

Your Generosity Overwhelms Us

We thank you for your generous monetary donations of October 1, 2010 through January 7, 2011 that helped us meet holiday needs!

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Richard & Fran Alloway
Vincent & Veronica Anderson
Bernardine Franciscan Sisters
James & Diana Billinger
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Bishop Shanahan High School
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William & Grace Wasch
Mary Kay Weldon
Edwin & Mary Youtz
Charles & Ann Zech
Clara Zukowski

Ways You Can Help Us Serve Others

We invite you to celebrate our 25th anniversary of serving families in Chester by a donation that helps sustain our service.

I am happy to donate:

\$25,000 _____

\$2,500 _____

\$250 _____

\$25 _____

Your kind and generous donation helps us provide emergency and supplemental food, healthy brunches, personal care supplies, educational programming, and support to families seeking our assistance during tough times.

Feinstein Challenge Grant

It is that time of year again! The Feinstein Foundation is offering BC the opportunity to increase its contributions. Feinstein Foundation will apportion its \$1 million funds based on the percentage of cash and food donations BC receives from donors from March 1 through April 30, 2011. So if you are considering a monetary or food donation to BC, **this is a great time to do so! We appreciate your support.**

Do you know that Bernardine Center is a recipient of funding in the Donor Choice Program for United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania.



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Stamp



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WINTER 2011

THE A NEWSLETTER OF THE BERNARDINE CENTER
BernardineCenter

TIMES
A Ministry of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters

Bernardine Center Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary

Bernardine Center – a place to receive a warm helping hand – opened its door to Chester's families on February 14, 1986. What a wonderful way to celebrate Valentine's Day!

Initially, and until today, BC offered emergency and supplemental food for those individuals struggling to put meals on their family tables. In the beginning, the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, who founded the Center, drove weekly to the Philadelphia Food Bank loading their cars with crates of food to bring back to Chester anticipating distribution to families seeking food assistance. BC staff and volunteers bagged three days of meals for each family member; that is, a family of four received twelve supplemental meals for the month. Over the succeeding years BC staff adapted to changing needs.

Today, clients coming to the BC food pantry complete a menu, itemized by food pyramid categories, based on the food items stocked on the pantry shelves; staff and volunteers package the food according to menu requests. This provides some choice of food items, and diminishes wasted food if individuals do not, or can not, eat certain types of foods. Presently, BC provides 21 meals per family member – that is, one week of supplemental food for a family for the month. Menus vary weekly based on food purchases and incoming food donations.

As an enhancement to our food pantry services, BC initiated its first SuperCupboard program in November 1987 offering low-income women with children opportunities to learn about and to prepare diverse, balanced, nutritious meals based on food generally received from a food pantry. Budgeting for the most efficient purchase of food became an integral dimension of the program. The BC 8-week SuperCupboard series became a model for other nutritional programs around the country.



The "Founding Four"
Sr. Rose – Founding Director
Sr. Gerald – General Minister of
Bernardine Franciscan Sisters,
Sr. Materna and Sr. Aurelian



SuperCupboard program of 2003 offers low-income women with children opportunities to learn efficient and diverse ways to prepare food pantry foods, to budget carefully when shopping, as well as to enhance life skills for improved self-sufficiency.



We dedicated the food lift on June 2009 thanks to Catholic Human Services Foundation, Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, and as a memorial to our volunteer, Mary Ellen O'Keefe



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.



Widener University nursing students orchestrated a Halloween party for children from our neighborhood and entertained with crafts, face painting, and snacks.



Sr. Aurelian stocks the food pantry shelves in the beginning days

Celebrating Our 25th Anniversary

Continued

Bernardine Center staff has not stood still. Over the years it added social justice and advocacy programming, empowering individuals to address the root causes of their poverty and hunger. Groups of clients and staff traveled to Washington, DC to speak on the Millennium Challenge Goals and to Harrisburg to speak up about State Food Purchase Program budgets.

BC's hospitality doors continued to open with its West Side Brunch in 2001, meeting a need for individuals on the west side of the city to receive a free, warm, nutritious brunch meal. Today BC serves brunches three times a week for the many individuals who seek not only a warm meal but a social outlet and friendships as well.

In 2002 staff began missing certain senior individuals who had utilized the food pantry services. Calls to their homes uncovered their inability to get to the Center because of compromised mobility or other health problems. Bernardine Center's homebound food delivery became an added ministry to insure that disabled seniors had adequate food resources monthly.

New and gently-used clothing has always been accessible for those families looking to deck themselves out for job interviews, school, or warm winter and cool summer attire. Personal care supplies, new warm winter blankets, bed sheets, coats, scarves and gloves are annual provisions offered to families seeking support.

Installation of the food lift, or dumbwaiter, in June 2009 eased a bit of the stair-climbing-carrying power that staff and volunteers endured for all the past years. The goodwill and brawn with which staff and volunteers receive, separate, shelve and then distribute thousands of pounds of food weekly is an every day, behind the scenes, feat.

Eight raised garden beds enhanced BC's corner lot as the community garden debuted in spring 2009 providing an opportunity for food-insecure families to grow some of their own healthy produce. Integral to the garden are assistance and oversight by our cheerful and generous master gardener as well as the support of Chester Friends Meeting.

BC celebrated, in October 2009, the completion and dedication of its awesome mural depicting bounteous creation. "Spring Forth," as it is entitled, graces our outside wall due to the artistry of Paul Downie and the support of the Community Arts Center in Wallingford.

Over these 25 years of service to the residents of Chester, Bernardine Center has made every effort to foresee and adapt to the changing needs of families seeking encouragement. On-going Parenting, Anger Management, Computer, and English as a Second Language Classes are just a few of BC's continuing opportunities. None of these efforts would be successful without the loyal and generous contributions of our faithful donors who support our every program. **Each of YOU is blessing to us and celebrates this 25th anniversary with Bernardine Center! Thank you so much!**



Fifth anniversary celebration with staff Sr. Therese Immaculate, Sr. Grace, Sr. Veronica, Sr. Mary Margaret, General Minister, and Sr. Rose, BC Director



Spring 2008 expansion of the computer lab enhanced with English-Spanish programming helped with ESL and the "Latina" SuperCupboard - gratitude to Connelly Foundation



Easter Brunch for families - Brunches are provided with assistance from Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program (EFSN) & our generous donors



The community garden's first growing season began April 2009, with oversight by Chuck, our Master Gardener and financial assistance from Chester Friends Meeting

Generous Hearts and Hands Serve Many

**October 1, 2010 through January 7, 2011
saw much activity at Bernardine Center
preparing for Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays**

During this period of time, BC:

- ♥ **Volunteers provided 1,924 hours of service**
- ♥ **Distributed 98,230 pounds of food through the food pantry**
- ♥ **Received 88,165 pounds of food through donations**
- ♥ **Provided 871 Thanksgiving meals to:**
 - 325 households
 - 345 children
 - 408 adults
 - 118 seniors
- ♥ **Provided 864 Christmas meals to:**
 - 314 households
 - 338 children
 - 408 adults
 - 118 seniors
- ♥ **Provided 1,612 West Side Brunch meals to:**
 - 1,579 households
 - 33 children
 - 1,269 adults
 - 310 seniors
- ♥ **Provided 53,235 meals from Food Pantry to:**
 - 955 households (21 meals/person in family)
 - 1,028 children
 - 1,168 adults
 - 339 seniors
- ♥ **Distributed:**
 - 113 pair of underwear
 - 256 coats
 - 60 fleece jackets
 - 30 sets of gloves and hats
 - 228 t-shirts
 - 14 other clothing
 - 99 toys
 - 45 sets of bed sheets or blankets
 - 300 infant items
 - 331 bags of personal care items
- ♥ **Spent \$20,852 on food for food pantry needs**



A Christmas gift well worth waiting for from the Sons of Ben - \$10,000 in our Christmas stocking! Marylou, Sr. Sandra, and Sr. Carolyn gladly accept the check from (L)Mark and Rick Laudenslager, and (R) Tom Rolletta



Our Bernardine Franciscan Sisters from Reading, PA provide brunch for our clients



The Philadelphia Union soccer team, SEPA Soccer Hall of Fame, Sons of Ben and Caldwell Bankers donate 200 coats for clients at Bernardine Center

Your Time and Talent Are Precious Gifts To Us

In-kind Gifts of October 1, 2010 through January 7, 2011

Alvernia University
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Mr. & Mrs. Blake
Boscov's Granite Run
Jane Brennan
Tom Brinker & Friends
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Butera
Community Art Center - Wallingford
Peggy Cully
ConocoPhillips
Curves-Havertown
Janet Czarnota
Delaware County Juvenile Probation
Regina DelRaso
Lisa DeProphetis
Mike & Kim Durante
Cass Englert
Essington Boy Scouts
Thomas J. Feayas
Dave & MaryAnn Fiebert
Charlotte Flynn
Tom & Trish Gallagher
Keith Harvin
Theresa Hedlund & CCD Class
Timothy Hoppe & Boy Scout Troop 145
Pete & Marie Hosler
Betty Howanski
James & Charlotte Hyer
Immaculate Conception of Lourdes Parish
J & J Snack Foods Corp
Joseph Silvestri & Son, Inc
Jim Judge
George & Peg Kau
Thomas Kendus
Connie Klenotiz
Mr. & Mrs. Kopko
Ramon & Marylou Laboy

David & Marilyn Lemmerman
Phyllis Lucas
Debbie Luniewski
Dolores Luniewski
Magellan Behavioral Health
James McCabe
Charles & Natalina McLaughlin
Joanne & Lou Milone
Carolyn Nelson
NGA/Ruth Mitchell
NGA/ Rudy Tellmann
Ohev Shalom Synagogue
On A Roll Restaurant
Our Lady of Charity Parish
Our Lady of Fatima Parish
Philabundance
Polish-American Heritage Association
Power Windows & Siding
Prospect Park Baptist Church
Joe & Johanna Rebarchak
Retired Teachers' Association
Charmain Robinson
Joseph & Loretta Romo
Sacred Heart Parish
Jay & Dr. Ana Sanders
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Savukinas
Scanlon Family
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Sciascia
Carol Seeley
Cathy Shuda
SEPA Soccer Hall of Fame
Sons of Ben
Cara Speer
St. Anastasia Parish
St. Cornelius Council #12391
St. Francis DeSales Parish
St. James Alumni Assoc.

St. John's Boy Scout Troop # 605
St. John Chrysostom Parish
St. John Chrysostom School
St. Joseph School
St. Kevin's Parish
St. Madeline's Parish
St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish
St. Mark's in Broomall
St. Mary Magdalen Communitiy
St. Thomas the Apostle Parish
State Government
Norman Suchomach
Sun Valley Football Team
Charles & Barb Tart
Elaine Tarte
TEFAP - Government Program
USCI Affinity
Margaret Wagner
Wells Fargo Auto Finance
Wesley United Methodist Church
Scott & Chris Wheatley
The Women's Club of Media



Marylou and James unload a van full of donated food provided by generous donors.



Students from St. Joseph School in Aston, PA delivered 99 frozen turkeys to Bernardine Center for distribution to families-in-need for Thanksgiving.