

Rehabilitation services aid those of all ages

When you speak of rehabilitation in a nursing-care facility, older persons come to mind. But that's not always the case.

The Rev. James Penica stayed at *Perry Village* in New Bloomfield, Pa., for rehab after an accident shattered his elbow and foot and cracked his pelvis in two places.

The 48-year-old pastor of Hilltop Christian Church in nearby Newport chose Perry Village because he was familiar with staff and residents, having visited regularly to meet with church members.

"It was six miles from home, easy for my wife and kids," the pastor says. "I always enjoyed being there."

For two months Penica lived at Perry Village and worked daily with members of the rehab staff. "Therapy was wonderful," he says. "Some of the nicest people I have met have been therapists."

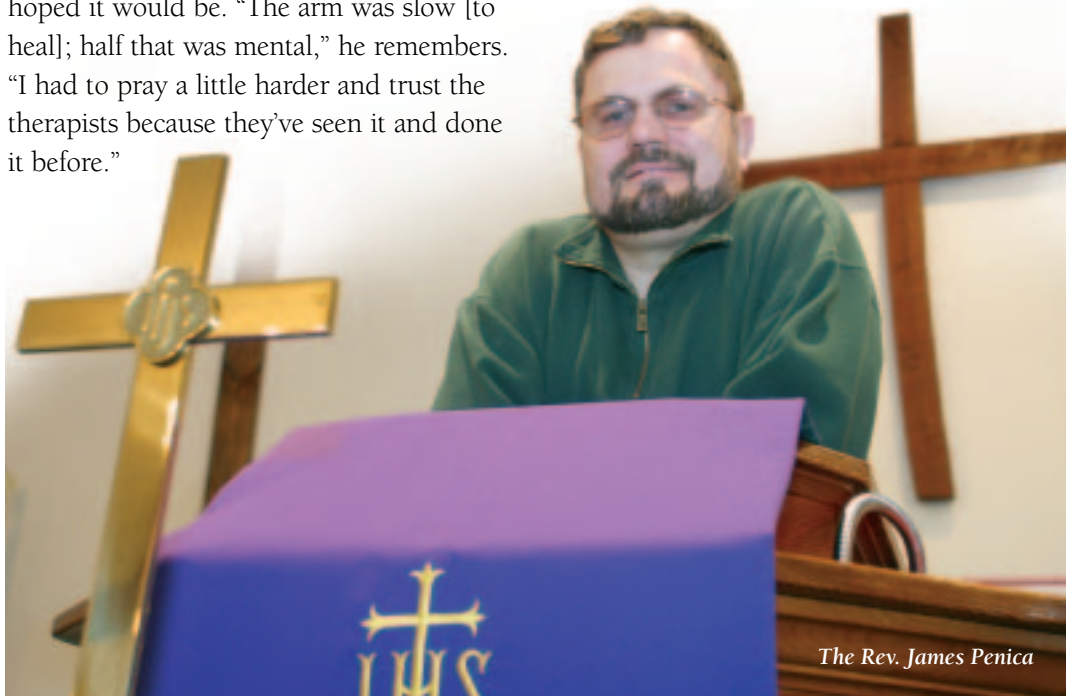
While he walked two months earlier than his doctors expected, the progress with his arm was not as rapid as he had hoped it would be. "The arm was slow [to heal]; half that was mental," he remembers. "I had to pray a little harder and trust the therapists because they've seen it and done it before."

When he first arrived at Perry Village, Penica couldn't dress himself or pull the foil off his coffee creamer. "By the time I left, my arm had 30 percent of movement and, my foot, maybe 50 percent," he says.

During his rehabilitation, his ability to cover for Perry Village Chaplain David Peterson came as a welcome diversion. "I could talk and turn the pages with my good hand and that was all that really mattered," he says, laughing. "It was the best of times, the worst of times. It was the worst of times physically. It was the best of times getting to learn how residents progress" in rehabilitation.

Thankful for the abilities he has reclaimed since having stayed with Perry Village, Penica says he can rotate his hand from palms down to thumbs up. "I probably lost half the motion of my hand," he says. "I just thank God that I can use a napkin and eat a burger with two hands!"

See related story on Page 4



The Rev. James Penica

Adoption Services

Family Life Services (*Tressler Counseling*)

Frey Village, *Middletown*

Perry Village, *New Bloomfield*

Refugee & Immigration Services

Senior Centers (*Cumberland County*)

Susquehanna Lutheran Village, *Millersburg*

TresslerCare

Volunteer Home Care

HEADLINES

New executive director

values Diakon's mission 2

Trinity's quilts

warm adoptive children 3

Wilderness Center

volunteers have impact 3

'Love Bugs'

invade Millersburg village 4

Program helps abusers

make right 'Choices' 5

Perry PROSPER

promotes strong families 6

Village creates

wheelchair-height garden 7

Executive director attracted to Diakon's mission and values



Chris Dear

After spending years as a nursing home inspector with the Ohio Department of Health, Chris Dear knew it was time for a change.

"I thought I could do more for the other 'side,' so I obtained my administrator's license and I have been doing that ever since," says Dear, recently appointed executive director of Diakon's **Susquehanna Lutheran Village** in Millersburg.

He made the change in 1985 and has held administrator positions at a number of nursing facilities since then. He joined the Susquehanna Lutheran Village staff in September, after confirming the "good things" he had heard about Diakon.

"I liked the mission and values. It is everything I expected it to be," he says.

Dear also enjoys the rural area in which SLV is located and where he makes his home during the week. Every weekend, however, he makes the more-than-two-hour commute to his family and other home in Altoona.

"When we moved where we are now, it was our seventh move and my wife said that was it," explains Dear, adding that his

children and grandchildren are nearby. "For years I left Sunday night and got home Friday, as a regional administrator responsible for facilities between Connecticut and North Carolina. You get used to it."

Dear has focused his initial efforts on enhancing services and building communications among village staff. "It is a real good facility," he says. "Very good staff."

Of course, village residents remain paramount. "That is the way to get back to center—go out and greet the residents and remember what it's all about."

Iraqi refugee

Continued from Inside Back Cover

He has supported the recent war in Iraq. Thinking of the brother and sister who remain in northern Iraq, he says that, "We want to know that the future can be better than today. We don't want another dictator. We can get our freedom back, get our dignity back. We don't want any more suffering."

Abdulqadir remains committed to reaching his goal of obtaining a degree and U.S. citizenship. "I can be part of my old country. I think I could be part of two worlds," he says. "Not a lot of people get that."

His dream would not have been possible without Diakon's Refugee Services. "Whatever question we had, they tried to help us—finding a place to live, finding a job, directing us to education. We couldn't be here if not for them. They represent the good will of the American people."

Admissions crisis

Continued from Inside Back Cover

"While we understand the need for increased security, only those of 'special humanitarian concern' have historically been approved for admission. Generally, this has meant refugees who have spent a long time in limbo with no other solution in sight, refugees at special risk of forcible return, and refugees with family members already in the United States. Government policy changes are affecting the arrival of even those persons," he says.

Refugee Services staff members ask concerned citizens to write legislators to renew America's long-standing commitment to the world's displaced. More information on contacting senators and representatives, as well as a sample letter, can be found on Diakon's Web site, www.diakon.org.

Dialog readers may also contact Dudley at (717) 795-0378.

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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Quilts warm children to new families

When the Women of the ELCA from Trinity Lutheran Church in Camp Hill, Pa., donated two dozen handmade quilts to *Diakon Adoption Services* last year, they could not have imagined the joy their hard work and thoughtfulness would bring to those on the receiving end.

“The two little girls that I gave them to were just beside themselves,” remembers Cheryl Drake, adoption case manager. “They are handmade. They are beautiful. The families who have received them have been very appreciative.”

When the Women’s Circle Group presented the quilts to Adoption Services, they included a card with each quilt providing details about the person who made it.

“My first thought when we got them was how best to use them. What would be most within the intent of those who had done the work?” says Ramona Hoyle, director of Adoption Services in Maryland. “We decided

to use them as gifts at adoption-finalization hearings.”

The quilts, adoption staff members agreed, are wonderful symbols of home and permanence, making them an appropriate way to mark the occasion.

“It is a nice gift and a nice symbol,” Drake adds. “You kind of think of quilts, families, home—all those things are conjured up” at the finalization.

Home was exactly what Kelly Schmidt thought of when her newly adopted daughter, Kacee, received her quilt.

“I was totally surprised,” she says of the country patchwork quilt. “My family is from West Virginia, and my grandmother and great-grandmothers made quilts like that. It was such a rush, an heirloom type of gift. It brought back all those memories.”

Although Kacee’s quilt adorns her princess bed, the entire family enjoys the gift. “You really don’t get quilts these days.

People don’t take time to make them,” she says. “It was more like a family gift.

Everyone thought it was such a wonderful thing that they did.”

Leena and Alisha Sharif of Camp Hill enjoy the quilts they received.



TresslerCare Wilderness Center volunteers have lasting impact on youths’ lives

Mike Hunter has building in his blood. With his father and grandfather both builders, “it just filtered through the family,” says the 51-year-old Diakon facility-management staff member. “They were great role models.”

Hunter carries on his family’s tradition of positive role-modeling at the *TresslerCare Wilderness Center* near Boiling Springs, where he volunteers to teach a wood-shop class to adjudicated delinquent or dependent boys enrolled in the center’s residential program.

On the afternoons he’s there, Hunter and the youths build various wood projects, such as storage shelves and jewelry boxes. But that’s not the only thing he’s helping them to build.

“I strongly believe building projects also build minds,” he says. “It is unique because as you are working, you can work in positive conversation. It is just amazing the impact you can have on some of the kids.”

Hunter was working with youth pro-

grams long before he became a Wilderness Center volunteer. “I taught at the Harrisburg Steelton Highspire Vo-Tech from 1978 to 1993,” he says. “When I retired, I got involved in an AmeriCorps [YouthWorks program that Diakon administered], which dealt with youths from 17 to 24 who were at risk. I was construction director.”

Hunter’s focus on helping young people stems from his belief that everyone should give back to society.

“I think there comes a point when you can’t suck everything in—you have to give something back. Working with youth is one of the gifts I have,” he says. “We’re all going to get old one day and we should have good products around to take care of us.”

More programs that focus on developing our youth could help society to reach that goal, according to Hunter.

“There is no such thing as having enough [youth programs]. That is what is wrong with the streets today. [Children]

want to wake up to something; be able to go to something,” he says. “Believe me. Youth programs work.” *Please turn to Page 6*



Mike Hunter
Photograph by Michael Fernandez, courtesy The Patriot-News.

Woman makes ‘motivated’ recovery in Frey rehab program

When Mary Simmons was admitted to *Frey Village* in Middletown for rehab in the spring of 2002, she had just completed a four-and-one-half month hospital stay, she had multiple medical issues, and she needed a lot of assistance with mobility.

Village therapists began working with her, but her rehabilitation was interrupted when she was readmitted to the hospital for another surgery.

“When she came back to us, she had lost everything she had gained previously,” explains Bill Bradley, physical therapist. “She had to fight her way back to where

she was before so she could continue to make progress to be able to go home.”

With the help of her occupational therapist, Simmons focused on regaining her ability to do the things many of us take for granted—bathing, dressing, and getting in and out of bed. “We had to help her with 75 percent of her care,” says Autumn Kingsboro, occupational therapy assistant. “She could only use a wheelchair, and her balance was very poor.”

Despite her challenges, Simmons began to improve. “It was slow and steady,” says Kingsboro. “With her condition, it took longer than for someone without so many

complications,” but by October she was ready to be discharged.

Mary Simmons was now able to walk on her own with the use of a cane, bathe and dress herself with some help, and eat normally.

“We were both surprised and pleased with the progress that she made. When somebody gets to a cane level from a dependent level, that is huge progress,” says Kingsboro. “She was very motivated to get back home. And she had inner motivation from her religious beliefs.”

That motivation—along with Frey’s rehabilitation program—made the difference.

‘Love Bugs’ invade Millersburg village

Every May there is an air of excitement in the halls of Susquehanna Lutheran Village, Millersburg—an excitement that takes the form of laughter and giggles as fifth-graders from neighboring Lenkerville Elementary School visit with village residents.

For nearly 30 years this phenomenon linking friends generations apart has opened the children to new experiences, formed lasting relationships, and planted the seeds for future careers.

“The ‘Love Bugs’ program was developed by a teacher and the assistant administrator in 1984,” remembers Anita Lauver, admissions coordinator, who helped manage the program in its earlier years. “It actually is in the fifth-grade curriculum” at Lenkerville Elementary.

Today, students participating in the program visit the village three times a week for one-and-a-half hours. “Because there are 90 students, we split it up and every group gets to come over six to eight times during the month,” says Caroline Bingaman, who is activities director and now coordinates the program. “They buddy up with a resident, take them to group activities, play games, and visit with them.”

Before the students first come to the village, Bingaman visits the school to discuss the program.



A “Love Bug” from prior years.

“We talk to the kids about what to expect at a nursing home, our rules and regulations, and we give them suggestions on how to interact with residents,” she says. “They aren’t afraid. They embrace it. They are very well-behaved and polite.”

Miranda Hoover, the village’s infection-control nurse, was in fact a former Love Bug herself.

“It was exciting to come and see what happened here. You don’t really get to do a lot of field trips like that in fifth grade,” she says. “It was part of the many experiences that led me to the geriatric population. I ended up working here in high school and now I have been working here for 10 years.”

Hoover is one of many children who were similarly affected by the program, Lauver believes. “In the days I heavily participated, we got a lot of children who would come back and volunteer. We had children who would ride their bicycles here in the summer because they had gotten close to residents,” she says. “Some kids came back as volunteers in high school and later went on to health-care careers.”

The program has likely had an impact beyond the upper Dauphin County region, the result of attention the program has received.

“Facilities as far away as Alaska have sent inquiries to SLV asking how to get the program running at their schools,” she says. “It is a quality, well-developed program that needs good people to keep it going. It wouldn’t still be going if people weren’t interested.”

Counseling program helps offenders 'unlearn' abusive behaviors

For more than six years, *Tressler Counseling and Education*—now called *Family Life Services – Capital Region*—has been chipping away at the repetitive cycle of domestic abuse.

Referred by courts in Cumberland and Perry counties, the offenders are enrolled in Choices, a 26-week educational and counseling program based on a curriculum developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minn.

"This is the best tool we've seen," says Anne Leedy, Family Life Services program director, adding that it is also offered by Lutheran Social Services in York. "It has been used nationwide to work with domestic violence programs."

The Diakon program includes both educational and experiential components and consists of four individual counseling sessions and 26 group sessions. "We teach skills such as anger management, conflict resolution, how to take a 'time out,' and assertiveness," explains Leedy.

The program also identifies the choices men must make in order to become non-violent.

OF NOTE

Tressler Counseling & Education—now Family Life Services – Capital Region—was recently awarded a \$61,568 grant by the Carlisle Health and Wellness Foundation to be able to offer scholarships for those who cannot afford Choices' services.

Others pay for the service on a sliding fee scale based on income.

Along with Domestic Violence Services of Perry and Cumberland Counties, Family Life Services also provides community education programs for the victims of abuse.

"We provide hope for abused women by providing them with counseling after they leave a shelter," says Anne Leedy, program director. "We are trying to address the needs of the whole family."



"Men who are abusive have learned the tactics that are involved in controlling their partners," says Leedy. "Because these tactics are learned, they can be unlearned."

One of the challenges the program has faced is making certain the courts understand the benefits of treatment, so that participation is mandated and offenders face consequences if they don't cooperate. "There needs to be an appreciation that this is a serious problem," she says.

The seriousness of the problem is underscored by statistics. In one area county, more than 30,000 of the 911 calls in 2000 were domestic violence-related. "Domestic violence offenders need to get a little more heat to get the services they need," says Leedy. "They are very good at minimizing their behavior."

As of early April, nine men were enrolled in the program. Following an evaluation at the conclusion of their treatment, they will either be discharged or recommended for another round of treatment.

"We do see positive outcomes," Leedy adds. "For guys who are catching on better than others, the nice thing about group counseling is that they confront each other about their behavior."

WISH LIST

The following Diakon programs can use your assistance! If you 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!

Adoption Services, York

- Proxima (\$2,000)
- Digital camera (\$400 - \$500)
- Digital camcorder
- Overhead projector & screen
- Office sign (\$500)
- Recruitment posters and free advertising
- Photo albums and scrap books

Frey Village, Middletown

- Draperies and hardware for nursing center (\$10,000)
- Electric beds (\$5,000 - \$25,000)
- Landscaping for courtyard area (\$5,000)
- Garden benches (\$500 each)
- Activity supplies (paper, paints, glue, bingo prizes, games, etc.)

Perry Village, New Bloomfield

- Standardized wheelchairs
- Extra-wide wheelchairs
- Alternating pressure relieving mattresses

Refugee & Immigration Services

- New or used in good condition:
- TV (cost to purchase \$75)
- Vacuum cleaner (cost to purchase \$100)
- Telephone (cost to purchase \$25)
- Clock radio (cost to purchase \$20)
- Pots and pans (cost to purchase \$35)

TresslerCare Wilderness Center,

- Boiling Springs, Pa.*
- Gas range/oven
- Lumber & drywall
- Entertainment center for information/learning center
- Hiking boots (men's sizes 9-12)
- Full-sized refrigerator

Family Life Services – Capital Region

- Children's videotapes
- Paper for children's drawings (large sheets)
- Gift certificates or monetary donations for playroom supplies
- VCR tape re-winder (\$15)

Volunteers *Contd. from Page 4*

Curtis Smitz, another Wilderness Center volunteer, agrees.

“If you can reach just one kid, the influence that you can have for good and positive things in that guy or girl’s life will be eternal. That is really why [I volunteer],” he says.

For close to a year, Smitz has been leading a voluntary Bible study class for youths in the center’s residential program. A long-time volunteer Sunday school teacher and senior high school hall monitor, Smitz sees the opportunity to head the Wilderness Center’s bible study class as a promotion.

“I look at it that way because [until this time] I have been instructing kids who have been church-ed. A lot of these guys have not been [church-ed],” he says. “Reaching them for Christ and allowing God to work in their lives and change their lives around for his Glory is my whole goal.”

Smitz and Jim Koontz, a TresslerCare case manager who represents the center during the weekly lesson, found each other by chance. A fellow church member told Smitz about the Wilderness Center and suggested volunteering.



Curtis Smitz

“I thought it was a really neat idea to work with troubled youth. Fortunately, God couldn’t have timed it any more perfectly,” remembers Smitz, who says he had just wrapped up a Bible study ministry at a nearby church. “That left me free to volunteer. I looked [the Wilderness Center] over, thought about it, prayed about it, and called Jim.”

Smitz, who has been teaching teens since the early ’80s, leads the hour-long

Bible study every Wednesday evening. “Whenever a troubled teen meets Christ and God changes his life around, we have a better community, a better state. We will have a better nation. We will have stronger families.”

Smitz sees the youths enrolled in the Wilderness Center as diamonds in the rough, who have real leadership abilities.

“If we can just get through that rough surface . . . to their potential,” he says, “we can build leaders for tomorrow.”

FLS program seeks to promote strong families

Twenty Perry County families are now better prepared to deal with the myriad issues families face today, thanks to a program for sixth-grade children and their families in the West Perry School District designed to promote strong families.

Diakon’s *Family Life Services—Capital Region* (formerly *Tressler Counseling and Education*) partnered with PROSPER (Promoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience) to offer the program.

“Our team, which includes school leaders, Cooperative Extension staff, parents, community leaders, students, and health and social service providers, works in cooperation with Penn State University to bring this free program to Perry County residents,” says Anne Leedy, MS, LPC, program director.

Funded by a federal grant, the program provides group workshops to parents and

children on such topics as substance abuse and emotional and behavioral problems. The first seven-week series ended in March. “We had three counselors working in partnership with school counselors at Carroll Elementary and Blain Elementary,” Leedy says.

The evening sessions were held weekly and included a free meal, provided by the Penn State Extension Service. “Parents then went in one group and discussed communicating with kids,” says Leedy. “In the kids’ group, they talked about self-esteem and getting along with others.”

The two groups then came together to discuss such concerns as problem solving and family meetings.

“We saw a lot of families of divorce and saw some improvement with their communication. Even though one family was divorced, both the mother and father came together with the child to do this,” says

Leedy, who hopes the positive response will promote even better attendance at the fall series.

Program evaluations indicate the students recognized changes in their behaviors and attitudes following the program. “I appreciate the things my parent does for me,” noted one respondent. “I understand the values and beliefs my family has.”

Parents also recognized the program’s impact and reported taking more time to do fun activities together as a family, scheduling regular times for homework, and explaining the consequences to their children if they do not follow their rules concerning alcohol use.

In addition to brush-up sessions that Family Life Services will conduct with program participants, PROSPER will conduct random evaluations at three and six months to determine if families are still using the techniques and skills they learned.

Frey Village Flowering bulbs create interest in wheelchair garden

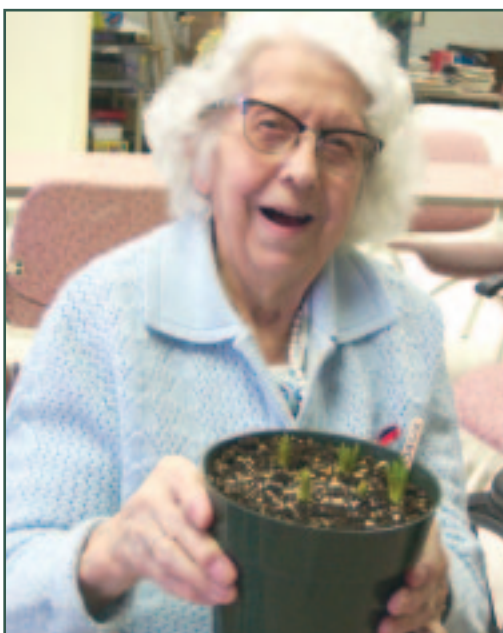
When Susan Crossley saw the pleasure nursing-center residents gained from caring for plants in their rooms, she knew she was on to something.

The *Frey Village* activities director was inspired, too, by how frequently residents came to the activities room to see what was blooming among daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips that brightened the area. Soon, she was researching gardening options for those with physical challenges.

"I found a company that makes raised garden-bed kits, 22 inches high, the height necessary for those in wheelchairs. The kits are made of cedar so they won't rot and there is no danger from chemicals associated with pressure-treated wood. I decided that if we were going to do it, we were going to do it the right way."

Crossley began looking for help. "I solicited local churches and men's groups for help. I needed labor to tear up the turf and lay the wheelchair pads down," she explains. "I also had a gentleman build an arbor so I could run electricity and water to the garden."

With as many as 38 nursing and assisted-living residents involved in the fun, Crossley had them planting cucumbers, zucchini,



Frey Village resident Helen Saul shows the results of bulbs she's planted in preparation for the village's new wheelchair-height garden.

carrots, tomatoes, and sweet peas. "The enthusiasm was absolutely fantastic," she says. "There is a great sense of satisfaction in growing your own salad."

Horticultural efforts are actually very therapeutic, she explains. "If you look at the average American household, 84 percent have some sort of gardening they are involved with around the front beds, in the vegetable

garden, or with indoor plants. A lot of residents completely lost that recreation."

Now, many note that when they are involved in gardening, they don't notice aches and pains as much. One garden-group project—dish gardens—even helps to promote self-esteem.

"Each week someone brings his or her dish garden down to the weekly garden group to show them off. We compare the progress of the gardens, talk about different growing conditions, and learn from one another," says Crossley. "The wheelchair garden is the outdoor extension of this project."

Of course, the wheelchair garden will require continued plantings, trimming, and weeding. "Elbow grease and labor are going to be my primary needs," she says. "We are holding bake sales to raise money to buy the beds and foundation plantings, electrical work, and so on."

The residents, she adds, do some of the baking through the village's cooking club and also handle the bake sales from collecting cash to helping price and bag baked goods.

"That truly makes this their project—and they are really excited."

Perry Village teams with local school to help students build confidence

Ellen Shaeffer hopes that with the help of *Perry Village* and other local businesses, her students will learn that they can meet their goals.

Shaeffer recently joined forces with Perry Village in a state-funded program called Jobs Encouraging Social Skills (J.E.S.S.). "My main focus is to teach my students proper social skills so they can hold a job," Shaeffer explains. "They are very capable of being trained, but sometimes don't have the confidence to seek help."

Approximately 16 children, ages 14 to 19, are participating in the program that has them working as Perry Village volunteers two times a week.

"I am working with the teachers to set vocational goals and also evaluating the students' progress," says Rhonda Snyder, Perry Village activities director. "We have participated in a program similar to this with West Perry High School, but on a much smaller scale. The students who participated at that time are now working in the community."

The students assist with transporting residents, lead simple exercise groups, and help out on outings. "I was looking for businesses to provide different opportunities for the students," says Shaeffer. "Perry Village provides the social aspect that is very fearful for my students. I want them



Students take part in village exercises.

to develop that confidence to know that they can do whatever they want."

Students participating in the program are required to complete a daily journal and a self-evaluation on how well they believe they are reaching social-skills goals. "I'm hoping they can see it on paper," notes Shaeffer, "and say, 'Yeah, I did it!'"



Craig Smith, TresslerCare executive director, unloads child carseats purchased through a donation from CCRX, Inc. The booster and infant seats are being given to foster parents in the program's Mechanicsburg and Topton locations. A new Pennsylvania law requires younger children to be restrained in a booster seat.

SERVICE-TO-DATE

Each year, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries touches the lives of thousands of persons throughout the Lower Susquehanna Valley. As of the end of March, the number of persons served regionally totaled more than 2,500.

Adoption Services, York
75 families (all of central Pa.)

Community Services for Seniors
913 persons

Family Life Services
(formerly Tressler Counseling)
564 persons

Frey Village
251 persons

Perry Village
356 persons

Susquehanna Lutheran Village
232 persons

TresslerCare continuum of services for adjudicated youths
230 youths and families

Tressler Refugee Services
105 persons

Volunteer Home Care
38 persons

The following memorial gifts were received from December 2002 through March 2003. Diakon programs thank these donors for their generous gifts!

IN MEMORY OF

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COMING EVENTS

Pig Roast, Silent Auction, and Music Fest June 14, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Benefits the Diakon-sponsored Location: West Shore Senior Center
Mechanicsburg Area, Big Spring, and 122 Geary Street
West Shore senior centers. New Cumberland, Pennsylvania

For information, call 776-4478 (Big Spring), 697-5947 (Mechanicsburg), or 774-0409 (West Shore).