find immigrants as well as using other non-traditional recruitment incentives,” she says.

At the time, two Diakon retirement communities—*Susquehanna Lutheran Village* in Millersburg and *Ohesson Manor* at Lewistown—were in dire need of physical therapists, says Angele Tran, Diakon's executive for rehabilitation services.

“Diakon's needs and the Gorskis' experience and desire to return to the states were a nice fit,” says Early. The transition didn't happen overnight, however. While the family's first contact with Diakon occurred in January of last year, they didn't arrive in the U.S. until summer.

“It was much harder to come into the states than it was in '95,” says Konrad. “It was difficult to set up. I had a problem getting a driver's license. Without a driver's license, I couldn't get a car or insurance. It took me almost all week to work through it, but everybody was very friendly about it.”

Nevertheless, “we are fortunate that our employee relations attorney has experience with recruiting in foreign countries, immigration requirements, and completing the necessary paperwork,” says Clark. “As a result, the process was more smooth and timely” than it might have been.

Konrad worried about how much English he would remember. In 1995, he had learned English to complete the American physical therapy exam. “I worried about the people not understanding my thick

accent, but we have connected. I love to talk with them and encourage them because it is easier to do the exercise that way.” He also enjoys joking with residents, because he believes smiles are a universal language.

But Konrad isn't the only one smiling. His wife says she has been elated since she began working at Susquehanna Lutheran Village.

“I have a wonderful co-worker, and I am very happy with work. That is what gives me energy each day,” she says. “Diakon has been so good to us.”

“The fact that the Gorskis were able to integrate into Diakon culture very smoothly and hit it off with staff at both facilities is wonderful. They are dedicated and have a strong commitment to residents,” says Tran. “We are extremely blessed to have them as a part of our family.”



Nicole Hahn (right), RNAC, and Marti Mosley react as the first hairs begin to fall.

Sometimes challenging people can get, well, a little hairy.

Or maybe not.

In May, Marti Mosley, *Susquehanna Lutheran Village* administrator, delivered on a challenge she had put before her staff. They had come through, and now she was doing the same. As she sat calmly in a chair, various staff members took turns reducing

Administrator's bold—ah, bald—move motivates staff

her shoulder-length hair to a “buzz.”

A few months earlier, Mosley had approached staff of the Millersburg village with a challenge: If they passed the next state Department of Health survey with flying colors, she would shave her head.

“I thought it was a bold thing that would get people’s attention,” says Mosley. “The stress level had been high preparing for the survey. I wanted to keep the focus on the effort, but make it fun as well.”

Mosley’s willingness to deliver on such a bold dare netted the response she was after.

“Part of it was to get people to ask questions about the process, so they would understand why it was so important. It did accomplish that,” she says. “We received no federal deficiencies and only a very minor

note from the state. That says a lot about our staff and the quality of care they provide.”

She adds, however: “I’m praying my hair grows very fast.”



Linda Straub, beautician, makes sure Marti Mosley’s haircut is even all around.

WISH LIST

The following Diakon programs can use your assistance! If you or your congregation would like to donate any of these items or provide funding for their purchase, please contact Diakon’s Office of Advancement at 1-888-582-2230, ext. 1219. Thank you!

Community Services for Seniors – Cumberland County

- New flooring in men’s restroom at Mechanicsburg Area Senior Center
- Easily moved podium with or without microphone
- Padded desk chairs with wheels

Cumberland Crossings Retirement Community, Carlisle

- New fitness equipment
- Furniture for nursing care center solariums
- Decorative borders for nursing care center resident rooms
- Enclosed glass display case for Assisted Living

Diakon Adoption Services, York

- Proxima projector
- Digital camera
- Digital camcorder
- Overhead projector & screen
- Recruitment posters and free advertising
- Birthday cards for children
- Bookstore gift cards
- Video-store gift cards
- Office desk and chair

Family Life Services – Capital Region

- Gift certificates for playroom supplies

- Disney videos (VHS) for waiting room
- Donations for families who need medications and cannot afford them
- Filing cabinets

Frey Village, Middletown

- Draperies and hardware for nursing center
- Electric hi-low beds
- Landscaping for courtyard area
- Garden benches
- Activity supplies (*paper, paints, glue, bingo prizes, and games*)

Perry Village, New Bloomfield

- Wall hangings for sub-dining rooms
- Tone chimes
- Digital camera
- Plants
- Activity supplies (*paper, glue and Bingo prizes*)

Refugee & Immigration Services

- Grocery store gift certificates
- Discount-store gift certificates
- Blankets, pillows, and towels

Susquehanna Lutheran Village, Millersburg

- Weights for restorative nursing
- Hi-low electric beds
- Wheelchair swing (*costs \$4,500; \$1,300 donated to date*)
- Special wheelchairs
- Sims-Weinstein filament kit
- Biofeedback machine

TresslerCare – Mechanicsburg

- Digital camera with docking station

- Disposable cameras with flash
- VCR/DVD player
- Proxima projector
- Bookstore gift cards

TresslerCare Wilderness Center

- Lumber & drywall or monetary donations to repair staff housing
- Men’s boots (*new or used sizes 9 ½ to 12; no steel toes*)
- Refrigerator for staff living area
- Room air conditioners and dehumidifiers
- Batteries (D, AA); Mag-light flashlights
- Undergarments: men’s boxers (M, L, XL) and women’s underwear (sizes 5, 6, 7)
- Gloves and hats
- Hygiene products (*toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, soap, small shampoos containers, towels, etc.*)
- Sponsorships for private referrals, specifically for families needing financial assistance.
- Course T-shirts for graduating participants (*sponsor cost per course is approximately \$120*)
- 25-inch television (*used is fine but with VCR hook-up*)
- Bibles for Bible study (*Zondervan Student Bible, \$25 each*)
- Monetary donations for resource library

Volunteer Home Care/Upper Dauphin & Schuylkill

- Volunteers needed in Upper Dauphin/ Millersburg areas

Judith Gutshall retires

Relationships and work make years fly by

Judith Gutshall was on her way to work when she heard of the opening. *Perry Village* was advertising for a bookkeeper.

Gutshall didn't waste any time applying for the position and before she knew it, she had begun a nearly 28-year career with an organization that held special meaning for the Perry County native.

As a child, Gutshall had lost her mother but continued to live in Perry County with her grandparents—on a farm that overlooked the *Tressler Orphans Home*.

"I could have been a child there, too, had I not had a family," she says of the children's home where many of her childhood friends grew up. "The kids went to the public school with us. We got close to them and got to know them."

Years later, when she landed the job with the same organization that had operated the children's home, Gutshall knew she was in the right place, beginning a career that ended this year with her retirement.

"I felt good about working for Tressler," she says of the organization that built Perry Village and whose ministries are now con-



Judith Gutshall, far left in second row, was among those recently nominated for a Diakon 2004 SERVICE award.

tinued through Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries. "I felt good about being in the county I was brought up in and being connected to the orphans home."

During her tenure with Perry Village, Gutshall never strayed from her role in finance, but that didn't stop her from witnessing many changes.

"Back then, you didn't have the security you do now. We had residents who could walk into town and go to the store," she remembers. As the nation's health-care system changed, however, residents' care needs became more and more intensive.

Changing technology also affected Gutshall's job. "From 1976 to 1988, we had no computer," she says. "In 1988 we got the first computer, and I started working on it. It was the only one in the facility."

Despite such changes—or maybe because of them—Gutshall says she only recently felt ready for retirement.

"I don't think with other jobs that you can get the satisfaction you do in a place like this," she says. "I've enjoyed the work and the people I've worked with. And I've really enjoyed the residents."

Program helps parents to PROSPER

Any parent who has an adolescent should PROSPER.

A maxim?

No, in this case, it's an admonition.

PROSPER—which stands for Promoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience—is a parent-training program. Enrollees say the skills they are learning are invaluable.

PROSPER "should be a requirement for anybody who has an adolescent," says Maria Reisinger-Metz. "It has helped us become more in tune with each other. It enabled us to communicate better. The program gave me a positive approach to dealing with kids' negative behavior. They still do the negative stuff, but my husband and I now know how to handle it."

The program, in which Diakon's *Family Life Services – Capital Region* joins other organizations to provide facilitation to promote strong families, just completed its second year serving sixth-grade children and their families in the *West Perry School District*.

The program's seven weekly sessions included free dinner and childcare. After the evening meal, participants were split into two groups.

"Parents went in one group and discussed communicating with kids," says Anne Leedy, Family Life Services director. "In the kids' group, they talked about self-esteem and getting along with others." Afterward, the two groups met to discuss issues such as problem solving and family meetings.

"The youth enjoy the activities, the interaction with their peers, and learning things about their parents they didn't know," says Becky Kaucher, PROSPER team co-leader. "The ultimate goal is to enhance their communication skills. We want them to conduct family meetings and choose things they can do together as a family that continue to build family strengths."

Family Life Services hopes to continue its efforts in the coming school year.

"PROSPER is grant-funded and the grant runs out at the end of this year," says Leedy, who believes the program's success will help gain new funding. "We are currently investigating grant opportunities so we can offer it again next school year."

Wilderness Center Expansion nears completion

People aren't alone in facing challenges. Organizations face them, too.

A major challenge for Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries was expansion of its *TresslerCare Wilderness Center* to accommodate services for at-risk youths and meet new state regulations.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, that challenge has nearly been met. With construction on the expansion project nearly completed, the center now boasts a new residential program for girls, a service for which county children and youth and juvenile probation offices had been asking.

The first referrals of girls began shortly after completion of the center's new residence hall in the fall. By early June, 22 girls had been enrolled in the residential program, a successful addition to the Wilderness Center's array of services.

"One young lady in particular, who was adjudicated delinquent, actively participated

in every component of the program, including individual counseling, educational and goals groups, and community service projects," says Deanna Davis, Wilderness School clinical director.

"Her family and her juvenile probation officer were both actively involved in her treatment, which was also a major influence in her success."

The center's capital campaign, *The Wilderness Challenge: A Chance to Succeed*, reached its initial \$2 million goal earlier this year although additional funds continue to be needed because of unexpected costs related to a wastewater-treatment system, required because the ground would not meet perk tests.

To date, the campaign has funded construction of a new residence hall, which allowed implementation of the residential program for girls, a classroom/gymnasium building, and a

state-of-the-art greenhouse, used both as part of the wastewater-treatment system and as base for a new horticultural program for at-risk youths.

The 5,000-square-foot gymnasium provides space for basketball, volleyball, and other indoor activities, says George Eckenrode, TresslerCare director of marketing.

"The space can also serve as a convocation center to hold Wilderness Challenge course graduations and other activities requiring a large indoor setting," he says, adding that there is additional room for academic services.

The Wilderness Center's four programs serve adjudicated delinquent and dependent youths from across Pennsylvania.

Donors interested in helping to meet the final stage of the center's capital campaign should contact Diakon's Office of Advancement at (717) 795-0470.

Wellness program puts focus on body, mind, spirit

Beth Bond is helping *Cumberland Crossings* residents to increase their focus on wellness, through a program on the "six

facets" of wellness: physical, nutritional, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

"The program encompasses a lot more

of the body, mind, and spirit connection, ranging from financial information to exercise," says Bond, wellness coordinator of the Diakon retirement community at Carlisle.

When the program began, it offered Tai Chi, the independent living pool program, and the Arthritis Foundation's aquatic exercise program. Offerings have since expanded to include massage therapy and twice-weekly exercises that work on cardiovascular strengthening, muscle tone, and balance.

"We've also offered a wellness speaker series on the six facets of wellness," says Bond, adding that interest is rising in membership in the Good Health Club.

"Anyone can be a member. The club has been established to set 'good health' goals while residents also earn points toward incentives. Points are given and prizes awarded for things like routine physician visits, participating in programs, activities and screenings, even wearing a seat belt."



Cumberland Crossings residents enjoy an aquatics exercise program.

Veteran attends D-Day anniversary

In September 1944, Irene Sauter arrived in France to serve her country. The retired lieutenant colonel recalls tending American soldiers in the ward and operating room at the 191st General Hospital on the outskirts of Paris.

Sixty years later, the *Cumberland Crossings* resident returned to France for the second time as a representative of the U.S. military and one of 100 veterans invited to the 60th anniversary of D-Day. Sauter and her fellow veterans were honored with the Legion of Honor medal during the multi-day festivities. “That was an experience of a lifetime,” she says.

“They got the red carpet out. We had the military and local civilians greeting us [when our plane arrived]... It was spectacular.”

During the next four days, the group visited a number of historic locations, including Normandy where President George W. Bush and France’s President Jacques Chirac thanked them for their service. “The next day we went to Arromaches,” remembers Sauter. “They had something like 150,000 people gathered for this ceremony. They had the heads of 17 countries, our president, and the queen—she was dressed in lavender. I was sitting about 50 feet away. It was fantastic.”

Sauter served in the military at a time women did not have a large presence. Those serving then were primarily nurses, she notes.

Today, Sauter empathizes with the troops in Iraq. After her experiences, she says, “I didn’t think there would be any more wars.”



Irene Sauter with Legion of Honor medal.

The following regional memorial gifts were received from January through May 2004. Diakon’s Lower Susquehanna Synod-based programs thank these donors for their generous gifts!

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Our apologies to Mr. and Mrs. Rice on the misspelling of their mother’s name in our last issue.