



In Gratitude for Those Who Contributed to the Feinstein Challenge

“Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.”
Marcel Proust



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Grateful for Bernardine Center

Do we ever know the quality of another's life or the blessings and encumbrances with which another lives? Let me introduce you to Terry Benson, a woman of much love and faith who utilizes the services provided by Bernardine Center. Terry, who is 54 years of age, lives in her home that houses eight family members including her ailing mother as well as adult children and grandchildren. Her mother is recovering from a stroke which caused right-sided paralysis. Terry gets her to physical therapy regularly as well as provides daily activities to assist her in strengthening her right arm. Her eldest daughter, in her 30s, is borderline mentally challenged needing special guidance and skills that Terry provides. Another daughter with two children shares the home while a fourth daughter attends Community College and a son is in high school.



As the middle child, Terry visits two ill brothers for homecare oversight to manage medication intake and home assistance. Terry receives social security benefits and food stamps, and acknowledges that she manages adequately for three weeks but really needs food assistance for the fourth week of each month. Because of Bernardine Center, "my grandkids go to school fed and ready to learn."

Terry began visiting the Bernardine Center several years ago for supplemental food assistance. "I don't mind going there because the workers are taking their time — time they could be doing something else — to serve us the food that helps us. In helping me and my family, the Center helps the community as well. The workers are so kind and the food is a blessing to our family." Terry and her daughter participated together in a Bernardine Center SuperCupboard program "where I learned how to cook healthy meals." When Terry's granddaughter was taken away from her mother by Children and Youth Services, Terry and her daughter attended Bernardine Center's "Parenting Classes" as one step in getting her granddaughter returned to the home. "Bernardine Center always seems to have some program I need when I'm down and out, like the diapers, shampoo, toothpaste, toilet paper and even the clothes I am able to get when I go there."

Some days when we think we're at the end of our rope, maybe we need to remember that other peoples' ropes might be a lot shorter than ours, and give thanks for our own unidentified blessings. Terry says "I'll always get by because God is always there directing me where to go."



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SUMMER 2011

THE Bernardine Center

A NEWSLETTER OF THE BERNARDINE CENTER

TIMES

A Ministry of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters

Sister Maria Denise Prorock Our Staff Profile

I have been on the staff of Bernardine Center since 2002. I was born and raised in the city of Chester and attended St. Hedwig's Parish and School and graduated from the former Notre Dame High School in Moylan, PA.

After being in the field of education for approximately forty years which included teaching Junior High School students and holding the position of Principal, I felt that I needed a change in ministry. Since the Mission Statement of my religious community, the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, contains the phrase "We are to work with and on behalf of the poor." I was drawn to the Bernardine Center, where I knew that this mandate could be fulfilled.

My position here is somewhat varied but I am chiefly concerned with preparing clothing donations and baby items which are so generously shared with the Center. I am also charged with the operation of our mini thrift shop which is aptly named "Bernardine Bargains." We offer gently used and new clothing to our clients at a minimal price.

Meeting clients who come to our food pantry is an enjoyable experience. It gives me an opportunity to speak with and to get to know many people who come from various backgrounds.

The Center offers me a challenge to grow each day in the spirit and love of the Lord for those I meet on a daily basis. The smiles and the many times I hear "Thank you" make my day! In all sincerity, I can truly say that I receive much more than I give.



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.

Hunger and the U.S. Budget



It's mid-June and the Bernardine Center community garden beds are already flourishing with veggie growth, thanks in great part to the staff of Fisher Tank Company who started the seedlings at work and then to Chuck, our Master Gardener, who guided novice gardeners in planting their gifted seedling plants.



Bernardine Center serves its Westside Brunch on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.



Amid the tense budget climate in Washington, D.C., Bread for the World members www.bread.org/hunger are urging their elected representatives to form a circle of protection around the programs for hungry and poor people when Congress considers legislation to reduce federal deficits. As people of faith, we know that society should protect its most vulnerable members – not cut programs that help to ensure that everyone has basic necessities. This is why we advocate to maintain and to fund programs such as Women, Infants and Children nutritional supplements (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Current proposals to reduce the resources available to hungry and poor people do not make sense. Ordinarily, people think of budget cuts as saving money. However, cutting the budget does not save money because it only adds to costs in other areas. When families don't have enough money for varied and nutritious meals, including fresh fruits and vegetables as well as whole grains, children start the school day already depleted and unable to retain new ideas and parents' energy and efficiency output at work and home is diminished.

Sufficient data is available showing that hunger and poverty increase the healthcare costs of adults and children, both now and for years to come. Rising healthcare costs are already a significant cause of the budget deficit. Research shows that even relatively brief periods of childhood poverty and hunger can cause a person long-term harm - such as dropping out of school and lower level jobs - that in the long term diminishes the integrity of the family and our country.

The cost of hunger and poverty is substantial. A study conducted by Harry Holzer of Georgetown University found that a conservative estimate of its cost was \$500 billion per year, due

largely to lower productivity and higher health care costs.

The arguments against cutting international poverty-focused assistance are similar to those against cutting U.S. safety net programs, but magnified. Spending on international poverty focused programs is less than one percent of the budget. However, the consequences of extreme poverty and malnutrition are clearly more severe.

International poverty- focused programs achieve a great deal with modest resources. Lives can literally be saved for a few dollars each. Thus, any savings from budget cuts would be heavily outweighed by the lost opportunities they create-- to build a more productive economy, develop a more educated workforce, raise healthier children, and save lives.

Material adapted from Bread for the World's website 6/11

For information on hunger in Delaware County, go to www.bernardinecenter.org; click on "Voices of Hunger" video on the right side of the home page.



We are grateful to all donors who help us keep our pantry shelves stocked with the precious gift of food. Marylou, Food Pantry Manager, does a great job in purchasing, separating and organizing the food pantry shelves in preparation for food distribution days.

What's New at Bernardine Center?



(L) Sr. Sandra meets with DC-based legislative aide, Bianca Lacey, to discuss the Violence Against Women Act - VAWA

(R) Deacon Tim from St. Francis of Assisi Parish delivers cases of donated food to BC to support our food pantry service



(L) James, (far left) BC's Volunteer in Mission, Tonia, Eva, and Paul, BC clients, accompany Lillian Maxwell from "Weed and Seed" to Harrisburg to urge legislators to continue funding for PCCD, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. BC presently benefits from PCCD funding for its computer lab.

(R) "Weed & Seed" advocates, including Bernardine Center's volunteer and clients, proudly pose on the capitol steps in Harrisburg.



(L) Bernardine Center in 1986

(R) Bernardine Center today



(L) Sr. Sandra shares Bernardine Center's mission with Soccer Hall of Fame banquet attendees.

(R) Sr. Sandra and Marylou pose with Rob Smith Jr., Vice-President of Soccer Development & Relations, at the Soccer Hall of Fame banquet in May. Soccer Hall of Fame donated 100 coats to BC this past winter.



What's New at Bernardine Center?

Cont.



(L) Students from Widener Partnership Charter School donate their garden-grown lettuce to BC to support its brunch program.

(R) Charter School students serve brunch and help staff to separate food donations.



(L) Clients, Pat and Mary Anne, choose a new winter coat from a gift of new coats donated by Boscov's

(R) Marylou & Terry attend annual Food Conference, "The Challenge of Feeding Our Diverse Communities in Delaware County" held at Widener University.



(L) Some of BC's recycling committee members, Marylou, Sr. Sandra, Terry & Sr. Carolyn, get an inside look at a recycling plant as incentive to enhance BC's own recycling efforts.

(R) James (2nd from left) taught computer students, Tonia, Reynaldo, Rosemary & Daisy to make computer-generated Valentine cards for loved ones.



(L) Many more persons seek assistance through BC's Westside Brunch which continues 3 times each week.

(R) Mike and Mike spent Memorial Day weekend resurfacing the parking lot for Bernardine Center as well as for the Medical Office next door. Their smiles overshadow the fatigue and heat they endured. Thanks, Guys!

