

DIAKON CONNECTION

WINTER 2003-2004

Cumberland Crossings now Diakon community

Cumberland Crossings Retirement Community near Carlisle is Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries' newest Continuing Care Retirement Community.

Diakon completed its purchase and began operation of the community on Nov. 1. The agency purchased the retirement community from the Carlisle Area Health and Wellness Foundation.

"We are delighted that our purchase of Cumberland Crossings is completed and that we can now continue the heritage of quality service and care offered at the community since its opening," says the Rev. Dr. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D., Diakon president and chief executive officer.

Jan Bigelow, Diakon's former executive for marketing and census development, is serving as executive director of Cumberland Crossings.

"We have long hoped to have a Continuing Care Retirement Community in Cumberland County," says McKee. "We also believe that such communities represent one of the future directions for retirement services and are pleased we can serve more people through such services and accommodations," says McKee.

Leroy and Vera Shutt enjoy their residence at Cumberland Crossings Retirement Community.

Cumberland Crossings Retirement Community consists of 115 senior-housing accommodations, 45 assisted living residences, and 59 nursing care beds.



Adoption Services

Cumberland Crossings Retirement Community, Carlisle

Family Life Services (Tressler Counseling)

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

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Scout makes senior center dream come true

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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Susan Bratton had a dream for the outside of the *Mechanicsburg Area Senior Adult Center*, one that involved new plantings and a coat of paint for the old sign.

Matt Goetz made her dream come true...and then some.

A senior at Trinity High School, Goetz was searching for a project to complete the requirements for the rank of Eagle Scout, the pinnacle of a Boy Scout's career. Since beginning as a Cub Scout in second grade, Goetz had worked his way through seven ranks and had already completed the skill requirements for the Eagle ranking. All that remained was a "substantial community service" project to be designed by the Scout to show his leadership abilities.

"The project had to be for a church, school, or community organization," Goetz explains. "It couldn't be routine maintenance; it had to be significant. We had to install something long-lasting or permanent."

When he contacted Bratton, director of the Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries-sponsored senior center, the youth says Bratton discussed a new flowerbed for the front of the center and a repainted sign. She got much more than that.

"With some help from my dad"—Matt is the son of Michael and Deborah Goetz of Mechanicsburg—"I developed plans that included landscaping, flower beds,

benches, and a bird feeder," Goetz says. "We added circular planters around the flag pole. And we painted the sign."

Goetz made a formal presentation to Bratton, secured donations of materials and supplies from local businesses and service organizations, enlisted volunteers from among his friends and fellow Scouts, and completed the project over several weekends in late September and early October.

As required, the Scout played the leadership role in getting the project done. He estimates that he spent about 90 hours of his time, and the other volunteers committed a total of 160 hours.

"Matt did an amazing job of transforming the outside of our center," Bratton says. "What he did far exceeded our expectations. The seniors here are thrilled with our new look."

At Trinity, Goetz is on the yearbook staff and is a member of the Astronomy and Ski clubs. A member of the National Honor Society, he plans to major in history or political science. He's also interested in philosophy and writing.

"Scouting has really broadened my horizons, and this project helped me to have an even higher respect for Scouting," the young man says. "Working with the people at the senior center and seeing how excited they were about what we were doing...it was a very rewarding experience for me."



Matt Goetz at senior center

Frey Village: Community connections abound

Resident leads homecoming parade

When the Middletown Area Alumni Association celebrated its 40th anniversary, *Frey Village* resident Alice Demey led the celebratory parade as the 2003 Homecoming grand marshal.

An elementary educator who spent 50 years teaching in the Middletown School District, Demey was chosen for the honor because of her prominent role in the community, according to Kay Nye, president of the alumni association.

“I’m real excited that she agreed to participate,” Nye says. “She was a respected teacher and the kids loved her.”

Demey asked that her sister, Alberta, also a Frey Village resident, share in the honor because she had taken care of their home and meals while Demey devoted her time to teaching.

In addition to leading the October Homecoming parade, Demey was recognized during the annual alumni dinner that same evening.



Frey Village residents Alice Demey and her sister, Alberta Demey, left, enjoy their ride in the Middletown Area Alumni Association’s 40th anniversary parade. Alice Demey served as grand marshal.



Heidi Murray, Rep. John Payne

Representative celebrates service

A visit from Rep. John Payne topped off *Frey Village’s* September celebration of National Assisted Living Week, focused on the theme, “Sharing Life’s Treasures.”

Heidi Murray, assisted living activities coordinator, presented Payne with a book entitled, “Assisted Living in Your

Community: A Local Public Official’s Handbook.” The book leads public officials through the steps of assisted living development, considers different roles for government and provides questions to assess the impact of an assisted living residence on a community.

Youths learn value of helping others

Youths from the *TresslerCare Wilderness Center’s Weekend Alternative Program* spent several Saturdays this summer weeding and mulching the flowerbeds at *Frey Village*.

“We really appreciated their efforts,” says Deanna Noble, director of residential services, of the eight youths who showed up each time ready to work. “It helped so much with the grounds.”

Noble contacted Corey Carothers, director of the weekend program, to ask for help. “We approached them and asked them to resume the partnership we had at one time,” she says. “The residents like seeing the boys and girls. We’re hoping to expand the partnership to include activities over the winter.”

Carothers believes the benefits of what they are doing go beyond the obvious. “With this project it has to be done the right way.

[The youths] have to be communicating to make sure that occurs,” he says. “While they learn the work ethic that comes naturally with community service, the idea of doing for others, especially older residents, is our main reason for coming to Frey Village.”

Devon Hoch, a participant in the Wilderness Center’s Weekend Alternative Program, helps with a weeding and mulching project at Frey Village this summer.



‘Forever Mom’ focuses on making children feel special

Lisa Gibson took her time in pondering adoption. “I had gone to college, worked several years, bought my first home. I wanted to pursue having children,” she says, “but I would be a single parent. Would that be enough?”

For two years she asked herself that question. Then, she discovered *Diakon Adoption Services*.

“I learned a lot through the adoption classes—parents who have adopted and their hurdles, interracial adoption, and more,” she says. “I didn’t know until then that [Diakon Adoption Services] deals mainly with children with special needs. The classes give you a background of where these kids are coming from, where they’ve been, and that there is such a need for adoptive placements of older children.”

By the time Diakon completed its home study for Gibson, she still wondered what type of child would be the best match for her.

“I really hadn’t made a decision at that point—infant or toddler, up to age five or six, not real specific,” she says. “I knew I would take almost any disability, as long as I wouldn’t have to be home to deal with full-time medical issues.”

Almost immediately, she began receiving information from agencies with custody of children available for adoption. “My case went relatively quickly compared to other people in my class,” she says.



Lisa Gibson with adopted sons Alberto and Manuel.

“I found a match in three to four months.”

The first time Gibson met with Alberto, then 8 years old, she didn’t know what to think. “I wasn’t sure how I felt about his age. But when I met with the caseworker and foster parents, I learned that it [could be] a benefit having an older child,” she says. “They already have their personality and their behaviors formed.”

Although Gibson quickly warmed to the idea, Alberto, one of six siblings in foster care, wasn’t sure he wanted to be adopted.

“It was tough. He didn’t want to leave

his brothers and sisters. He didn’t know what adoption was,” Gibson says. “We had to talk those issues out.”

By the spring of the following year, Alberto had come to live with Gibson and her mother. “He had some adjustments coming from a foster family and some of his siblings to a home with me, my mom, and himself. He also had some challenges at school,” says Gibson, explaining that the boy was diagnosed with ADD and Tourette’s syndrome. “When you have a child thrown into a strange area, you do need time to adapt.”

The new family was able to meet its challenges head on and, two years later, agreed it was time to grow again.

“Alberto came from a large family. I also really wanted another child. But I didn’t want to do it if it would be detrimental to Alberto,” says Gibson. “Once I didn’t see any harm [in the adoption], I kept Alberto in on the process, so he would always be special.”

In fact it was Alberto who helped eight-year-old Manuel—or Juni—with the transition into his new family. “Juni was



Alberto and Manuel Gibson with “Flash.”

Quilted bags comfort youths

It broke Bettie Heycock's heart every time she saw a child enter **TresslerCare** foster care with his or her belongings in a paper bag. "They didn't have anything personal with them," she recalls. "When I saw them, I was almost in tears." TresslerCare's administrative assistant asked if her congregation, Trinity Lutheran Church of Lemoyne, could help. "We have a quilters group. I asked if they could make me a drawstring bag," says Heycock. "Then I went to the women of the church and asked if they thought the congregation would donate some new personal items and stuffed animals." It wasn't long before Heycock returned to work with nearly 50 small and large duffel bags, each uniquely designed, which have brought smiles to the faces of children in foster care. "They were very willing to help," Heycock says of the Hummingbird Quilters and

members of the congregation's Women of the ELCA group.

Each bag contains toiletry articles, but it is a stuffed animal that has been winning the hearts of children big and small. "I had a foster mother tell me that one little boy held his Koala bear all night long," says Heycock. "When you see these children and understand their heartaches, you realize how thankful you should be."

Women of the ELCA group at Trinity Lutheran Church, Lemoyne, fill duffel bags for children. From left are Doris Gaul, Dana Sanchez, Ellen Verbos, Stephanie Trenhauser



Staff, residents, and family members gathered earlier this year for a festive picnic to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Perry Village, New Bloomfield.

Below: H. Leslie Bishop, left, of Camp Hill, talks with the Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D., Diakon president, during this fall's annual luncheon to honor donors and past Tressler Lutheran Services-related board members. Bishop served as a board member and interim Tressler president.



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!

Diakon Adoption Services, Central Pennsylvania office:

- Proxima projector
- Digital camera
- Digital camcorder
- Overhead projector & screen
- Recruitment posters & free advertising
- Photo albums & scrap books
- Disposable cameras with flash
- Birthday cards for children
- Bookstore gift cards (to buy adoption book for child)
- Video store gift cards
- Office desk & chair

Community Services for Seniors - Cumberland County:

- Entertainment center (for VCR, TV, etc.)
- File cabinet
- Signage
- New flooring in men's restroom (West Shore Senior Center, New Cumberland)

New flooring in men's restroom (Mechanicsburg Senior Center, Mechanicsburg)

Family Life Services – Capital Region:

- Children's videotapes
- Paper for children's drawings (large sheets)
- Gift certificates for monetary donations for playroom supplies
- VCR tape rewriter

Frey Village, Middletown

- Draperies & hardware for nursing center
- Electric beds
- Landscaping for courtyard area
- Garden benches
- Activity supplies (paper, paints, glue, bingo prizes, games, etc.)

Perry Village, New Bloomfield

- Wall hangings for sub-dining rooms
- Digital camera
- Plants
- Activity supplies (paper, glue & Bingo prizes)

Refugee & Immigration Services

- Grocery store gift certificates
- Department-store gift certificates
- Blankets & pillows
- Towels

Susquehanna Lutheran Village, Millersburg

- Weights for the therapy department
- Hi-low beds (10)
- Patio furniture set with umbrella
- Outdoor swing, wheelchair accessible
- Pair of self-locking wheelchair brakes
- Sims-Weinstein filament kit
- Biofeedback machine

TresslerCare Foster Care

- Back packs & school supplies
- Board games & computer games
- Gift cards for children for clothing
- Disposable cameras & photo albums

TresslerCare Wilderness Center

- Lumber & drywall
- Entertainment center
- Hiking boots (men's sizes 9 1/2 - 12, no steel toes)
- Refrigerator
- Room air conditioners (window insert-style) & dehumidifiers
- Batteries (D, AA, AAA sizes)
- Gloves & hats

Volunteer Home Care, upper Dauphin & Schuylkill counties

- Display board

Family Life Services promotes abstinence

With a grant worth \$135,000, Diakon's *Family Life Services – Capital Region* is beginning an abstinence program that targets at-risk youth in Dauphin and Cumberland counties.

Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the program reaches youths ages 12 to 15 with a message to abstain from sex, drugs, alcohol, and violence.

"We are working with research from the United Way of the Capital Region that says youth ages 15 to 17 are most at risk for out-of-wedlock, unplanned pregnancies, HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, and drug and alcohol use," explains Anne Leedy, Family Life Services director.

"The logic is let's provide some kind of preventive programming for them before they hit that at-risk age level."

Abstinence programming isn't new to Family Life Services. For the last three years, the service has offered Abstinence is BEST (Building Educated Successful Teens), funded through the same department. "We automatically were re-awarded a one-year grant, which will likely turn into a larger grant at the end of the year," Leedy says.

The latest version of the program includes eight hour-and-a-half sessions. Topics range from sex, emotions, self-respect, honesty, and alcohol to STDs, pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, self-discipline, limit setting, and decision making.

The new program, "Choosing the Best," is described as a research-based, medical learning model that motivates students through relationship education, refusal-skills coaching, character education, and parent-teen interviews. It features three different curricula that are tailored to specific ages.

Choosing the Best Way is for grades six and seven. The lessons teach students how to make decisions, assess relationships, and choose abstinence. For grades seven and eight, the program is Choosing the Best Path. The lessons are challenging enough to

keep middle-schoolers' attention and cover the myths of "safe" sex and the benefits of abstinence.

Choosing the Best Life is targeted at grades nine through 12. Teens are empowered to form healthy, positive relationships. Real-life teen stories and role-playing help dynamically to reinforce abstinence.

Leedy is confident that the program's positive message will reach its audience with the help of adult and student facilitators. "The adult facilitators are mainly minorities who have been working in the mental health or criminal justice fields," she says. "The peer educators are students from Messiah College and Harrisburg High School."

Two of the first locations targeted for the program are the Schaffner Youth Detention Center in Dauphin County and the TresslerCare Wilderness School.

"We are looking to take our act on the road to anyone who wants us," says Leedy, adding that program staff members are focusing on schools and community organizations as well. "It can be during or after school, even on the weekends. It depends on the facility. It is a mobile program. We just take it where it is needed."

Coordinating the abstinence programming is Roxanne Hern, public health trainer/curriculum developer with Hamilton Health Center, Harrisburg.

"She is 'hands-on,' getting the staff trained, getting the curriculum together, and finding the facilities that are interested," says Leedy of Hern, a graduate of Harrisburg High School and Seton Hall University. "Prior to [working with Hamilton Health] she was a public health educator and grant writer for the American Red Cross in Camden, N.J. Most of the work she did was on HIV, AIDS and abstinence education."

Anyone interested in bringing "Choosing the Best" to their organization should contact Anne Leedy, Diakon Family Life Services – Capital Region, at (717) 795-0330.

Mosley leads Susquehanna Lutheran Village



Marti Mosley

A familiar face within the Diakon family, Marti Mosley is now administrator of *Susquehanna Lutheran Village*.

Mosley transferred to the Millersburg facility this fall from Diakon's *Pennknoll Village* near Bedford.

Having led Pennknoll Village since early 2000, Mosley is familiar with Diakon's management philosophy and at home in a facility the size of SLV. "We have a great staff here and one of my goals is to make sure they know they are appreciated for what they do," she says.

Mosley holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Waynesburg College and a master's degree in social work with an emphasis in health care from West Virginia University.

She also completed her nursing home administrator work at Slippery Rock University and was recently named a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Administrators.

In addition, she recently earned the Retirement Housing Professional (RHP) certification, after spending six days in Columbus, Ohio, attending classes and completing three comprehensive exams. Awarded to professionals who strive for excellence, RHP identifies an individual who is trained in facility management, is committed to a philosophy of excellence, and has mastered the principles, philosophy, and practice of facility administration for older adults.

Messiah College-Refugee Services link shares learning – both ways

The promise of new life is something many refugees dream about long before they arrive in America. But once here, they soon come to understand that resettlement can be lonely, and even frightening, if they cannot speak English.

To help refugees overcome this loneliness and improve their chance for success, Diakon's *Tressler Refugee & Immigration Services* has partnered with Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., the last four years.

Each September, Chris Longenecker, case-worker and immigration counselor, meets with students in professor Linda Parkyn's Methodology in Teaching English-as-a-Second-Language class to pair students with refugees who have resettled in nearby communities.

SERVICE-TO-DATE

Each year, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries touches the lives of thousands of persons throughout the Lower Susquehanna Synod. As of the end of September, the number served regionally totaled more than 5,000 persons.

Adoption Services, York
211 families

Community Services for Seniors
1,487 persons

Family Life Services
(formerly Tressler Counseling)
1,336 persons

Frey Village, Middletown
309 persons

Perry Village, New Bloomfield
798 persons

Susquehanna Lutheran Village, Millersburg
304 persons

TresslerCare Services
475 youths and families

Tressler Refugee Services
335 persons

Volunteer Home Care, Upper Dauphin
71 persons

"You can help them gain confidence to use the phone, pay their bills, and communicate at the store, as opposed to teaching them rules about grammar," Longenecker tells the students at the beginning of the semester, emphasizing that practical English is the most important thing to share in their meetings. "There will be a range of levels that you will deal with, so whatever the student wants to learn is what you should focus on."

Parkyn began this practical experience for her students in 1985. "We have had 15 [refugee] families a semester for 19 years," she says, adding that before working with Diakon, students had partnered with another organization. "I give the students ways to teach English at first, but my interest is that they understand what life is like from the refugee's perspective."

She also helps them to realize they are among very few Americans who will visit the refugees' home in these first months. "Make sure you are friendly. Make sure you eat what they offer you," she tells them. "If there had been a fly in the water the Samaritan woman had given to Jesus, would he still have taken a drink?"

The students, who major in such fields as education, English, and modern languages, have had no problem taking Parkyn's direction to heart. For Sean Going, the experience has had a big impact in little time.

"Somehow with my limited experience in how to teach, I'm still able to help them overcome something that is really an obstacle for them. It feels so good to know that you are helping someone that way," he says. "At the same time, they are giving us just as much. We're learning about their culture. We're learning to be more respectful of other perspectives. It's like we are continually, mutually blessing each other."

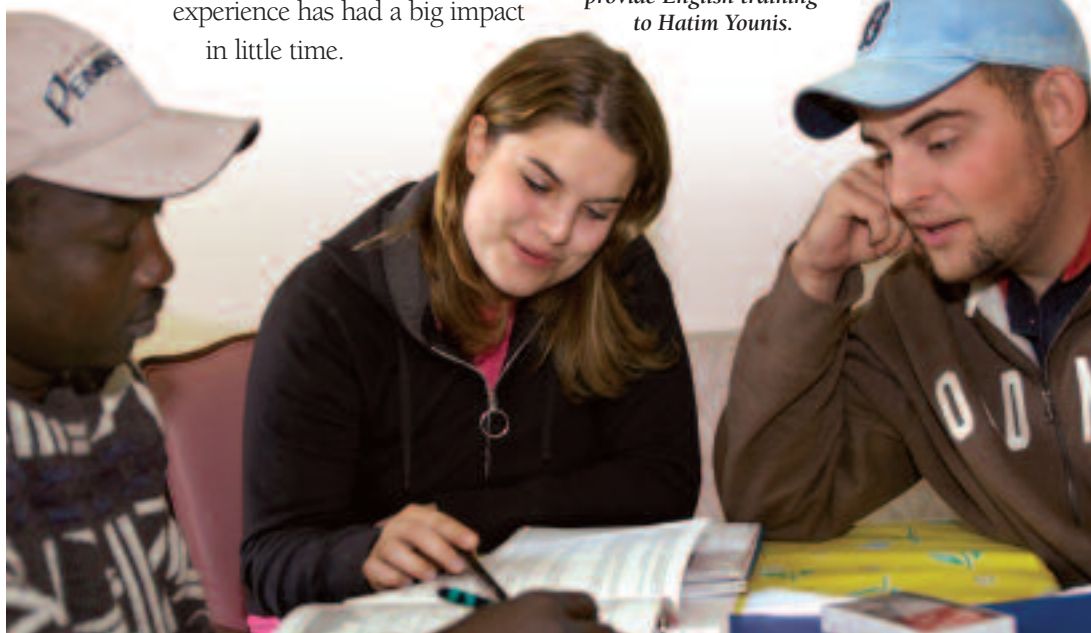
Another student says the experience has even broadened her career options.

"I knew I always wanted to teach English-as-a-Second-Language, but I always thought I wanted to go abroad," says RyAnn Allred. "I never realized that here in our own country there are people that need it just as much, if not more."

The students continue to meet with the refugees throughout the fall semester and sometimes continue into the spring, often forming friendships that lead to discussions about culture and even shared holiday meals.

"The class is a popular elective with students who want to live somewhere else in the world or who are interested in intercultural ideas," Parkyn says. "This is something that makes the learning come alive while it helps others."

Messiah students Katie Grant, center, and Sean Going, right, provide English training to Hatim Younis.



‘Forever Mom’

Continued from Page 6

very attached to his foster family and he was very homesick for a couple of months, but Alberto was very supportive. Of course, after that ‘honeymoon’ was over,” she chuckles, “we got right into the typical sibling rivalry!”

While Gibson has had her share of parenting challenges, even enduring a medical crisis with Juni, she credits a supportive circle of family and friends for her success.

“It would have been much harder had I not had the support of my family and friends,” she says. “Everyone has treated them like my own [children] from the beginning.”

That support has also come in handy when Gibson wants to spend individual time with her sons, now 11 and 13. “They each have a ‘Date Day’ with Mom every month, when they get to pick a couple of things we can do together,” she explains. “The other child stays with Nana or goes to a friend’s house, so I can give them the individual time they want.”

Gibson’s focus on making her children feel special is something she has fostered since the beginning. “I always tell them that they have three moms—Birth Mom, Foster Mom, and Forever Mom,” she says.

“They have a Birth Mom who loved them very much, but could not provide the care they need. They both had Foster Moms who cared for them. And, now, they have a Forever Mom, who loves them very much.”

The Juvenile Detention Center Association of Pennsylvania has named the Herbert A. Schaffner Youth Center’s project with Frey Village its “Community Service Project of the Year.” Youths from the Dauphin County facility organized a range of activities with residents and assisted with gardening and the planting of literally hundreds of flower bulbs at the Diakon retirement community.



The following regional memorial gifts were received from July through September 2003. Diakon’s Lower Susquehanna Synod-based programs thank these donors for their generous gifts!

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