



Saint John's Hospice Newsletter

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**Helping those in need
on behalf of those who care.**

**Saint John's Hospice
seeks to be a
community
grounded in
faith and service
where homeless persons
find dignity,
respect,
nourishment
and opportunities
for new beginnings.**

YES!

By Kevin Barr, Program Director

Our circumstances are different. Our hurts, hopes, and brokenness are different. Many of our fears are different. But our healing journeys, I realize, all begin the same way with one word, YES! (Paula D'Arcy)

My name is Kevin Barr. I am the new Director of Saint John's Hospice. If there is one word that best describes what I intend to bring to SJH, it would simply be that one healing word - **YES!**

This "YES" has taken many forms in my life. A YES to my family (my wife and I have been married for 30 years and are blessed with 7 children), a YES to education (Master's Degree in Religious Studies from Saint Charles Seminary, adjunct professor at Neumann College), a YES to my parish (St Simon and Jude), and certainly a YES to Catholic Social Services (CSS).

Out of YES comes new beginnings, YES changes the broken heart, YES opens the eyes to beauty, YES moves the suffering, causing it to pass through. YES, I will accept the circumstances of my life. I will cry and mourn my losses - will hold them near until all their wisdom has been spilled - will accept them until God takes what man has meant for evil and creates of it a brilliant good! (D'Arcy)

It has been my work at CSS for the past seven

years where my YES has allowed God to become, for me, more of an active verb of participation ("Follow Me") than just a passive noun. It is where my YES and God's YES have merged into a vulnerable, yet beautiful and intimate dance. The movement that flows out of this dance is open and inclusive and rooted in "gospel" music. It is music playing a "spirituality of imperfection" where both God and I say YES to the wounded, the messy, and the powerlessness of life.

Our healing journeys ... all begin with one word, YES!

I am convinced that God has been leading this dance and that our steps were meant to move through SJH. It was obvious to me from the moment I first walked through these doors that God's inclusive, forgiving, compassionate spirit was moving freely and strongly through every person who enters this building. His spirit reaches the homeless through the time, talent and treasure of our generous volunteers, donors and employees who consistently say YES to men in need.

Thank you for opening your eyes and hearts to the beauty that is Saint John's Hospice. My prayer is that through our collective participation we continue to bless and be blessed by SJH. May the many ways we say YES to Saint John's help us to always recognize God's presence both "in the breadlines" and in our daily lives.



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**United Way Donor
Option #272**

**Combined Federal
Campaign #25893**



Reflections of the Acting Director

By Deborah Wagner

I had the pleasure to serve as Acting Director of Saint John's Hospice from March 24 through June 6, 2008 while we con-

ducted the search for a new Director after Joe Pinhak departed. As the Administrator of Housing and Homeless Services, I supervise the directors of our residences. They keep me well informed of the work they do and the challenges they face. There is nothing, however, like first hand experience.

On Monday June 6, I returned to my administrative duties. I miss walking into Saint John's every day and saying hello to the residents and staff in the dining room. People are so friendly. I miss the surprises that made each day unique: surprise inspections by funders, auditors, and the Health Department; envelopes containing checks, bequests, and notes of appreciation. Pleasant surprises — the donations that arrived on

our doorsteps at all hours of the day and night: breads and cakes, clothes new and used, toiletries, produce, meats, box lunches, trays of catered food, cases of water ... and the list goes on.

There were unpleasant surprises too: leaky roofs, broken copy machines, fire alarms that don't go off or do go off for no reason. Because Saint John's provides lunch and services to over 300 guests each day, our staff has learned to expect the unexpected: occasional fights and outbursts, 911 calls for medical emergencies, police serving warrants. But more often than not, we encounter men happy to get a good meal, mail, clothing, showers, and respect.

I have been so impressed with the staff, their dedication to the mission of Saint John's, their hard work and expertise. They want to make Saint John's better. I have

enjoyed the smiles of residents, our little exchanges on the stairs, and the gratitude expressed by many for having Saint John's in their lives. I know we are doing something right when I listen to them.

I always knew that groups of volunteers came to Saint John's to serve the noon meal.

What I didn't know is that they come every day.

They are family groups, school children, retired church members, employee groups ... and all

come with infectious enthusiasm. There are also our longstanding individual volunteers who perform duties almost indistinguishable from our staff.

I miss my daily routine at Saint John's, surprises and all. I am grateful to have worked here. It has enriched and energized me. I am better for it.

I miss my daily routine at Saint John's, surprises and all.

Homeless Arts Project at Saint John's Hospice

Lucy Edwards and Adaobi Kanu brought their **Homeless Art Project** to Saint John's Hospice in June 2008. They are recent Bryn Mawr graduates who received a grant from the Davis Projects for Peace foundation to fund the project. They are working with



Lucy Edwards & Adaobi Kanu

residents and staff four days per week—two afternoons and two evenings. **Dawn Ballard** and **Kayla MacDonald** are helping with the project.

The project involves dance, visual arts, and creative writing.

There will be a final exhibition in August that will include all phases of the

project, including life size tape sculptures.

In competing for this grant, Edwards and Kanu recognized that homeless men would contribute to peace by helping express compassion and understanding.

A recent Bryn Mawr College news article offers more details about the project. It's worth a look: www.brynmawr.edu/news/2008-05-01/peace.



Dawn Ballard helping with torso sculpture

Where Your Gifts Go ... July 2007 through June 2008

Saint John's Hospice housed **115 men** in our 40 beds. Average stay was 143 days.

The **Good Shepherd Program** housed **27 men** with medical needs for an average of 278 days.

We served **81,296 Day Services meals** ... that's **6,775** per month. That requires **1,100 casseroles** each month.

We distributed **clothing** to **6,081** men ... not counting our residents.

Brother Kip provided day service counseling to **6,372** men ... transportation help ...

setting up mailboxes ... getting ID cards ... his common sense support and advice.

Our **Coffee House** provides over 9,000 nights of rest each year to men on the street.

We receive **300** pieces of mail each day ... as a mailing address for over **2,000** men. We distribute toiletries from the mail room: shavers & shaving cream, soap, deodorant, toothbrushes and toothpaste.

What do we need?

• **Casseroles** — Call Anthony Willoughby, Food Services Manager, for recipes and a

pick-up schedule. (We had an excellent response to our recent Casserole appeal.)

- **Toiletries** — Small/travel sizes are best. Excellent school/group projects.
- **Clothing** — New XL tee-shirts are in high demand as well as new undershorts and socks.
- **Cash** — for operating costs ... fuel for our truck ... as well as making up the difference between donations and needs.

We are pleased to pick items up but we always accept these donations at our door.

Cranaleith Summer Gardening

Cranaleith Spiritual Center and the Sisters of Mercy are once again hosting Saint John's Hospice and other shelter residents for their summer gardening program. SJH volunteer **John Heary** is instrumental in driving and accompanying our men every Thursday to Cranaleith in the Somerton area of Philadelphia. There they plant, cultivate, and harvest vegetables and other plants. Sisters **Mary Trainor** and **Maria DiBello** also offer fellowship, lunch, and horticultural expertise each week—plus donate the fruits of the harvest to the participants.

Transitions & News Bits ...

Joe Pinhak, former director, left Saint John's Hospice in March 2008. He is the Social Services Coordinator of the new Saint John Neumann Place independent living apartments for seniors in South Philadelphia. We wish him continued blessings in his work for the church in Philadelphia.

Veronica (Ronnie) Palovcak, our secretary since 1996, retires on August 21st. She is the rock of stability at Saint John's—writes letters, orders supplies, tracks and acknowledges donations ... and a walking archive of our history. We offer her many blessings as well as heartfelt thanks for her generous time and work here for many years.

Miss **Joan Crawford**, our longest tenured employee at 19½ years, retires in October. She is Saint John's front door face to the world ... handling donations, mail and toiletries, phone calls, referral requests, and any other task thrown her way. We offer her our heartfelt blessings for many years in retirement.

Saint John's Hospice will attain its **45th Anniversary** on September 7, 2008 ... more to come ...

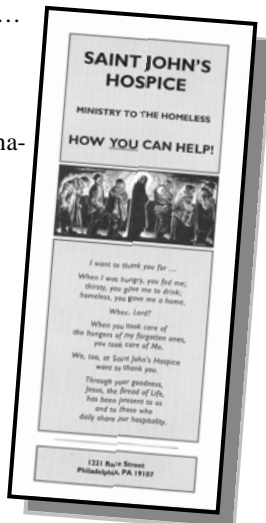
We will be a **United Way Days of Caring** volunteer site on September 10th and 13th ... see www.uwsepa.org for details ...

New Brochure ...

We recently published a new brochure that outlines the donation and volunteer opportunities for Saint John's Hospice and our Good Shepherd Program.

It shows the many service opportunities available for both groups and individuals.

Please contact us for copies ... for groups or church leaflet racks ...



The Many New Faces of Saint John's

New faces over the past nine months



Kevin Barr
Program Director
Out of YES comes new beginnings.



Jennifer Kemmerer
Good Shepherd Program Case Aide
I have seen first hand that we can not change God's message but God's message changes us.



Mamie Mathis
Food Services
This is rewarding—I feel very good about the service I can provide the community.



Kim Wilson
Food Services
It is most satisfying to help homeless men. I realize how blessed I am to have a roof over my head.



Mike D'Ambrosio
Food & Donation Pick-up Driver
Every day is a gift—that's why it's called the present. I have truly found my work passion.

Maria Johnson
Good Shepherd Program
Residential Aide
I am happy to support the men in their recovery.



Mustafa Brooks
Coffee House & Front Desk
Just simply giving a small kindness goes a long way.



Jim Christie
Day Services
Working here is an adventure—but it's wonderful to be surrounded by staff who are always so helpful and friendly to all.



Gerry Huot
Volunteer & Community
Relations Coordinator
It is a true blessing to work in the service of others.



Malcolm Kenyatta
Good Shepherd Program
Case Manager
I like most the chance to help my men.



Latoya Haynes-Thoby
Case Manager
SJH allows me to work with members of the community and help them move toward progress, stability, and self-sufficiency by humbling myself, being open to learn, and continued personal growth. I am honored to be a part of the SJH support community.



Saint John's Hospice



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Helping those in need on behalf of those who care

Introducing ...

Please call me *Gerry*.

I arrived in mid-April with the advantage of two weeks with Mike Mesa, our Capuchin Franciscan postulant who volunteered here for about nine months with skill and charisma. Thanks, Mike.

I am humbled to work here at Saint John's. *The Christ of the Breadline*—prominent in our dining room and on our newsletter, brochures, stationary, and business cards—is a powerful image of the real presence of Christ in our guests, residents, volunteers, donors and staff.

I am humbled to follow in the ministry of Sister Virginia and Beth Bresnan.

It is a blessing to serve here. Giving to the Church and service of others has always been a family priority and is part of what led me to Saint John's.

I am blessed by our volunteers' stories... those who come once and those who return

By Gerard Huot Volunteer & Community Relations Coordinator



over and over again...and by the stories of residents and guests who offer thanks to God everyday for their own blessings.

I grew up in Providence, Rhode Island, but spent most of my life in Aurora, Colorado (a Denver suburb) where Ann and I raised our two children, Christopher and Elizabeth.

I am humbled to follow in the ministry of Sister Virginia and Beth Bresnan.

We were active in a young, vibrant, and life-giving parish where Ann was Sacrament Preparation Coordinator and I was committed to music, liturgy, RCIA, and youth ministries. I was a training manager for the Air Force and Space Command.

In summer 2005, Ann and I packed up our belongings and moved to Philadelphia. Both our children had found their way here. Christopher had married Heather, whom he met and worked with at Saint Francis Inn...

and had provided us a grandson. Elizabeth was at Temple, engaged to Brent, and preparing for a 2006 Philadelphia wedding. We are much closer also to many of my own family in and around Rhode Island.

I often speak to Beth...she wishes all her best and very much misses her ministry here. What a blessing she is! Please offer a prayer for her...as I do.

We have updated our brochure, *How You Can Help!* Call me for copies...it describes our programs and volunteer and donor opportunities. Next project...our website.

I have met many volunteers and donors. And that is such a joy in my life. I look forward to meeting many, many more. There is much to do and speak of in the months ahead. I look forward to it and I am excited!