

DIALOG

A publication of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

Summer/Fall 2011

Therapy dogs provide kids with friendship, comic relief, love

■ Eight-year-old Josh can tell his friend, Grizzley, anything.

“I can tell him secrets because he doesn’t tell anyone,” says the South Williamsport Central Elementary School second-grader.

Although Grizzley loves to play, he is not a “typical” friend. In fact, he has been known to eat erasers and play with items from trash cans; he even got caught stealing a breakfast bagel off the school nurse’s desk. But it is his “comical” character that draws students to him.

“He is a clown,” says Pat Peltier-Russell, a Diakon Family Life Services school-based outreach counselor. Grizzley—a 10-year-old golden retriever and his 13-year-old mother Guenivere—are her therapy dogs.

On any given day, you can find Grizzley or Gwen at South Williamsport Area School District schools. Known to students as Ms. Pat, the school-based outreach counselor has been serving the district for eight years and is a Commonwealth Approved Trainer for Pennsylvania Student Assistance. Working with referred kindergarten thru sixth-grade students and their families, Peltier-Russell helps those struggling with divorce, separation, grief, bullying, adjustment problems, generalized depression, anxiety, and other issues.

“These issues can interfere with academic success,” she says. “Often I fade into the background and the kids open up to the dog.”

“Ms. Pat” and her furry sidekicks teach communication skills, compassion, and pet care to older life-skills students. In earlier grades, they teach human education—such as how to be safe with dogs and care for pets. The counselor also addresses bullying.

“Sometimes when I’m talking with a group of kids about a tough topic, such as how assertively to respond to someone who is bullying, the dogs simply help to set an atmosphere of safety and comfort,” she says.

“What Pat does is priceless, says Kathy Furman, Central Elementary School principal. “The trio touches our lives in ways we can’t express.”

Peltier-Russell and her therapy dogs are especially important to struggling readers who enjoying reading to Gwen and Grizzley.

“Students benefit from the attention of an adoring dog who would never react to a mispronounced word,” she says.

Excitement follows the trio everywhere they go. Heading to visit a second-floor classroom, “Ms. Pat” drops Grizzley’s leash and tells him to travel up the stairs. The sounds of his paws echo in the stairwell. Once at the top, Peltier-Russell picks up his leash and leads him down a hall, where students call out his name—distinguishing him from his mother, Gwen. Outside the classroom, Grizzley calmly sits and waits. Peltier-Russell drops the leash and gives him permission to greet the students. Ears flopping in the wind, Grizzley hurries into the

classroom, where he quickly spots an unattended eraser and grabs it with his mouth. The classroom bursts into laughter.

“There is nothing more powerful than a therapy dog,” says Peltier-Russell with a chuckle.

In addition to such comic relief, therapy dogs provide comfort, teach communication skills, and encourage self-confidence.

In addition, Peltier-Russell and her dogs respond to crises. They have worked in the South Williamsport School District and surrounding communities to help students and staff members cope with deaths of students, staff members, or young children.

“Gwen and I worked with a community last fall as they dealt with the suicidal death of a teen who had been bullied,” says Peltier-Russell.

The dogs have a way of connecting to people who are experiencing difficult times. “You would be surprised how in tune they are to our feelings.”

Peltier-Russell’s love for therapy dogs began when she was working at the SPCA as a volunteer coordinator. There, she recognized Gwen’s uncanny ability—even as a puppy—to help an elderly neighbor unsteady on his feet. “I knew then she was a born therapy dog.”

Gwen had a litter of puppies, and Peltier-Russell picked Grizzley to follow in his mother’s footsteps.

“I feel very blessed. Gwen and Grizzley are an extension of me or maybe the reverse is more accurate. My only advantage is that I can speak,” says Peltier-Russell. “Dogs love you no matter what. To me, they are a reminder that we should simply accept what a person is experiencing without judgment.” ■



OUR MISSION

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

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

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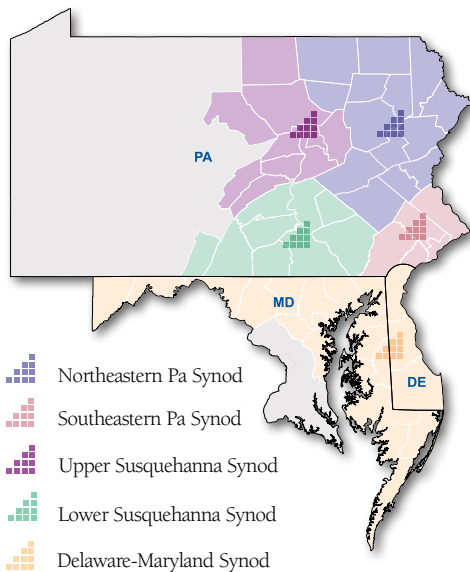
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THE PRESIDENT'S DIALOG

Diakon's capital planning committee has one of the more challenging roles in our organization—how carefully to expand and upgrade our many senior living communities using a limited pool of funds available for capital projects.

I am grateful for the work they have done because we have recently embarked on—or are about to begin—a number of projects vitally important to our continuing ability to serve our neighbors.

One of our most-recent announcements involves replacement of the nursing care center at Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village.

We purchased the Lewisburg, Pa., village—which has since been expanded to include a personal care community and senior living accommodations in multiple styles—in 1975. While the nursing care center, built in the late 1960s, has always offered quality care and was among the nicer facilities of its time, time also has had its effect on the facility's appearance.

And so Buffalo Valley became a priority, along with several other locations. Careful planning, in fact, has allowed us to take advantage of newer designs and amenities. For example, the \$14 million Buffalo Valley project, which should begin by spring, will be constructed in what is called a "modified neighborhood concept." That design eliminates the traditional double-loaded corridor in which rooms are located directly across from one another, instead staggering rooms and including common space across from some rooms. The result is more home-like and less institutional.

In fact, even semi-private rooms will be constructed to emphasize privacy, with beds positioned toe-to-toe rather than in the traditional side-by-side arrangement, with the semi-private rooms' bathroom separating the two beds.

Of course, our work at Buffalo Valley is just part of what we call the "repositioning" of our senior living communities. Among other efforts, we ...

- Completed construction of the first building within Bridgagate, a community of new apartments on the campus of Luther Crest, Allentown, Pa., and continue



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



TWINING VILLAGE



FREY VILLAGE



LUTHER CREST

with planning for renovations of the health-care centers at Luther Crest. The efforts follow the earlier opening of Southgate homes, continuing renovation of existing Luther Crest apartments, and complete renovation of major common areas including the construction of a wellness center.

- Announced plans to build 56 senior living apartments at Frey Village in Middletown, Pa. While eventual construction is contingent on meeting presales goals, we remain confident the \$20 million project will move forward.
- Launched extensive renovations at Twining Village in Bucks County, Pa. This project includes completely refurbishing apartment suites in the village's two-story buildings, renovating accommodations in the one-story buildings to create cottage-homes, and redesigning the village entrance and reception areas.
- Continue with marketing the potential conversion of up to one floor of personal care units at Pocono Lutheran Village, East Stroudsburg, Pa., for a new service called Senior LivingPlus.
- Work to gain licensure of the two campuses of Diakon Senior Living – Hagerstown, Maryland, as a single Continuing Care Retirement Community, necessary for expansion there.

These efforts are key to a vision we call “Diakon Tomorrow,” a view of what we need to be to sustain this nearly 150-year ministry in challenging economic times while also meeting the changing demands of children, youths, families, and older adults.

But “Diakon Tomorrow” includes more than expanding or renovating senior living communities. It also involves expansion of our home and community-based services (such as home health and hospice) as well as integration of those services into our senior communities to complete our continuum of care.

And it includes ways we’re beginning to explore to mesh more fully our adoption, foster care, and youth programs, along with the behavioral health care available through Diakon Family Life Services to support these ministries.

And in that way, our vision of Diakon Tomorrow is also a “look back,” because our plans re-emphasize those services that have been part of our ministry for nearly 150 years.

Mark T. Pile

**BUFFALO VALLEY
LUTHERAN VILLAGE**



Turning Point gives youth *tools for fresh start*

After 14-year-old Eric Freeman's mother was wrongly incarcerated and his stepfather was murdered, he found himself feeling utterly alone.

"I started hanging out with the wrong crowd. At first, I thought they were my friends, but it turned out that they were the wrong type of people. They robbed a school and broke into a house," he says while sitting at Turning Point, a weekday afterschool reporting center in Lancaster, Pa., that serves adjudicated or pre-adjudicated males ages 12 to 18.

Having faced alleged burglary charges from his involvement with the "wrong" crowd, Eric is one of a number of youths who have been monitored at Turning Point, a Diakon Youth Services program. Allowing students the opportunity to remain in their home communities through meaningful intervention, the program offers bilingual services and works closely with probation officers, school officials, parents, and community organizations.

The halls of Turning Point are adorned with posters that display sayings such as The choices

you make turn the pages of your life, If you think nobody else cares, think again, and Be someone you would be proud to know. Young men can be heard discussing American history with a Turning Point staff member.

"Through mentoring, we can help students turn their lives around," says Program Director Tanisha Negron-Bailey. While teaching academic, social, moral reasoning, workforce development, independent living, and vocational skills, staff members also foster family involvement and promote community volunteerism.

"I have learned a lot here, but maybe the most important thing that I have learned is to control my actions," says Freeman, who admits that he was easily influenced, disrespectful, disruptive, and lacked self-confidence when he first came to the program. After spending three months in a secure detention center, he was released to Turning Point, where his mother, Doris Wood, began to see a remarkable transformation.

"This is a healing place," says Wood. "Eric is no longer a follower. He is very independent and doesn't feed into negativity. He still has a way to go, but because of the program, he has been given the tools to work on himself. He has had life mentors here."

Programs such as Turning Point are part of a growing trend to keep adjudicated youths out of detention centers and in their home communities—while also not compromising public safety. Made possible by a grant administered through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and obtained by the Lancaster County Office of Juvenile Probation in August 2010, Turning Point follows this

trend, one many believe increases reform rates.

"Secure detention is not an ideal situation for children," say Negron-Bailey. "When they are taken out of their home school, students often fall behind and this can snowball."

After-school centers can also create a positive sense of belonging at home and in the community. Each month, Turning Point holds family-themed dinners that help foster open relationships among students and their families.

Wood recalls one special night: "In October, we carved a pumpkin together for the first time. It was just me and him without his brothers around. It was a special time for us."

Freeman, who once wandered the streets of Lancaster in the middle of the night, now can be found picking up litter and packing lunches for the needy at St. Paul United Methodist Church—the location of Turning Point.

"I am doing something good for people who actually need it—it makes me feel good," says the eighth-grader, who has earned the title of "best food packer" among his peers.

Changing lives and mending broken hearts are part of the program's mission. "It is really about lifting students up and not down. At this point, the majority of our students are first-time offenders. This program gives them an opportunity to turn their lives around," says Negron-Bailey.

Recently released from the courts and Turning Point, Freeman believes that his Diakon experience has made him realize his future can be bright.

"I have more support now than I ever did," he says. "This is the best program that I could have ever been in. It has given me a new opportunity and I am going to continue to work hard." ■■

Dialog Digest

Summer-Fall 2011

Seneca Search declares Diakon Adoption & Foster Care a leading provider

In a recent wall post on Facebook, Seneca Search wrote: "Diakon is not just one of the leading family-finding providers in Pennsylvania; it's one of the leading providers in the country... I've found Diakon to be one of the most innovative agencies in the field." Seneca Search is a site that specializes solely in searching public records to locate relatives of children in foster care.

First Lady of Nigerian state tours Diakon Kathryn's Kloset

Mrs. Obioma Liyel Imoke, First Lady of Cross River State in Nigeria, who has a history of supporting outreach programs for women and children, recently toured Diakon Kathryn's Kloset as part of a visit to Maryland. Imoke's tour laid the groundwork for a potential partnership between Diakon Kathryn's Kloset and her work in Nigeria.



Through a behavior modification system, Eric earns rewards such as Fun Night Fridays, bowling outings, and time with Turning Point Counselor Samuel Rivera.



The Good Fellas include, from left to right, Elio Scaccio, Ken Rochon, A.J. Ali, Steve de Castro, William Peach, Vince Sharps, and Brian Jarosinski.

Members of the MOB strong-arm poverty and hardship

Wade Brown is a leader in the MOB and his actions—along with those of six other “partners in crime”—have been captured in a reality-based television show, “Good Fellas of Baltimore,” which airs at 1 p.m. Saturdays on the city’s Fox station or anytime online at www.GoodFellasTV.com.

Not your stereotypical mobster, Brown, executive director of Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset, and others are encouraging people to become Mentors of Baltimore (MOB)—a group of individuals who assist seven entrepreneurs coined the Good Fellas. Together, they advocate for positive change by identifying an individual, family, or community need. Each episode highlights a different hardship and non-profit organization and captures how the city’s underserved are aided.

Called a “multi-platform movement of caring in which fans and sponsors participate in changing lives,” the television show is something Brown supports in earnest.

“We (Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset) are the coordinating non-profit for the program,” says Brown. “The show’s mission and that of Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset are one and the same. We have a heart for the community and together we are making a difference.”

Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset secures and stores corporate donations of new and unused personal care, educational, and other items that may have otherwise been destroyed and provides them, free-of-charge, to non-profit organizations that in turn distribute them to people.

Like Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset, the “Good Fellas of Baltimore” program demonstrates how businesses and citizens can work together to accomplish a greater good.

Brown has been involved with the program since its inception more than three years ago. Created, produced, and directed by Brown’s friend, AJ Ali, the show has been gaining popularity while creating awareness of Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset.

“The partnership with the Good Fellas program is helping us (Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset) garner support, which in turn helps us assist those in need. This means everything to us because Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset is built of partners.”

With 10 episodes planned, the first show introduced a family who lost their home to a devastating fire and featured Living Classrooms, a non-profit educational organization that taught the family’s children.

For the first episode, William Peach, an associate broker for Coldwell Banker, was the Good Fellas project manager who spearheaded efforts to rebuild the family’s home and clean up their neighborhood.

“People stepped up larger than I expected. Things were donated that weren’t even on the radar. So many people made things happen. I sent an e-mail out to the MOB and people showed up to plant flowers, pull weeds, and clean up the area—but that is the idea of the MOB. When things are needed, they will help out,” says Peach, who can see the MOB playing a role in Diakon

**If you’re not part
of the solution,**

**you’re part
of the problem.**

Kathryn’s Kloset shipments.

“It is hard for people to know when and how to volunteer. Maybe a person only has an hour or two to give, but that is all it takes to unload a tractor-trailer of donations for Wade,” he says.

As an advocate of Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset, Peach will be participating in Dining with Diakon on Oct. 20, being held at the Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset warehouse.

“William is the type of guy who gives help to those in need, even if it means stepping out of his comfort zone,” says Brown.

Peach is one of about 12 guest chefs who will prepare their favorite recipes and serve them to guests who vote, by way of donation, for their favorite dishes.

“For me the biggest thing is to be able to raise awareness and funds. At the event, I want to reach out to companies and hopefully obtain names of people who can potentially donate products instead of destroying them,” says Peach.

Fundraisers such as Dining with Diakon help to raise much-needed funds to offset the program’s \$700,000 annual operating budget.

“For us, everything we give away is free. There are other programs that charge, but our goal here is not to put that burden on those people who can’t afford it,” says Brown. “I hope Dining with Diakon also creates awareness among corporations.”

Brown says that companies often pay to destroy products. Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset can serve as a one-stop shop by taking the products and distributing them to the non-profit community while also helping companies fulfill philanthropic efforts.

“What Wade is doing is phenomenal,” says Peach. “Wade and

his two staff members are helping millions. I will do anything I can to help his efforts and I look forward to Dining with Diakon.”

The generous support of donors help to make Diakon Kathryn’s Kloset possible. No money is ever exchanged for items distributed through this program.

Foster children fill couple's empty nest

■ A Home for the Holidays was airing on TV and JoAnn Carter was excited because one of her favorite recording artists was performing on the annual special that highlights adoption.

Soon afterward, the local station's news broadcast highlighted a child in need of a foster home. Carter knew it was time to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming a foster parent, a process that proved to be more involved than she had imagined.

"I thought if I called, it would just happen," she says. It didn't "just happen," but the delay didn't deter her.

Carter and her husband, Jeff, began the foster-care process, but decided that agency was too far from their home in Allentown, Pa. Doing extensive online research, Carter decided to move forward with the Topton office of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care. Since then, the couple has fostered and provided respite care to several children.

In April, they were matched with two girls ages 6 and 10. Soon, the love, support, and structure they provided was being recognized by officials at the girls' schools.

"They are doing very well," says Jeff. "The little one couldn't read when she came to live with us. Now she can't read enough."

Kathy Roach, director of the Topton office, believes the Carters are role models for foster care. They not only have prior experience with parenting—they have an adult son, now 24 and living on his own—but they also serve as an inspiration to others.

"Empty-nesters make excellent resource families," says Roach. "Because they have already raised a child, they are comfortable and confident in their ability to parent other children."

With 500,000 children waiting for a foster home and 151,000 additional children awaiting a permanent family in the U.S., the need for families is significant.



Jeff and JoAnn Carter spend time studying with their two foster children. They have provided care for several children over the past few years.

"We encourage people not to be afraid to step forward and help a child in need," says Roach. "We are always looking for more resource families to help parent these children."

Despite the positive changes they have witnessed in children's lives, the Carters don't believe they have done anything special, noting that anyone can be a foster parent and have a positive effect on a child.

"It bothers me when people say 'I could never do what you

do,'" says Carter. "Anyone can do it. All you need are patience and the desire to help children."

The Carters say foster parenting has both ups and downs, but far more ups than downs. While they live with not knowing how long they will have their foster children or if they will ever see them again after the children leave, they remain content, knowing they are helping and not sitting back at a time in life when doing so can be very tempting. ■

♥ By your support and donations you can help Diakon Adoption & Foster Care touch the lives of children in need. Your gifts provide financial assistance to help subsidize families' adoption fees or provide necessary personal care items and clothing for foster children and youths.

Diakon Dialog Survey Winners

Congratulations to the following individuals who won a \$50 Visa gift card.

Diana Gillespie :: Lance Bungess :: Jon R. Fisher :: Beth Hiriak

Names were drawn randomly from all those who completed our survey in the last edition of *Dialog*.



Members of the Twining Village knitting group include, seated, left to right, Joan Blumenthal, Antoinette Edenhoffer, and Edie Larkin. Standing, left to right, are Josephine Cicio, Marilyn Boyer, Ruth Bogia, and Beverly Gouton, director of community life at Twining Village.

Afghans deliver fun to residents, warmth to those in need

■ Twining Village resident Marilyn Boyer is helping others in her community by doing something she loves—knitting. Whenever Boyer and fellow knitters at Twining Village, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Holland, Pa., complete an afghan as part of the Warm Up America! program, they are ready to begin the next one.

"We just really love working on the items we donate," says Boyer, who, involved in the program at her church, brought the project to the Twining knitting group. "Receiving an afghan that has been created with love has a way of touching people's hearts and making them feel good inside."

Warm Up America! is a foundation that coordinates efforts of volunteers nationwide who knit and crochet afghans to help those in need. Each afghan is made of 49 patches sewn together. The Twining group meets weekly to make the individual patches for the afghan, which is assembled at Boyer's church.

"To someone in need a handmade item can add a sense of home when they need it most," says Boyer.

"It's a way to show we care about people and want to brighten their day with something warm and cozy that was made with love," adds resident Josephine Cicio, who has been crocheting for many years. "It is a nice social activity for us while we work on a project that benefits others." ■

Wilderness program, scholarship turn tragedy into hope for the future



Matt Croak

long remember. The program requires youths to live outdoors and successfully complete challenging physical and emotional activities. Working with specially trained staff, up to 10 youths in each challenge group share responsibilities, learn problem-solving and communication skills, and overcome fears as they create a foundation for a successful return to home and community.

Croak learned survival skills, rock climbing, and team-building.

“The program was both exhilarating and breathtaking,” he says. “By being out on the course and having time to think and listen to the instructors, I was able to get a better grasp on my life and accept more responsibility for the accident. It also taught me how to accept responsibility for actions in the future. That is why I consider this placement a blessing. I think if I had been put anywhere else, I would not have had the same experience or learned the things I know now.”

For his outstanding accomplishments in the program, Croak received a \$5,000 scholarship for college, made possible by the Charles Merritt Singer Memorial Scholarship fund administered by the Diakon Lutheran Fund Board of Directors.

Currently a freshman at Lock Haven University, Croak is studying criminal justice. During the school year, he lives on campus but stays with his family during breaks. “When I learned I was going to receive a scholarship from Diakon, I was very excited,” he says. “With the money, I am able to help cover some of the cost of my tuition and books for the upcoming semester.”

Corey Carothers, Diakon Youth Services administrator, says Croak did a wonderful job in setting and completing goals for the program and planning for his future.

“Matt did a great job in satisfying program requirements and has moved on with his life. Program participants don’t always follow through with their goals, but Matt did. He comes to visit us from time to time and keeps us updated on how he is doing. We look forward to that.”

The lessons of the wilderness challenge still speak to him. “Throughout the course, I had to set goals that were measurable and within reach. I continue to set personal goals for myself. I can thank Diakon and the Wilderness Challenge Program for my future.” ■

💡 *The Diakon Wilderness Center depends on your generous giving to continue making a remarkable difference in the lives of at-risk young men. Please use the enclosed envelope to help.*

■ He didn’t know it at the time, but the day Matthew Croak entered the courtroom his life took a turn for the better.

The Churchville, Pa., youth was ordered to participate in the Diakon Wilderness Center’s 30-Day Wilderness Challenge Program, which focuses on capturing the attention of youths who need to stabilize behavior or regain focus before more intensive services are needed.

“Being placed in the Wilderness Challenge Program was the best thing for me,” says Croak, now 18, who in the summer of 2009 was in a car accident that took the life of the other driver. “I was not drunk, on drugs, or using my phone; it was just a tragic accident.”

Far removed from televisions, cell phones, and the Internet, the adventure-based challenge delivers an experience participants will

Scholarship program changes lives

■ Last year, \$65,000 changed the lives of 18 young men and women.

This year, \$90,000 will help other young adults reach their dreams and achieve success.

“These funds are available through the Diakon Youth Services Scholarship Fund, made possible by generous donors such as the Charles Merritt Singer Memorial Trust,” says Corey Carothers, Diakon Youth Services administrator. “So far, 14 individuals are in the process this year.”

The scholarship fund assists with tuition and related educational expenses for youths served by Diakon programs.

To qualify for a scholarship, a student must be 17 to 24 years old, have a financial need, and be enrolled in a trade school or college. To apply, the student must complete an application and write an essay describing his or her experience with Diakon and what he plans to do in life.

Carothers has a stack of applications awaiting approval. Each youth is eligible for \$5,000 in a year.

“The nice thing about the program is that it’s extremely flexible based on need and can cover anything—tuition, books, laptops, tools, etc.—as long as it’s for educational purposes,” Carothers says.

“The power of this fund is that it provides hope when often there is no hope,” he adds. “A lot of times these kids are considered the bottom rung of society. This proves that if you provide them with the resources they need, they can excel just as well as any child can.” ■



Your generosity is appreciated

💡 In 2011, Diakon will provide approximately \$14 million in benevolent care to the people we serve. We need your continued support to provide that level of care to people in your community with limited financial resources.

Most of the Diakon services depicted in *Dialog* provide benevolent care in a variety of ways. Diakon depends now more than ever on generous donations from corporations, synods, congregations, and individuals to enable it to serve so many people.

You can join us in making a difference in the lives of people in need. Simply use the blue envelope in this issue of *Dialog* or log onto our web site’s convenient and secure donation form to make your gift.

For further information on how you can support one or more of Diakon’s ministries, please call the Office of Development at 1-877- DIAKON-7, option 2, extension 21219, or visit www.diakon.org. Thank you.

Young meet young-at-heart

You hear them before you see them, noisily happy in a way only carefree preschoolers can be. The Frey Village residents waiting for them welcome the sound.

“Here they come,” say several residents, greeting the young visitors who are part of the Stay-at-home Moms Group that comes to the Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Middletown, Pa., once a month. They visit Frey Village to spend time with residents, doing a craft project and enjoying a snack and story together. It’s clear everyone enjoys one another’s company.

The group formed three years ago via an online site helping to connect people of like interests or needs. Kristen Elliott began the group with the goal of finding other stay-at-home moms with whom to socialize while kids share playtime. The group, now with 40 members, includes mothers and children from throughout central Pennsylvania.

“We do all kinds of activities and events and we decided we also wanted to get involved in community service,” Elliott explains. “That led us to Frey Village. We’ve been visiting here for two years. It’s special for our kids and for the residents.”

Any resident may join in the fun, notes Tracy Klein, village activity director. “You never know how many will decide to come, but they always have a good time,” she says.

Ida Davis eagerly awaits the children’s visits. Lately, she looks forward to seeing a baby boy who is a recent addition to the group. “I love to just hold him,” she says. “I think children are the best part of society.” ■■

*‘I think children
are the best part
of society.’*

Frey Village Resident Ida Davis

