

DIALOG

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Going home

A pastor who receives rehabilitation services after an accident so that he can minister again.

A teacher in the same circumstance, whose experience in rehab allows him to return to teaching.

A man whose rehabilitation following a fall down basement stairs permits him to go home—and to drive again!

Think of rehabilitation services offered within a nursing care center, and you automatically think of older persons who live permanently within the facility. But that is not always the case, as these examples attest.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries' retirement facilities frequently provide shorter-term (with some even offering outpatient) physical, occupational, and speech/language therapy that allows people to return home—and, in some cases, to their occupations.

In fact, as part of its turn-around plan in 2001, Diakon created its own rehabilitation services department, preferring to offer the care in-house rather than contracting for it with an outside company.

In addition to the administrative benefits of such a move, says Lynn Pierce of Elizabethtown, Pa., executive for the new service, "offering the program in-house allows us to have much more involvement with

the day-to-day operation of rehabilitation services and, more importantly, with the care we offer our residents.

"With in-house services, we have the ability to work more closely with facility administration and staff and with efforts to continuously improve the quality of care offered," she adds. "Our staff members take part in daily care meetings and in plans that relate to quality assurance and improvement. The arrangement allows us to be an integral part of the care team, and to work to assure quality rehabilitation services."

The efforts have been successful, as you'll find in reading the stories in the regionalized insert inside this issue of *Dialog*.

The service is epitomized, Diakon's rehab staff members believe, by the recent experience of one nursing care center resident.

"We have a woman receiving therapy as an in-patient at one of our nursing care centers who has requested she continue her therapy there when she

moves on to outpatient status," says Angele Tran-Pham, a Diakon regional rehab manager. "Normally, she would go to another provider for outpatient therapy, but she is so impressed with her therapy that she wants to come back for the outpatient portion."

Our regional format

Beginning on Page 3, you will find our newsletter content focuses on your geographic area. The section you receive—which we call *Diakonnection*—depends on your address or interest in a particular Diakon program or facility.

Four regionalized inserts are produced: Delaware-Maryland, Lower Susquehanna, Northeastern Pennsylvania, and Upper Susquehanna. The regions parallel synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The regionalized *Dialog* provides interesting information about the retirement villages and Congregation, Children, and Family Services programs in your area—and about those they serve.

If you are interested in receiving an insert different from the one in this issue, please contact Mary Seip at 1-888-582-2230, ext. 1215. In addition, each of the four inserts is available for viewing on our Web site, www.diakon.org.

INSIDE

Mission Map*Inside Front Cover*
Refugee Crisis*Inside Back Cover*
TimeLine: 1966*Back Cover*
Diakonnection
Regional Edition*Page 3*



'Shalom' at the core of our ministry

"Be glad and rejoice for ever and ever for what I am creating, because I now create Jerusalem 'Joy' and her people 'Gladness'" (Isaiah 65:18).

Joy and gladness—these are what our loving God intends for His people. And as the prophet Isaiah continues to describe this “new creation,” a vision for human life unfolds in which all people have:

- Shelter
- Food
- Work
- Health or healing
- An accepting community in which to live.

This vision of human life can be described as **Shalom**, the condition of peace and well-being. Of course, as we know all too well, there is a marked distinction between what God intends for us—**Shalom**—and the reality of human life on earth.

While God desires **shelter** for us, we experience homelessness...

While God desires that His people have **food**, we experience hunger...

While God desires that His people engage in meaningful **work** (that is, vocation), we experience meaningless or no labor...

While God desires **health** for us, we experience pain or lack of healing...

While God desires that His people be in **community**, we experience loneliness and separation.

We therefore find ourselves living in the midst of tension—the tension between God's will for His creation and the reality of our broken, sinful world. Of course, this tension is also where the church, in all its expressions, finds itself called to service, called to the task of working for **Shalom**.

Congregations gather around word and sacrament and then “go in peace to

serve the Lord” through ministries of food pantries, community health programs, homeless shelters, visitation, and more. The ELCA and its synods and other partners in ministry work to do the same through their social actions and programs.

In fact, working for Shalom is the business of the social ministry organizations of the church.

Diakon takes this “business” of **Shalom** very seriously. We know that we must have adequate resources to provide the services God's people need for wholeness. We seek ways to efficiently and effectively use Diakon's time, talents, and treasures to work for **Shalom**, through resources made available to us from fees, government payment systems, and gifts; our human resources; and our business skills and industry knowledge.

To help us in this task, Diakon has developed a “mission map”—a diagrammed statement of the vision and context for what is at the heart of our agency and what drives us. Our vision states that:

“Diakon is a social ministry organization of the ELCA called by God through

Jesus Christ to a ministry of service. Informed and empowered by the living Christ as attested through Scripture, and grounded in God's grace, we are in the world witnessing to God's creation.”

We carry out this vision for our ministry through:

- Working to be informed and empowered by the spirit of the living Christ (prayer, devotions, support groups, etc.)
- Advocating justice and mercy for all people (proactive ethics committees, upholding each person's dignity as a unique child of God)
- Affirming our Lutheran identity (“works” grounded in God's grace and our baptism, study, and consultation with the ELCA's social statements)
- Partnering with other expressions of the church (congregations, synods, colleges, seminaries, etc.)
- Witnessing through stewardship (understanding and affirming our business purpose, managing our resources, supporting those who have limited resources)
- Ministering through service (helping to create the five conditions God wills for us)
- Nourishing a sense of vocation (making certain all staff and vendors understand Diakon's call to ministry, providing opportunity for people to continue their own faith journey).

Working together, Diakon, other social ministry organizations, and all of our partners in the church can help to bring about God's **Shalom** for all people.

Thank you for your partnership in this work. I invite your support and your comments.

(Several concepts and ideas for this column have come from discussions with the Rev. Thomas Reinsel, the Rev. Lisa Leber, and Larry Webber, as well as the writings of the Rev. G. Frederick Aigner and the Rev. Dr. Foster McCurley. I am grateful to all of them for helping me on this mission journey of understanding.)



The Rev. Dawn E. Mckee,
Ph.D., President/CEO



ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE RETURN ON YOUR INVESTMENTS?

Many older persons are turning to *The Charitable Gift Annuity* because it accomplishes several important goals:

A higher rate of return for you and/or your loved one if you so choose (for a single person the rate may be as high as 11.5 percent).

Several important tax benefits.

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MAKE YOUR MONEY WORK FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS.

Call Diakon's Office of Advancement at 1-888-582-2230, ext. 1219, for more information.



Admissions crisis slows help for refugees

The United States' historic program of assistance to refugees from around the world is in jeopardy. And the change is affecting Diakon's Tressler Refugee and Immigration Services.

With offices in Mechanicsburg, Pa., and Baltimore, Md., the program is an affiliate of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and offers sponsorship recruitment, supportive services, and immigration assistance. Diakon's program serves the Allegheny, Delaware-Maryland, and Lower and Upper Susquehanna synods, while a similar program operated by Lutheran Children & Family Service of Eastern Pennsylvania serves the Northeastern and Southeastern Pennsylvania synods.

"President Bush set refugee admissions at 70,000 in fiscal year 2003, but first-quarter actual arrivals were only 3,823—not the 17,500 that would be needed to meet the number in the presidential

determination," says Alan Dudley, executive director of Tressler Refugee Services.

In the 18-month period from Oct. 1, 2001, through March 31, 2003, the Diakon offices in Mechanicsburg and Baltimore welcomed 225 refugees. "Typically in that time period, the offices would have had up to 600 resettlements. If not for the support of Diakon, the impact on services would have been far greater," he says. "Currently, we are focusing efforts on serving those clients who have arrived, but also anticipate reducing staff and other operational costs in an effort to maintain some capacity for resettlement services," should larger numbers eventually be admitted.

Refugee admissions ground to a halt in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, "crushing the hopes of thousands of refugees in desperate circumstances in refugee camps," he says.

Please turn to Page 4

Iraqi refugee hopes to be part of two worlds

Six years ago, with the help of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries' Tressler Refugee and Immigration Services, Kirmange Abdulqadir and his father fled Iraq and the then-dictatorship of Saddam Hussein for the promise of the United States.

"At that time, I was just worried about my safety and my family's safety," he says, adding that his mother, brother, and sister followed a year later. "We couldn't imagine we'd be in the situation [we are in now]; that we could be living good."

Before arriving in the Harrisburg, Pa., area in early 1997, Abdulqadir spent a few months in Guam where he interacted with the U.S. Air Force. In the years that

followed, thoughts of joining the Air Force were never far from Abdulqadir's mind as he worked and attended school part-time. "In the beginning, it was something I wanted to do for myself, for education and to meet new people," he explains. "That changed after 9/11," when he realized his goal had expanded to include helping his new country.

A Kurd, Abdulqadir says he owes a lot to the United States. "In my country, we never got any respect as a human being from the government. They were always trying to repress us, and we didn't have any freedom," he says. "I owe this to this country which gave me freedom and a better life for ourselves."

Please turn to Page 4



Address Service Requested

TIMELINE: 1966

All Diakon retirement communities focus on hospitality.

But one long-ago facility may have cornered the market on that—after all, it was created within a hotel!

The Lutheran Home at Hazleton, the second retirement facility operated by Lutheran Welfare Service of Northeastern Pennsylvania—whose ministries are today continued by Diakon—was developed within the former Altamont Hotel in downtown Hazleton.

LWS moved its retirement accommodations into the nine-story building, approved for eventual occupancy by 169 “residents and patients,” in April 1966. The sixth floor of the building was immediately renovated as a 31-bed “infirmiry”—the term then for nursing care—with the seventh floor altered to offer an additional 30 beds the following year.

By 1973, the facility had undergone extensive renovations to its dining rooms, recreational facilities, kitchen, and

administrative areas and featured a new physical-therapy suite and even a newly installed third elevator.

At near capacity as LWS prepared to celebrate its 15th anniversary that year, the facility included as part of its “family” residents of the Home for Homeless Women, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., which had been heavily damaged by flooding from Hurricane Agnes in 1972.

In 1976, the hotel’s grand ballroom was converted to the Chapel of Christ the

Servant, thanks to a \$5,000 gift from Trinity Lutheran Church, Lehighton, as well as hundreds of additional contributions.

Nursing care residents of the Hazleton home relocated to what is now called The Pavilion at Saint Luke Village in the fall of 1983 following completion of that facility, adjacent to The Manor at Saint Luke Village, which LWS had purchased in 1974. Other residents of the home moved into retirement-living accommodations now called Amity Place at Saint Luke Village.



The Altamont years before its conversion.