

DIAKON CONNECTION

SUMMER 2004

Ninety-one-year-old tackles challenge of rehab head-on

Dorothy Smith never imagined a stroll to her tomato plants would result in a life-changing event.

“Last summer, after checking on my tomato plants, I came up the patio steps and my shoe caught on my outdoor furniture. I fell and ended up fracturing my hip,” says Smith.

Hip fractures are, unfortunately, all too common for older persons, but the way the 91-year-old decided to take charge of her recovery is anything but common.

Following surgery and a short stay in the hospital, Smith became a resident of Diakon’s *The Pavilion at Saint Luke Village*, soon finding herself in therapy.

“I was in a lot of pain at first. In fact, I even cried, but I never said, ‘I can’t do this because it hurts me.’ I just kept at it, and the therapist

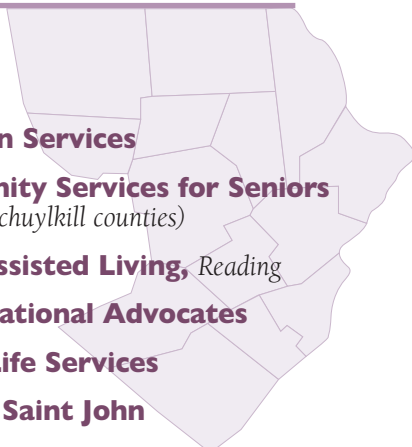
kept after me to continue to do what I was doing. Maybe I didn’t give up because I was an RN and knew what would happen if I did,” she recalls.

As she persevered, she became an inspiration to others.

“Not only did Dorothy not give up, but when she saw others struggling, she encouraged them to continue on,” says David Smith, village rehabilitation coordinator.

Mrs. Smith also displayed enthusiasm over rehabilitation techniques and equipment, says Jennifer Lucash, occupational therapy assistant. “When she first used the adaptive equipment to put her socks on, she was very excited and said, ‘Oh my word, who thought of such an idea?’” says Lucash.

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Adoption Services

Community Services for Seniors
(Berks & Schuylkill counties)

Caum Assisted Living, Reading

Congregational Advocates

Family Life Services

Hospice Saint John

Luther Crest Retirement Community, Allentown

The Lutheran Home at Topton

Luther Ridge Assisted Living, Pottsville

Lutherwood, Scranton

Pocono Lutheran Village,
East Stroudsburg

Pregnancy Services

RSVP Lehigh, Northampton, & Carbon counties

Saint Luke Village, Hazleton

TresslerCare Foster Care, Topton

Volunteer Home Care

Mrs. Dorothy Smith



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Tremont volunteer adds 'sunshine' to center

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.

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www.diakon.org

There is plenty of sunshine at the *Tremont Senior Center*—even on rainy days, perhaps because long-time volunteer Evelyn Mae Brown can light up a room.

“She’s sunshine,” says Robert Somers, another center volunteer. “She just makes you feel happy.”

For approximately 20 years, Brown has been volunteering her time, Monday through Friday, to help others. From washing dishes to packing meals-on-wheels lunches, she assists with various tasks throughout the center, sponsored by *Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries* in concert with the Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services.

“Evelyn never sits down, and we can’t get the dish cloth out of her hands,” says Kathy Leahy, program manager, senior centers. “She is very committed. We are blessed to have her here.”

Although the 89-year-old admits that she is “not much of a kid anymore,” she says she has no plans to put up her feet and relax anytime soon. “What else would I do if I weren’t here? Sit at home and twiddle my thumbs? I’d be crazy if I didn’t come here and help. It makes me feel good to help others, and I’ve made many friends by doing so.”

Members have a lot of fun together, she says. “I remember one time, another volunteer and I decided to throw a senior center picnic at Knoebel’s Amusement Resort.

We had our car loaded down so full of supplies, it could barely make it up the hill. No kidding, we had the trunk, back seat, and floor filled clear full.”

Whether throwing picnics or putting together soup fundraisers, Brown is a hard worker.

“We used to make so much pot pie that we’d fill all of our huge stainless steel pots,” she says. “By the time we were done, I didn’t know how we could put one foot in front of the other to get out the door.”

Brown also goes out of her way to help others, notes Leahy. “There is a young disabled man who comes here who cannot speak or hear,” she says. “Evelyn is the first to cut up his food and make sure his bread is buttered and he has a drink.”

It is that type of dedication that keeps the center running.

“Volunteers like Evelyn are extremely important,” says Leahy. “They keep the centers open. Without volunteers, we couldn’t afford to staff them.”

Volunteer David Stroup says Brown is certainly integral to the Tremont center: “She can’t be replaced, that’s for sure.”

Leahy agrees.

“We’ve all learned a lot from Evelyn—not just how to run a center, but lessons for life,” she says. “No matter what is happening, she shows you there is a sunny side to life.”



Janis Reed, left, joins her mother, Evelyn Mae Brown, during a birthday celebration.

Triumph over tragedy

“You can never forget tragedies, but you learn to live with them,” says a **Luther Ridge Assisted Living** resident.

Experiencing tremendous loss over her 90 years, M. Elizabeth—or “Betty”—Cain knows about heartache and hardship. “The last time I saw my youngest son was on his wedding day. He was only 23 years old. Shortly after he was married, he and my daughter-in-law died in a house fire,” she says.

Her heart was broken by the death of the youngest of her three children and his wife, but unfortunately the loss would not be her last. In fact, the event seemed to trigger a tragic period in her life.

“I had 10 funerals in four years. My son was the first, then I lost aunts, uncles, my brother, and the last funeral was that of my husband’s,” she says. Never ill a day in his life, he died of a sudden heart attack.

“I was only 54 at the time, and I wondered where I’d go from there,” she says.

Living in Deer Lake, Cain felt she had only one companion left—her dog.

“He was my best friend, but he got hit by a car. I was all alone then. I knew I was going to have to go back to work, so I wrote to Washington, D.C., to the Volunteers in Service to America,” or VISTA.

When she received word that the organization had accepted her application, she sold her house, put her belongings in her car, and headed for VISTA training in

Colorado. Although she didn’t realize it at the time, she says, she believes she was running away from her life.

In the process, however, she ran smack into a realization: “By helping others, I will be helping myself.”

Following VISTA training, she went to a Job Corps site in the midst of the Idaho wilderness. She enabled young men ages 16 to 21 to take their future into their hands by teaching them to read and write.

“The best thing I ever did was go in VISTA and help someone read and write,” Cain says. “Most of those boys were good kids, and they eventually worked at good jobs because they learned to read and write.”

With her one-year VISTA volunteer period fulfilled, she returned to Pennsylvania for a time, then moved to be with friends in Boise, Idaho. It was there that she met her second husband.

“We were married five years, and then he was killed in an auto accident. After that, I often said, ‘why me?’ But the Bible says you don’t get more piled on you than you can take.” Picking up the pieces of her life, she again relocated to Pennsylvania, where she once more found herself helping others.

“I heard on television that they were looking for Foster Granny volunteers to help with disabled individuals. I would go and work four to five hours a morning and feed the participants, push them in wheelchairs,



Betty Cain

and go to chapel with them.”

When she completed her service with Foster Grannies, she relocated to Reading, where her physician recommended she undergo angioplasty. Complications from the surgery, however, meant she couldn’t be alone, so she moved to Diakon’s Luther

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Rehabilitation makes move to assisted living possible *Continued from Page 1*

Described as a compassionate and extraordinary person with a great sense of humor, Smith obtained a nickname during her therapy visits. “She would call me ‘Trouble’ and I’d call her ‘Trouble’ back,” says Mary Beth Leshko, physical therapist assistant. “Dorothy is so pleasant and easy to get along with. She is a real kidder.”

Smith admits that humor helped her through recovery. “Those therapists would kid me a lot. We had lots of fun, which made therapy easier. I can’t say enough great

things about them.”

Meeting her therapy goals—including one to become sufficiently independent to relocate near her daughter, who was retiring in the Allentown area—would not have been possible, she says, without the support of the Saint Luke Village staff she encountered during her three-month recovery.

“I received excellent care,” she says. “The therapy is the best in the world. I had a hip suture a foot long and I never had any problems with it because the nurses were attentive.

They were all marvelous people.”

Currently living just miles from her daughter in assisted living accommodations at **Luther Crest**, a Diakon retirement community in Allentown, Smith has fond memories of Saint Luke Village.

“I made a lot of friends with the residents up there, and because I was in a nursing home, I was very close to the people who took care of me. I miss them all. They were just wonderful people who helped me to get back on track.”

Family Life Services retreat helps women focus spiritual connection

With the topic “Your unique spirituality,” Diakon’s *Family Life Services – Northeastern Pennsylvania* hit a home run with its annual women’s retreat.

“This year we were filled to capacity, and we had people on a waiting list,” says Louisa Weber, program specialist, of the annual event held at the Mariawald Renewal Center in Shillington. “The participants explored in what unique ways they connect to God. They also had help making a plan for how to engage in spiritual disciplines that address their unique inclination for connecting to God.”

Jane Williams, Ph.D., M.Div., associate priest for Christ’s Church in Reading, was the retreat facilitator.

“The group definitely knew Jane and came because of her gifts,” Weber says. “I think they really appreciated the mix of activities—speaker input, small group discussion, individual free time, ‘journaling,’ and Saturday movie night.”

The weekend began with participants completing a survey that helped them identify their personal worship style, as well as the style of their church. “It’s a really good start for people to begin to learn about themselves and their own spirituality,” says Williams.

For Susan Wambaugh, who says she attended the retreat to help find balance in her life, the survey was the first step toward helping her reach that goal.

“We put together an action plan for ourselves to recognize and cultivate the areas of spirituality that were most magnetic for us. And we put in place a plan to implement it. It wasn’t just a mountaintop experience,” she says of the retreat. “I came out with a clear idea of what to do, had already thought through what the first steps should be and how to go from there. It wasn’t just an isolated

event; it had tentacles reaching into my everyday life.”

Becky Price also found the retreat to be an eye-opening experience. “It was much better than I had hoped for. It really spoke to me personally,” she says. “There were many moments throughout the weekend when something seemed particularly directed toward me.”

Williams’ ability to inspire and challenge retreat participants also had an impact on Price.

“She challenged us to experience activities that were outside of our typical spiritual style,” Price says. “What I gained was an appreciation. It’s not that I’m going to have a dramatic change in the way I worship, pray, or participate in congregational activities, but she helped me understand the value behind appreciating other people’s styles.”

“It’s a really good start for people to begin to learn about themselves and their own spirituality.”



Ruth Rayna at keyboard.

There’s no ‘retirement’ for Luther Crest retiree

When visitors enter Ruth Rayna’s *Luther Crest* apartment, the first thing they notice is the energy emanating from the so-called “retiree.” With her phone in one hand and her datebook never far away, she moves from room to room and piano to computer, trying to maintain a sense of order in her busy life.

“I’m not sure what retirement is; I just moved my base location,” she says of her 1998 move to the Diakon retirement community.

Indeed, the 71-year-old still works full time as the director of music for St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Allentown and plays for all Luther Crest services, directs its choir, and teaches private piano lessons.

“I’ve been on the organ bench since I was

19. I’m used to doing it,” she says of her pace, admitting that she played at three weddings at Lehigh University during a recent weekend.

She does allow three days a week to attend an arthritis water-walking class at the nearby Rhodale Aquatic Center. “That’s one thing I can’t miss,” she says.

She’s also not letting technological advances pass her by, having purchased a computerized piano in the last year. With the help of her computer-savvy students and a willingness to learn, she has kept abreast of the latest computer software and hardware.

“Technology is going to permit me to make music for much longer than I would have thought—even 10 years ago,” she says. “It has given me a wonderful gift and ability to function.”



Hospice Saint John's Hazleton office, decorated for 25th anniversary.

At the end of each day, Punki Rusiloski believes she has gained more from the day than she has given.

"It's just that kind of job," says the clinical educator for Diakon's *Hospice Saint John*. "Hospice is about caring for others, but we get so much in return."

Sometimes, that care can take unexpected turns—such as requiring Rusiloski to face off against a groundhog—but that commitment to serve is the hallmark of Hospice Saint John, this year celebrating its 25th anniversary (*see the related TimeLines story on Hospice Saint John's history and name, beginning on the back page of Dialog*).

"The dedication and longevity of our staff are what have allowed Hospice Saint John to survive over the years, along with a supportive community," says Debbie Search, executive director of the program, which has offices in Hazleton, Pittston, and Allentown.

But offering service hasn't always been easy. "Initially, we had struggles paying for care," says Pam Thomas, director of the program's Wyoming Valley/Scranton office in Pittston. "That was before Medicare started reimbursing for services. "The original Hospice Saint John director even traveled to Washington to advocate for the Medicare hospice benefit."

Yet even after that hurdle was crossed, Hospice Saint John faced another challenge—one that continues even today.

"We sometimes see that patients and

Hospice Saint John's 25th anniversary Sometimes care means removing a groundhog

doctors are not receptive to hospice care early enough or that they do not understand what hospice can do for them. Sometimes they don't see a need until the very end," says Search.

"The doctor works with medical treatment, but we do much more than that. We also focus on emotional and spiritual needs and physical care, especially managing pain and symptoms that are difficult to manage. In addition, many don't realize that we continue to provide support to the grieving family after their loved one has died. The sooner we can get involved to make sure they are comfortable, the sooner we can improve their quality of life."

To combat that problem, the program implemented community-based education. "We have community liaisons who educate others on our services," says Search. "We also developed a range of services to help children deal with the loss of a loved one."

Because Hospice Saint John is not affiliated with a large hospital and because it serves people without regard to their financial resources, volunteers and donors have

been critical to its success.

"We've overcome many of our challenges through community support," says Rusiloski, who served as director for a number of years. "The community believes in us and numerous people are committed to our mission. That is something you can't put a price tag on."

Many may also believe that the care offered by Hospice Saint John is priceless.

Program staff members not only care for terminally ill patients and their families, but also often go beyond the call of duty. From a hospice nurse who cross-country skied a mile each way to reach a patient in the middle of winter to a hospice chaplain who performed a wedding ceremony for a patient, Hospice Saint John staff members have made a difference in thousands of lives over the last quarter-century.

Susan Lasecki, for example, once offered musical comfort to add to a patient's quality of life.

"He enjoyed listening to the sound of the organ and singing his favorite songs, so I would play for him when I completed

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Hospice Saint John serves numerous children through its bereavement camp.

Resident finds Topton her ‘answer’ for care

June 17 last year was a day of mixed emotions for Jean Noll. As she prepared for back surgery, scheduled for noon, her ailing mother passed away and her expectant daughter gave birth.

Noll was both joyous and sad.

“It was a rough day,” she says now. “I wasn’t too concerned about the surgeries because I’ve had others in the past. It was everything else that was on my mind.”

A lifelong resident of Berks County, Noll underwent surgery to help treat inflamed sciatic nerves and stenosis of the spine. Following her surgery, she chose Diakon’s *The Lutheran Home at Topton* for rehabilitation.

The choice came naturally. Her mother had received care on the campus and her sister-in-law, Jean Fox, had once been the

administrator of the campus’ Henry Health Care Center.

“Topton was my answer,” Noll says. “I have two daughters nearby and many friends around the area.”

While leaving the home in which she had lived most of her life was difficult, Noll continues to treasure her collection of porcelain “Mrs. Albee” dolls, earned over many years of selling Avon.

“I was an ‘Avon lady’ for 50 years,” she says. “I loved selling. I did it for so long that the people I sold to were friends, not customers. I’m really proud of my doll collection.” While she has survived the loss of her son and her husband, she says those many friends and family members have kept her company.

Still in therapy but “getting stronger,”

she hopes eventually to be able to drive again. While she depends on a walker and sometimes uses a wheelchair, long-distance walking remains a challenge.

“At first, I couldn’t walk at all,” she says. “The therapy here is excellent, and the therapists are so nice. They would tell me, ‘You work so hard.’ But there are so many things I want to do.”

Although she moved to Topton initially for therapy and settled comfortably into the Henry Health Care Center, Noll is today a resident of Topton’s Buehrle Center for Assisted Living. As she gained strength and mobility, the move made sense.

“I’m glad it was suggested to me,” Noll says. “I needed some place to go, but I also needed some help. It feels good to be almost independent again.”

WISH LIST

The following Diakon programs can use your assistance! If you or your congregation are able 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!

Caum Assisted Living

- Computer for residents
- Outdoor benches
- Television for public area
- Stand-up garden for outdoor use
- Cushions for outdoor furniture
- Six-disc CD changer to be used for “hall” music

Community Services for Seniors - Berks County

- Volunteers to deliver meals to homebound elderly.
- CD player to be used for exercise entertainment and musical activities.
- Video camera for special events at the centers.
- Small coolers for homebound elderly to hold delivered meals
- Sofa for center.

Diakon Adoption Services

- Proxima projector
- Digital camera and camcorder
- Overhead projector & screen
- Recruitment posters and free advertising
- Birthday cards for children
- Blank cards for children
- Bookstore gift cards (*to buy adoption book for child*)
- Video store gift cards
- Office desk and chair

Family Life Services – Northeastern Pennsylvania

- Thank you notes
- Marriage preparation books for couples participating in Marriage Prep program
- “Good Grief” books for pastoral care teams

Hospice Saint John

- Cotton sheet sets (*twin size – extra long*)
- Cloth under pads
- Ensure
- Hospital gowns (*male/female*)

- Weekly pill cases
- Sheepskins
- Toiletries (*talcum powder & liquid soap dispensers*)
- Baby wipes
- Baby monitors
- Blankets
- Children’s bereavement books
- Digital camera for wound-care patients
- Camcorder or data projector for PowerPoint presentations

Luther Crest

- Dining room chairs/tables for Health Care Center
- Funding for Health Care Center and Personal Care Garden/Courtyard
- Outside benches
- Furniture for guest apartments
- Bistro dining table/chairs

Luther Ridge Assisted Living

- Volunteers
- A “bear-proof” birdfeeder
- A ramp with grab-bars from back entrance to bird feeder
- Installation of automatic door on the enclosed porch
- Indoor putting green

Lutherwood

- Draperies
- Pool table cover (*community room*)
- Clocks for common areas
- Artwork for common areas

Pocono Lutheran Village

- Aquarium
- French doors for the dining room area
- Furniture for new activity room

Pregnancy Services

- Infant bottles/nipples (*new*)
- Diapers – infant and size one
- Baby wipes
- Formula – Similac Advance with Iron
- Diaper bags
- Disposable cameras with flash
- Picture frames
- Photo albums

- Infant bath sets/grooming sets
- Grocery store gift cards

Saint Luke Village

- Dining room draperies
- Resident room chairs
- Courtyard plantings
- Courtyard benches
- Prints for walls
- Wheelchairs
- Reclining shower chairs
- Digital camera for activities program
- Dementia Unit
- Television with VCR and a variety of videotapes
- Compact disc player and a variety of CDs
- Glider rocking chairs

The Lutheran Home at Topton

- Rock-n-Go wheelchairs
- Outdoor benches and patio furniture
- Specialty mattresses
- Hi-low electric beds
- Holiday/special event table linens
- Gas grills
- Aviary

TresslerCare Foster Care Services – Topton

- Rocking chair or glider rocking chair (*to rock infants*)
- Diapers—sizes 2, 3, 4, 5 and pull ups
- Baby wipes, diaper cream
- New car seats – infant and booster seats
- Color printer
- Digital camera to take photographs for “life books”
- Duffle bags
- Department-store gift cards
- New spill proof sip cups/bottles
- Baby shampoo, baby bath, nail clippers, thermometers, baby lotion

Volunteer Home Care and Ready Ride Transportation (Berks-Mont area)

- Volunteer drivers with weekday availability.

Volunteer Home Care (Luzerne County and surrounding region)

- Volunteers needed to transport clients to doctor and hospital appointments

Certification has lasting impact on retirement industry



The Rev. Thomas H. Reinsel, RHPF

Diakon's vice president for Church Relations.

The impetus behind that change has a lot to do with AAHSA and its Retirement Housing Professional certification, he believes. "What AAHSA wanted to do when it developed the certification in the late 1980s was provide something educational for people who were in housing, not nursing. Housing and hospitality are the bywords of what this certification is about."

Since AAHSA began the certification program, training has advanced to where graduates must understand the desire of the customer, who is buying a lifestyle, Reinsel notes.

"We began to introduce for the first time concepts like fine dining and a wellness philosophy, which includes fitness buildings, pools, workout rooms, spas—all those things have been part of the growing edge of what RHP has done for the industry," he says. "It is very resident-centered. We are trying to gear the concept to continually refine what the customer wants, and stay ahead of that wish list, yet be fiscally sound."

More and more organizations are buying into the RHP concept for their retirement communities, says Reinsel, including Diakon.

"Two of Diakon's values—stewardship and respect—fit hand and glove with the RHP certification," he says. "Everyone can gain from the fact that customer satisfaction and hospitality are where you need to be."

The recognition of this approach also played a part in AAHSA's turning the certification process over to the University of North Texas, Department of Applied Gerontology, in recent years. "The graduate school now conducts the training and grants the certification," explains Reinsel. "By next year, plans are to include it in the Ph.D. program."

Reinsel discussed the progress the certification has made and the significance of the credential to program graduates at AAHSA's 2003 annual meeting in Denver.

"I talked about the uniqueness of what the certification does for them as professionals," he says, pointing out that 1,300 people now hold the designation.

"Today, no matter whether you walk into a rental-assistance complex or into a very elegant resort living community, if the leadership team takes seriously the RHP certification you are immediately going to walk into hospitality and graciousness."

"We began to introduce for the first time concepts like fine dining and a wellness philosophy..."

The best continuing care retirement communities are now retirement "resort living" communities that focus on hospitality and graciousness, says the Rev. Thomas H. Reinsel, RHPF.

The Diakon staff member's knowledge of the retirement field and the changes it has undergone was shared with new graduates of the Retirement Housing Professional program during last year's national convention of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, or AAHSA.

"The model has changed from 'we have nursing and apartments and cottages' to 'we run a hotel and, by the way, there is nursing and assisted living available,'" says Reinsel,

Luther Crest receives ecumenical service award

Diakon's *Luther Crest Retirement Community* recently received the Lehigh County Conference of Churches' 2004 Ecumenical Service Award in recognition of the community's "commitment and enactment of ecumenical ministry to people in need."

Luther Crest residents and staff participate annually in the local CROP Walk for Hunger, support special Lenten and Advent giving opportunities, and donate weekly offerings

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Dianne Kareha, chaplain, right, shares a moment with Dorothea Haff, a former chair of Luther Crest's Spiritual Life Committee. Luther Crest received the Lehigh County Conference of Churches' 2004 Ecumenical Service Award given to organizations.

Regional events, in brief

Topton's Memory Garden dedicated



George Dorry, Jr., left, campaign leader for The Lutheran Home at Topton's Memory Garden project, speaks during the recent dedication ceremony for the garden.

The new garden offers two patios with a variety of trees, shrubbery, and flowers surrounded by connecting, lighted walkways. It features a statue of Christ in the meditation area, a water fountain, and an arbor with teakwood benches for residents and visitors to enjoy the area. A total of \$130,250 was raised to create the garden and establish a perpetual fund to ensure proper care for the area.



Passport to Europe

The Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D., Diakon president/CEO, right, presents gifts of appreciation to Pat Ward and Sharon Evans, co-chairs of Diakon's first Passport to Europe, an event benefiting Diakon's Hazleton-area programs. Passport to Europe raised more than \$46,000 to assist in covering the costs of uncompensated care for residents of Saint Luke Village; provide services to patients and families cared for by Hospice Saint John; and help to underwrite Volunteer Home Care services for residents of Luzerne and Carbon counties.



Benefactors' dinner

The 16th annual The Lutheran Home at Topton's Benefactors' Dinner raised more than \$221,000 to help provide services to children and families through Diakon's adoption, foster care, foster-to-adopt, and pregnancy services programs. In the photograph, Robert Danzig, retired CEO of Hearst Newspaper Group and a former foster child himself, signs one of his books for an attendee of the dinner, held near Reading. Danzig served as guest speaker for the dinner, held in May.

Bishop of Tanzania visits Topton

The Rev. Shandrak Manyewa, bishop of the South Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, and his wife, Miriamu, recently visited Diakon's The Lutheran Home at Topton through a companion synod program of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Their three-week visit to the United States included a stop in Topton to learn how social ministry is delivered in the United States. In the photo, Bishop Shandrak and Miriamu speak with Bishop David R. Strobel of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and his wife, Doris.



CEO's firsthand experience demonstrates value of employee assistance programs

A life-changing experience by its very nature teaches fundamental lessons," believes Michael Dooley, CEO of Kutztown Publishing Company, who describes what he learned a little over a year ago when his wife of nearly 30 years passed away.

"I chose to contact the people at our employee assistance program for help coping with the grief that goes with this type of an experience." Kutztown Publishing has an employee assistance program contract with Diakon's *Family Life Services – Northeastern Pennsylvania*.

For more than three years, in fact, the family-owned business has worked with Family Life Services, using the program in a variety of ways. "I've had situations with employees who have had difficulties of one kind or another. We've used it also where we've referred" employees who were having problems on the job, says Dooley, who believes the program is essential to the company's long-term viability.

"People have things that happen to them in life. Everybody does. Some of those can cause difficulties with the job. The choices are you can hire someone else or try to solve the problem, help the employee and, in the long term, help the company."

When Dooley called on the program himself, the firsthand experience gave him insight into how the program really works.

"It helped me put things in perspective. I could speak to somebody who had experience with other people who have had similar problems," he says. Losing a spouse "is so emotionally charged that it could certainly lead to all sorts of problems in the workplace and in life, if left untreated. In my case, I told my counselor she made an enormous difference in my life. She helped me cope and deal with something difficult. That was positive."

When Dooley first took advantage of the Family Life Services program, he met

with the counselor once a week. As she determined he was progressing, their meetings decreased to once a month, once every three months, and then finally stopped.

"One of the things I had a concern with was that the counseling would go on endlessly, and I wasn't sure how helpful it would be," he says of his initial hesitation. "I learned that the goal of counseling was to help the healing process begin and to keep it moving along."

The fact counseling was provided in a comfortable, professional environment was icing on the cake for Dooley.

"The staff were wonderful. I never felt I was on display. Everyone was very professional," he says, adding that he was so comfortable that he hasn't hesitated to suggest the service to others. "I recommend the staff at Family Life Services without reservation. In fact, I have done so on several occasions to friends who have faced similar circumstances."

Computers donated to Schuylkill centers

The new Schuylkill Regional Resource Center (formerly the Mahanoy City Senior Center) received 17 used computers from Air Products for use in senior centers throughout Schuylkill County. Schuylkill County Senior Community Resource Centers are a service of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries and funded under a contract with the Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services. Examining some of the laptop computers

are, left to right, Marie Beauchamp, Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services; Dave Myers, Air Products; Kathy Leahy, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries; and Mary Agnes DiCasimirro, site coordinator, Schuylkill Regional Resource Center.



Triumph . . .

Continued from Page 3

Ridge Assisted Living near Pottsville.

Not surprisingly, she is using her stay at Luther Ridge to help others.

"Betty shares her drive and determination with everyone," says Lloyd Wertz, director. "She always helps out when she can. She leads a lady who is blind through the facility to exercise classes and to meals, and she even takes her outside."

Although Betty Cain has experienced numerous tragedies throughout her life, they have led her to help others, believes Joann Mikos, activities director. "God always put her in the right place in life. She has definitely made lemonade out of lemons."

She has found strength to continue, she says, through her faith in God. "If there is one thing I learned, it is that you can live only one day at a time. You need to do the best that you can, because there are no guarantees in life."

Determination makes big difference in rehabilitation

When he first moved to Diakon's *Pocono Lutheran Village* in East Stroudsburg last November, Oscar Anderson relied on a wheelchair and his wife, Dorothy, to navigate the facility.

Today, with Dorothy still usually close at hand, Oscar counts only on a walker to get around. In their apartment, he moves about unaided.

Physical therapy and his determination made the difference.

Having had several "mini-strokes" and a serious fall, Anderson understood the challenges of remaining in the house in which he and Dorothy had lived and reared their children. Assisted living seemed to be their answer.

"We had a big home in New Jersey, and it was getting to be too much," says Mrs. Anderson. "We had lived there for 58 years. It was time for a smaller place, and we came to assisted living for the help."



Pocono Lutheran Village

By design, assisted living offers the opportunity for people to live on their own, but receive help when they need it. The Andersons found what they were looking for, and more, at Pocono Lutheran Village.

Shortly after their arrival, Anderson began therapy and regained some mobility. With a regimen of exercises to do, he made more progress but then seemed to lose interest, his wife says. "But after Easter, he was determined again," she says, "and got

back into it."

That extra burst of determination made the difference. Soon the wheelchair was gone. "I was so glad to get rid of it," he says.

Married 59 years, the couple displays devotion to each other as they talk and walk together. Anderson was a Merchant Marine during World War II and then a machinist and estimator, but is best known to other village residents and staff members for his elaborate woodcarvings. Many adorn his apartment; even more have been given as gifts to family and friends. From birds to boats and sailors to Santa Claus, the carvings are beautifully detailed and clearly reflect the pleasure the carver took in creating them.

The Andersons participate in many village activities, "to get involved with the people," says Mrs. Anderson. Traveling through the facility, they address other residents and staff warmly. Anderson, nodding toward his wife, who has hurried to assist another resident with a door, says, "She helps everyone."

The Andersons chose the Diakon facility after looking at options in both their home state and Pennsylvania. They are not far, they say, from one of their daughters and her family near Blakeslee, Pa. Other family members still in New Jersey visit often, as do old friends.

Yet the Andersons also have made many new friends. "We've met very friendly people here," Dorothy says. "Everyone is so nice."



Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Anderson

Residents play integral role in renovations

Aware of the need to exceed customer expectations, Diakon's *Luther Crest Retirement Community* is renovating areas for use by independent-living residents.

"The first phase, which we expect to complete by early fall, includes renovating the beauty salon, reorganizing the current laundry services area, and developing a cardio theater," says Jeanne Oski, executive director of the Allentown, Pa, community.

The beauty salon renovations include the addition of new entrances from independent-living accommodations, as well as from the community's health and personal care centers. The independent-living entrance will be accessible from the same corridor as the new cardio theater.

"This small fitness center will include new equipment such as a treadmill, steppers, and free weights," says Oski, adding that new carpeting, mirrored walls and mounted televisions will add to the room's appeal. "We also will hire a part-time fitness instructor to develop personal fitness programs for residents."

Residents also will enjoy new wall finishes and ceiling tiles in the corridor leading to the billiards area, which will be upgraded to a true billiards room with high paneled walls, seating, and lighting.

"Members of the billiards group met with us to share their needs for the room, as did a residents' decorating committee that was very involved in the design of the entire Wellness Center," says Oski. "This was a very important step in the process."

In addition to these changes, Luther Crest has updated its apartment accommodations. All one-bedroom apartments will now have walk-in showers, with larger units continuing to have a tub and a shower.

"Every bathroom will be upgraded as apartments turn over," Oski says. "We are doing them in groups so that we have apartments ready for immediate move-in."

Another new standard for one-bedroom apartments is the addition of a washer and dryer. "New residents will also notice upgrades to all patio doors, lighting, door handles, appliances, cabinetry, and carpeting."

Luther Crest award

Continued from Page 7

to various ministries in the Lehigh Valley.

"Luther Crest also hosts Diakon's *Hospice Saint John* volunteer training and a Moravian Theological Seminary-sponsored course on ministry with older adults," says the Rev. Dianne Kareha, chaplain. Residents and staff also serve as volunteers within congregations and civic organizations.

"Not only is Luther Crest a vibrant model of ecumenical community life, with many of its events open to the public, but it also provides a home for the Diakon-sponsored *Retired and Senior Volunteer Program*, whose volunteers contributed more than 91,000 hours in 2003," says Kareha.

Hospice Saint John

Continued from Page 5

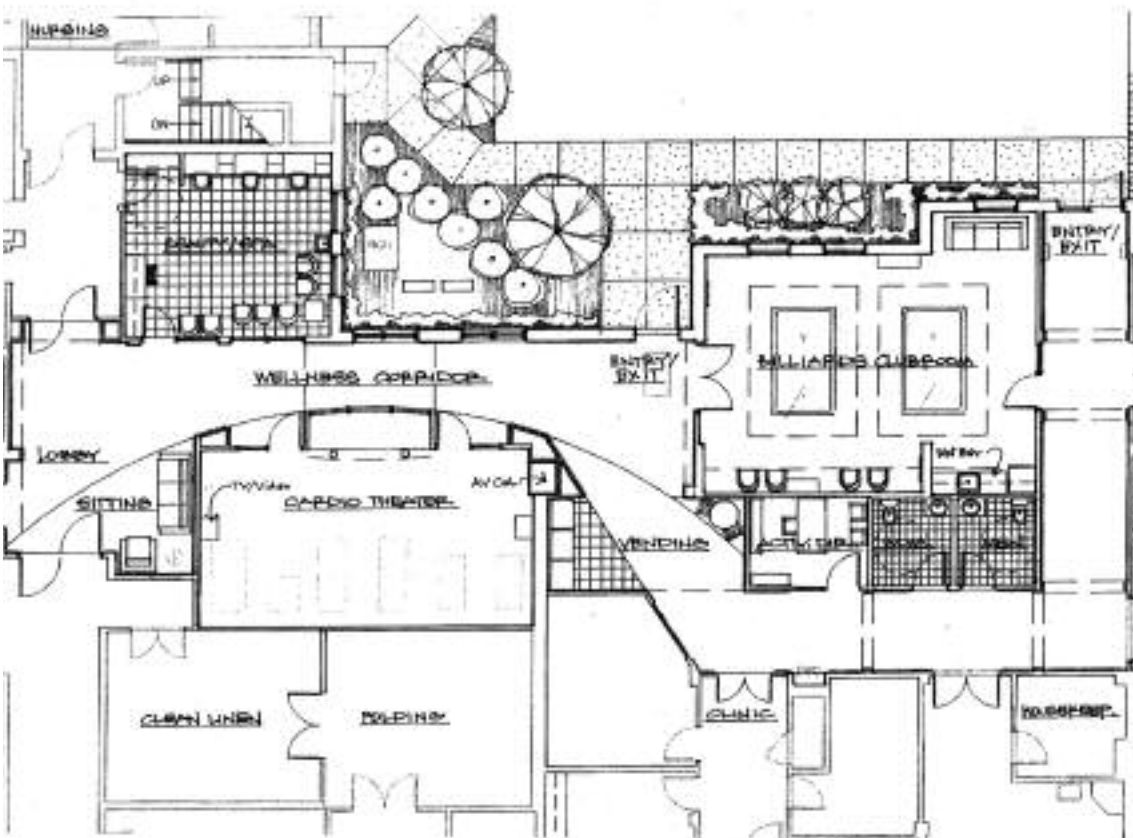
my nursing visit," says Lasecki, director of the program's Greater Hazleton Area office. "I was told that he looked forward to me coming just so he could hear his favorite music and sing along."

And Rusiloski will never forget one request she received.

"This happened when I was a hospice nurse," she says. "A man told me he couldn't pass in peace because there was a groundhog in his garage, and his wife was terrified of it. So I took a live-trap and caught it. After he died, we received a survey from his family that stated that one of the best things I did was remove the groundhog," she chuckles.

Hospice Saint John staff members are indeed special people, Search emphasizes. "They go the extra mile to make a difference and look for new ways to improve the care they give every day," she says.

"Although the name of our sponsoring organization may have changed over our 25 years," says Rusiloski, "there is a common thread. We've always been serving others. There is something very sustaining in the fact Hospice Saint John is now part of Diakon, whose very name means ministry of service. That name represents what we have been doing all these years. It is a great validation that God takes care of Hospice Saint John, and I am sure He will continue to do so in the years ahead."



Renovations Illustration

Diakon hosts legislative breakfast



Noting challenges

For the second year in a row, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries recently sponsored 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, Mark Pile, Diakon executive vice president and chief operating officer, listens to Rep. David G. Argall (R-124), right, majority appropriations chairman. Argall's territory includes Berks and Schuylkill counties.

Discussing senior issues

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. Below, Tama Carey, Diakon's vice president for Continuing Care Retirement Communities within the agency's Retirement & Health Care Services division, center, and Garry Hennis, right, senior vice president for Retirement & Health Care Services, speak with Rep. Paul W. Semmel (R-187), whose territory includes Berks and Lehigh counties.



Auditor general

Linda Ciampi, Diakon's senior vice president for Congregation, Children, and Family Services, speaks with state Auditor General Robert P. Casey, Jr., at Diakon's recent legislative breakfast. Ciampi oversees such programs as adoption, foster care, hospice services, adult day care, and community-based senior services.

Artist's work continues to draw attention

During the 21 years that *Luther Crest* resident Erma Frey taught blind and visually impaired elementary students, she continued to develop the artistic talents first revealed in her teens.

Years later, macular degeneration brought her a similar impairment, ending her painting career. Her art, however, continues to draw attention.

In the past, she says, summer breaks were spent taking art classes and perfecting the use of watercolors and pastels. "My husband and I traveled a great deal. I took slides and painted from them," she remembers. "Others I painted on the spot."

When Frey stopped teaching, she "got down to business" with her art. She appeared in art shows; won local, state, and national prizes; and sold hundreds of paintings.

"When people bought one, they bought another," she says, adding that her artwork hangs in such locations as Lehigh Valley

Hospital and the offices of *The Morning Call*, as well as in schools and many private homes.

When she reached her 70s, however, her ability to paint began to suffer as the effects of macular degeneration took their toll. "It started slowly, but I haven't been able to paint since I moved here," she says of her relocation to an apartment in *Luther Crest's* personal care accommodations. "I had a lot of things in my mind, so many slides I wanted to work on. But with macular degeneration, it's not possible."

Although Frey hasn't painted in recent years, her art remains popular. In fact, *Luther Crest* recently submitted two of her paintings for consideration by the combined organization of the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. The combined organization is seeking artwork for its new Washington, D.C., office, a project implemented to

recognize artists living in accredited facilities and to increase public awareness of their contributions.



Erma Frey with some of her many paintings.

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