

For It Is in Giving, That We Receive...

St. Francis of Assisi

**Bernardine Center is so grateful to
W.W. SMITH CHARITABLE TRUST
for the \$13,500 grant to service its Food Programs**

It is heart-warming that there really are individuals who care about the needs of others, and actually act to show that concern. In a world where too many today look out for themselves as number one, there is still an ethic of helping. We are all, in the overall picture, interdependent. Bernardine Center is privileged to have many persons who assist its staff to meet the needs of families who struggle to get through each day without enough food for their children and who prefer lightly used clothing to meet needs rather than purchasing new clothing at hyper-inflated prices. The minimal income our clients do receive pays the rent and buys gas for transportation to work – if it can stretch that far.

Mary Cummings shares how and why she volunteers, “As a member of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish, I was familiar with the Bernardine Sisters who live at our parish convent. One Sunday in the Church Bulletin there was a notice that the Center was seeking volunteers. After being interviewed by Sr. Sandra I began volunteering as a basic computer tutor in October 2010. Today I volunteer four mornings a week and have added tutoring of English as a Second Language to my service after preparing as an ESL tutor at the Delaware County Literacy Center.

I hope my contribution will go a long way in helping Bernardine Center meet its mission.”



When I retired from teaching I was looking for something that I could do to give back to the community. Facilitating “Parenting Classes” has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have encountered.
Sandra Powell



I love to donate to help others because I have experienced hard times. When I drive away after giving, I feel so good and glad I could help.
Connie Klenotiz



(L) Michelle Montgomery from W.W. Smith Charitable Trust visits Bernardine Center Food Pantry with (R) Sr. Sandra, Director.



I am very happy that I decided to volunteer. Coming here has given me a new and different insight into the world of poverty.
Mary Cummings



It's a rewarding experience to give back to the community.
Mike Reyes



I've been pretty fortunate during my life and I feel it is time to give something back.
Jim Judge

Advocacy Education Update

PREP CLASS - Prepared Renter Program, an 8-week series of 2-hour classes, was sponsored by “Residential Living Options of Delaware County” and held at Bernardine Center. Adult students learned renting fundamentals, understanding the ramifications of their personal history for renting options, the process of locating available housing, understanding a lease, dealing with money problems, and starting off right as a new renter. Ten of 17 students completed the series. Certificates of Achievement were presented during a celebratory luncheon held at Bernardine Center on October 27th.



Interested in registering for Anger Management or Parenting Classes, check Bernardine Center website for dates and times

www.bernardinecenter.org



Bernardine Center
2625 West Ninth Street,
Chester, PA 19013
www.bernardinecenter.org

Stamp



2625 West Ninth Street,
Chester, PA 19013
P: 610.497.3225
F: 610.497.3659
director@bernardinecenter.org
www.bernardinecenter.org

WINTER 2011

THE A NEWSLETTER OF THE BERNARDINE CENTER
BernardineCenter

TIMES
A Ministry of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters

“For I was hungry and you gave me food...” Mt.25:35

This morning as I finished my prayer, I began thinking about food. What will I have for breakfast today? Am I hungry enough for a “big” breakfast or will toast and a piece of fruit fill me up? How many choices are available to me when I open up the refrigerator or the cupboard!

I pray: *O gracious God, how often I eat from your table of plenty and have no thought about those who have no choices, no food in their refrigerator or in their cupboards! How blessed I am. Please, gracious Creator of all Earth's resources, show me how to share from the abundance that you shower upon me! As I work among families who are poor, teach me to recognize my own poverty that prevents me from recognizing the needs of my sisters and brothers!*

More than 43.5 million people in the U.S. live below the poverty line; that is one in every seven Americans (*Bread for the World, October-November 2010 Newsletter*). How can we, as Americans in one of the world's wealthiest nations, stand by in numbness, anger, or indifference, while 25% of U.S. children under the age of five live in poverty and go hungry daily?

During the last fiscal year, Bernardine Center provided 142,443 supplemental meals to 2,687 families, supplying 6,783 individuals with take-home meals during distribution of food from its pantry. Westside Brunch served 4,716 hot, cooked meals, almost twice as many as the previous year. Volunteers and staff could not have accomplished this feat without YOU who so generously donate funds and food to our Center. New families arrive each week; some who donated food now receive food because of loss of employment or because of underemployment. Can this be what the “Occupy” movements around the world are all about? Poor families work hard for every penny they earn, yet they are left behind, while corporations command the upper hand.

How has it come to this?

What might I be doing that creates an atmosphere of poverty in my community? Do the structures that create the conditions for poverty benefit me and my life-style? How can I act collaboratively with persons in poverty in my community to diminish the barriers that oppress them?

Daily I pray the “*Our Father*.” The line that I struggle with is “*Your kin'dom come, your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven...*” God's kin'dom is meant to be here on Earth. Those parents who struggle to feed their families each day must be bewildered, questioning the so-called kin'dom. I certainly question it. How do I help to bring about God's reign here on Earth, today, right now?

Gracious Creator and Sustainer God, imbue me with a generous heart that I might offer hospitality to anyone in need – that I might work each moment to bring the kin'dom of God – peace, compassion, mercy, relief of hunger and homelessness - to this Earth now!



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.

Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread!



We at Bernardine Center thank each of you, as our gracious donors, for the food, funds, clothing and supplies that you provide for our struggling families!

<u>Food Pantry</u>	<u>August 2011</u>	<u>September 2011</u>	<u>October 2011</u>
Households	245	277	272
• Children	275	303	247
• Adults	311	319	363
• Seniors	98	108	104
Meals provided	14,166	15,309	14,994
Emergency food	2	9	5
Westside Brunch			
Households	531	413	515
• Children	32	24	13
• Adult	358	300	413
• Seniors	131	115	110
Meals served	563	437	528
Volunteer hours	322	466	495
Clothing items distributed	245	323	319
Supplies	64	75	75
personal care, diapers, baby items distributed			



(L) Westside Brunch offers a warm meal three times each week. The hospitality room welcomes 30 to 55 meal-seekers each of these days.

(R) Food donations are always a "special delivery" for us.



Bernardine Center Wish List

Holiday Food Items

Turkeys or hams,
Canned yams, sweet potatoes or white potatoes
Turkey stuffing mix
Cranberry sauce
Jello or pudding mix
1% or 2% milk, no refrigeration needed
Apple or cranberry juice
Mayonnaise, filled salt & pepper shakers
Sugar, flour
Can opener

Staple Food Items

1-lb canned hams
Tuna
Spam
Canned or frozen chicken
Beef Stew
Chicken & dumplings
Canned salmon



Non-Food Items

Laundry soap
Toilet paper
Toothpaste
Tooth brush
Deodorant
Shampoo/ conditioner
Hair brush, comb
First aid items: bandaids, hand sanitizer, antibiotic ointment
Towel & washcloth set
Diapers size 3 & up
Pull ups 2T & up
Diaper wipes



Take the Food Stamp Challenge

The United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania reports that the Jewish Council for Public Affairs is challenging citizens to take the "Food Stamp Challenge." Are you willing to challenge yourself and your family to walk in another's moccasins?

I participated in an immersion experience several years ago that sent groups of four members per team to the supermarket with \$12.00 for a day's worth of food for each team. The goal was to see how each group would compromise in deciding on the essential foods to purchase, while trying also to purchase balanced meals for the day. So the first obstacle of course was to come to a consensus, like a family, on what foods would meet the needs of the family.

So, if you are a risk taker, like challenges, or just want the experience, make a plan to live for one week on the average food stamp allotment.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs is encouraging community leaders across the nation to take the Food Stamp Challenge so they might better understand the workings of the program on a personal level and to highlight the important role that food programs play in alleviating hunger.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture which oversees the Food Stamp Program reported that the average allowable benefit in 2010 was \$133.79 monthly, that was \$4.50 a day or \$1.50 a meal. It won't be easy. Today an orange costs \$1.00 and a grapefruit costs \$1.50. You might find like many struggling families that healthier fruit and vegetables go by the wayside, while less healthy but filling white bread and potatoes fill your shopping bag. Take the challenge!



Interested in Contributing to Bernardine Center? Let Me Share the Ways!

Offer free professional repair work, e.g., masonry, roof or gutter repairs
Donate financially through a workplace United Way Campaign
Donate fresh produce for food pantry distribution
Hold a diaper or personal care item collection

Volunteer time sorting and shelving food
Make a monthly financial contribution
Prepare and serve a brunch
Hold a food drive
Weed our garden
Make casseroles
Teach a class

