

THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

My experience at the Bernardine Center began as a school project, but over the past 16 weeks, it has grown into much more than that. This summer, I volunteered my Wednesdays to the BC helping out with the food pantry and staying past noon when the doors closed to help out however I could as an intern. From the minute I met the staff back in April and found out how much they give back to the community, I knew it was a place I wanted to stay. Being an English major with minors in Professional Writing and Journalism, I volunteered any assistance in those areas that they needed. Even though I have done little writing beyond one article for them, and was more of an organizer and cleaner, I am still grateful that I can talk about my experience with future employers and how it has changed me as a person.

I feel like a real part of the BC, and that my contributions, no matter how small, are making an impact on at least one individual's life. Knowing that is one of the main reasons that I stayed beyond the school project, and will continue to stay during the school year. From this experience I have grown a lot as an individual and have realized how simple it really is to make a difference. I believe that everything happens for a reason, and being matched up with the BC for a school project is one of the best experiences that happened to me. The staff members are among the nicest and most selfless people I have met in my life, and I look forward to volunteering my time whenever I can.



By Lisa Whittaker
Student at Widener University

Before volunteering here, I admit I was rather selfish with my free time, but just one day at the Food Cupboard showed me how simple volunteering 3 hours of my day is, and how much of a positive impact it has on everyone who walks through the doors. Every program that they provide promotes self sufficiency rather than just giving hand outs. Their emphasis on not just providing hand outs, but giving people confidence, independence and knowledge to do things without depending on others is admirable, and helps to strengthen the community.



Bernardine Center is grateful to United Way of Southeast Delaware County that facilitated its American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Grant for our Food Pantry Program.

Yes, I want to help the Bernardine Center. Enclosed is my contribution in the amount of
 \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$Other

Name _____
 Business/Organization _____
 Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please make checks payable to: **Bernardine Center** 2625 W. Ninth St. Chester, PA 19013
 610-497-3225 (v) 610-497-3659 (f) • Director@bernardinecenter.org • www.bernardinecenter.org

Bernardine Center 2009 Holiday Hopes

2625 W. 9th Street • Chester, PA 19013 • 610-497-3225

Wish list for THANKSGIVING

Gifts for Families-in-Need

Needed between October 15 - December 30

- Low-sodium or fat-free soups
- Wheat pasta or spaghetti
- Jello and pudding mixes
- Cake and cookie mixes
- Nuts
- Canned meats and fruit
- Juices – liquid or powder mixes
- Turkeys, hams
- Diabetic items –
 Equal, Splenda
 Jello, pudding
 Syrup, Jelly
- Baby formula – “Good Start” regular and soy

Wish List for CHRISTMAS

Gifts for Families-in-Need

Needed between October 15 - December 30

- Bed Sheets- single and queen sizes
- Blankets – single and queen sizes
- Socks – for adults
- Diapers – sizes 2-6 and Pull-Ups
- Baby Wipes, shampoo, lotion, and baby wash
- Educational Toys
- Gift Certificates – Shop-Rite, Acme, Pathmark, Amelia's, save-A-Lot, K-Mart
- Personal Items –
 Shampoo, Conditioner
 Shaving Cream, Razors
 Soap, Lotion

Merry Christmas



The BC Times

A Newsletter of The Bernardine Center

A Ministry of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters

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FALL/WINTER 2009

Partnering for Plentiful Produce

The first garden season of the Bernardine Center has been completed and the memory of how the garden began will be “seed” for future gardens. Planning and measuring began last February. By May, 4' x 8' beds were being built. The soil was amended with rich mushroom soil and renters began to plant tomatoes and peppers by June. The first harvest was July 15th and continued until the first week of October. Along with tomatoes and peppers, were radishes, zucchini, cucumbers, eggplants, green beans, cherry tomatoes, carrots, and herbs. Children from the neighborhood, BC clients, and volunteers all enjoyed watching their vegetables grow. Yet produce is not the only reward of a community garden. Working with others, while feeling the warmth of the sun and the coolness of the soil, enriches the spirit of a gardener. Looking at a fully grown garden fills one with awe and amazement realizing that everything began from a tiny seed or very small plant. To quote the lines of a familiar song, “Wonder of wonders! Miracle! Miracle!” Yes, a community garden does feed both body and soul.

By Sr. Josandra Ciucci.



Mission Statement

The Bernardine Center provides a helping hand to low-income Chester area residents by distributing emergency or supplemental food and supplies.

The Bernardine Center also offers educational, spiritual and advocacy programs to help clients build better lives for themselves, their families and communities.

All the ministries of the Bernardine Center are rooted in Franciscan hospitality and the social teachings of our Catholic Christian tradition.

Meeting of Friends

We are so grateful to Chester Monthly Meeting of Friends who gifted the Bernardine Center with a \$786 grant to start up our first BC Community Garden. Your gift encourages us to continue our efforts at helping our clients and neighbors to achieve some measure of local and sustainable food sufficiency.

Thanks!

The Bernardine Center
 2625 West Ninth Street
 Chester, PA 19013



Volunteers Are Integral to Bernardine Center's Ministry

You gave 29,000 Hours of Dedicated Service to BC during the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year

*We Thank You,
Thank You, Thank You
For Your Time and Dedication!*



"We're happy to be helping out and working with great people." Karen and Jim



Chuck, a Master Gardener, provided guidance and hands-on expertise to manage our successful community garden.



Sister Marinetta assists BC staff to entertain children while mothers participate in SuperCupboard.



Fred tears down extra boxes after food delivery; helps pack food for clients to take home.



"It's a pleasure to volunteer here." Martha provides service regularly on Wednesdays during Food Pantry.



Melinda guides women to create Container gardens during a recent SuperCupboard Program.



Carol (L) provides resources and client referrals that are needed during Food Pantry.



Judy helps organize and distribute donated bread and desserts for food pantry every Wednesday.



Jim packs up food for clients readying it to take home.



Bette interviews clients who come for food distribution.



Bill packs the food for clients to take home on food pantry days.



Tim volunteers his service in a myriad of ways. Here he assists Sr. Josandra to begin the BC Community Garden.



Judy assists to serve a meal during West Side Brunch; also helps regularly



Sharon helps to gather food for clients during Tuesday Food Pantry.



Sister Genny delights in overseeing the bread and dessert distribution during Food Pantry



"Volunteering here makes me realize how blessed I am." Terry



"I just like helping less fortunate people. We are all called to help." Candy



Maryann (L) and Pat (middle) assist Sr. Carolyn (R) each week to serve West Side Brunch.

In every community there is work to be done. In every nation there are wounds to heal. In every heart there is the power to do it.

Marianne Williamson

Catholic Human Services Foundation and Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Mission Fund

...provide major grant monies for the Bernardine Center to install a food lift between two floors.

The food lift, sometimes called a dumbwaiter, enables the staff and volunteers to store more food and to move it with greater ease between the basement storage area and the first floor where food is separated and prepared for weekly Food Pantry distribution to low-income families seeking emergency or supplemental food. During FY 2008-2009, BC has distributed 207,675 pounds of food equaling 101,205 meals to needy families.



For too many years, staff and volunteers of BC traipsed up and down steps to and from the basement in order to store canned and jarred food items that were in excess of the available shelving on the first floor where food pantry distribution and West Side Brunch programs occurred. Needless to say, this made for a tedious and body-aching daily task.

So on April 2, 2009 city permits arrived and hands-on electrical and plumbing work began to prepare the site for the shaft construction and the actual installation of the mechanical portion of the food lift that can carry up to 300 pounds of canned food in one trip between floors. After what seemed like forever, but was really only three months of construction work, the food-lift was complete. Probably those doing the construction and installation were weary of having their pictures taken as progress was recorded in photos.

A dedication ceremony on June 30th honored those who had been instrumental in facilitating this burden-relieving accomplishment. A plaque outside the food-lift reads:

*With sincere gratitude to those who
Lighten the Way and Bring Hope
through their loving and generous
support of Bernardine Center
Catholic Human Services
Foundation
Bernardine Franciscan Sisters
Mary Ellen O'Keefe Memorial*

