



ST. JOSEPH HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

# FROM the PORCH

Easter 2014 Newsletter

St. Joseph House of Hospitality

A program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pittsburgh

## Do You Believe In Miracles?

By Tom Kneier, Administrator

Not too long ago I was at a shopping mall with my 17-year-old son. As we stepped into the elevator, we were joined by a woman and her young son. After the doors closed and we started our ascent, the mother broke the stereotypical elevator silence abruptly: “Do you believe in miracles?” “Why yes I do,” I stated emphatically, wondering where in the world this was going to go. Then she smiled down at my son and turned back to me saying in a whisper, “I’ll be praying for one.” — and she stepped off the elevator.

As she walked away, it started to compute. Wait, you mean you’ll be praying for him to be healed of his Down Syndrome? But you don’t understand. He doesn’t need to be healed. He is a living miracle. Every day that he overcomes his various physical and mental disabilities with his contagious joy is a miraculous day. **And it’s that kind of miracle that I get to glimpse every so often at St. Joseph House of Hospitality.**



*It happened recently at one of our monthly House Meetings. The typical agenda is to introduce new residents, highlight upcoming activities, review important policies, respond to items from the Suggestion Box, and open it up for discussion on any topic. It’s the open discussion that’s the*

unpredictable part. Kind of like waiting to see what’s behind the curtain on Let’s Make A Deal.

**On this particular night, the curtain revealed something entirely new.** One of the men—I’ll call him “Chaz”—stood up and asked if he could say something personal. The room got very quiet. He disclosed that earlier that day he had participated in the weekly games and competitions sponsored by local Catholic high school students at St. Joe’s. But he explained that as one particular resident continued to win, Chaz became increasingly agitated because he was choosing the prizes that Chaz had his eye on. Finally, he stood up, stared daggers at the lucky winner from across the room, and then angrily shouted something at him as he walked out. Chaz paused at this point in his story and looked down at his shoes. “I embarrassed myself,” he said. “I got so caught up in my anger and

selfishness, that I acted like a fool in front of you and those students. I want to apologize.” An awkward moment followed. And then one of the men said, “That was a real stand up thing to do, man.” Others then simultaneously chimed in. And I knew I was witnessing something extraordinary.

Webster defines a miracle as an *extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause. Isn’t it a bit of a miracle every time we overcome our selfish human nature by the grace of God?*

One man had the courage and humility to acknowledge his shortcoming, and to seek forgiveness. It stirred words of spontaneous encouragement from another—and undoubtedly the respect of the others present. It was an important step in the journey of building a genuine community.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples of Jesus in the upper room on Pentecost, they were transformed from a group of fearful self-centered individuals into a community of courage and faith.

Please join me in my prayer for the men gathered in the upper rooms of St. Joe’s, that the Spirit of God would work in the hearts of each man to bring about healing and freedom that they—and all of us—so need and desire. So now I’m the one asking it: “Do You Believe In Miracles?”



## Spotlight on a Resident

By Sr. Mary Nolan, SC

### Wisdom of the Handyman!

“If there is any one of you who needs wisdom, he must ask God...” (James 1:5) Looking at “Frank’s” life, there’s no doubt he must have had a continuous conversation with God—although he would deny any formality in doing so!

Born at home, Frank’s birth was never recorded. Thus, he has no birth certificate to prove he exists! Operation Safety Net referred him to St. Joseph’s. So, at age 53, he left a basement room he shared with mice and assorted bugs, to enjoy a private room, health care, dietetic planning to control his diabetes and—assistance in securing a birth certificate needed to prove he lives and needs SSI help!

“I’ve been growing up all my life,” Frank shook his head and added; “I was raised in a foster home. My friends make up for not having a family. I’ve *learned* to be happy. I really am blessed!”

Life was not easy, Frank admits. Abused in a foster care contributed to his PTSD for which he still gets treatment. He dropped out of school, but eventually earned a GED. Mistakes along life’s path earned him 2 ½ years imprisonment at Waymart in the Poconos where the seeds of volunteerism took root.

As a Vista volunteer, Frank served at the Homewood Brushton Community Association and at Rainbow Kitchen in Homestead. He is now helping at the Homewood YMCA, preparing curbside flower planters and planning a Street Fair. And he says he has learned a lot about

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### St. Anthony Student Volunteers

Every Monday since the school year began, two or three students from Bishop Canevin High School have visited St. Joseph’s to volunteer and learn how to achieve real-world job expectations. The young men are part of the St. Anthony Program – an initiative of the Diocese of Pittsburgh for students with special needs at Catholic schools.



*St. Anthony students with teacher Carol Juba and St. Joe housekeeper, Mary Moran.*

The students perform assigned tasks that included cleaning the lounges, conference room, offices and stairwells. They have also assisted in the kitchen and sorted donated clothing. St. Joe’s housekeeper, Mary Moran said the students learn responsibilities of being on time, following directions, focusing on details, consistency, and working well with others. She added, “The benefits to having them here are that we get a lot more things done, while it teaches them responsibility and good work ethics.”

The students are accompanied by their job coach, Carol Juba who said that Mary and the other staff have been very supportive of the students and their work. She also noted that the residents are also appreciative. “They have been very nice and even tell the boys jokes sometimes.”

At the end of their work day, the students enjoy lunch at the residence and feel that this is a “thank you” for a job well done.



16<sup>th</sup> Annual

## BLUEGRASS Concert

Benefits St. Joseph House of Hospitality

**APRIL 25, 2014**

**Friday, 7:30 PM**

**Synod Hall, 125 N. Craig Street, Oakland**

*Featuring*

**Allegheny Drifters**

**Border Ride**

**Fern Hollow Boys**

**Mac Martin & The Dixie Travelers**

**The Roustabouts**

*Emcee*

**Bruce Mountjoy, WYEP 91.3 FM**



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[www.ccpgh.org](http://www.ccpgh.org)

**Festival Seating: DONATION: \$20**

**Tickets purchased online at [www.ccpgh.org](http://www.ccpgh.org).**

**Tickets also available at the door.**

**For more information, call 412-471-0666, x 227.**

*St. Joe’s is a program of  
Catholic Charities of the  
Diocese of Pittsburgh, serving  
the homeless for over 70 years.*

## Photo Gallery

### Award-Winning Intern



Joseph Hough (right), a Psychology/Sociology double major at the University of Pittsburgh, spent his senior year interning at St. Joe's, where he helped provide services to men like Anthony (left).

At the recent Honors Convocation, Joe was recognized for Outstanding Academic Accomplishments in the form of the Eugene F.

Scanlon Memorial Scholarship. After graduation, he plans to continue his education pursuing his MSW at Pitt and hopes to return to St. Joe's in the fall for a second internship. ♦

### Flea Market Friends

Linda Lasenburg receives yet another donation from Marcia and Don Hobaugh. This dedicated couple has joined their love for flea markets, garage sales, and yard sales with their love for the mission of St. Joseph House. Erik Germesin, our Operations Manager, provides a running list of "Things Needed" at St. Joe's that they take with them on their frequent outings in search of those hard-to-find bargains. When they come back with their thrifty purchases, they are always all smiles. ♦



### Man To Man



Our newest Volunteer Program pairs a member of the local community with a resident of St. Joe's to form a bond of friendship and support. They might meet for lunch, chat in the Visitors Lounge, or plan an outing in the local area. Dr. Pedro Aguilar (right), a neurosurgeon from the Canonsburg area, is partnered with Larry (left).

For more information on becoming a "Man To

Man" volunteer, contact Tom Kneier at 412-471-0666 ext. 227 or tkneier@ccpgh.org. ♦

## A Holiday Recipe from St. Joe's Kitchen

### DEVILED EGG EASTER SALAD

Prep time is 45 minutes; serves 8.

8 hard boiled eggs, colored with food color if desired

1/4 cup mayonnaise

1 teaspoon seasoned rice vinegar

1/2 stalk celery, minced

1 tablespoon chopped chives

1/2 teaspoon black pepper and salt to taste

1 teaspoon hot sauce

6 cups shredded lettuce

4 crispy cooked slices of bacon

1 pint grape tomatoes

1 pint tiny button mushrooms

1 large cucumber, thin sliced

12 black olives

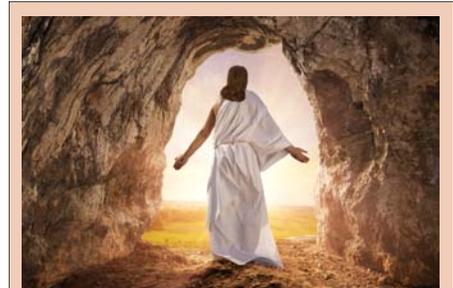
1 carrot, cut into rounds

### TO MAKE DEVILED EGGS

In a bowl, combine mayonnaise, vinegar, celery, chives, pepper, salt and hot sauce; whisk to combine. Cut hard-boiled eggs in half, remove yolks and add yolks to mayonnaise mixture; mash and mix well; fill egg white halves with mixture.

### TO MAKE SALAD

Spread shredded lettuce on a platter. Place cucumber all around platter. Add deviled eggs on top of lettuce and top each egg with a piece of bacon. Add remaining ingredients all around. Serve with your favorite salad dressing. *Enjoy!*



**May the joy and sheer amazement of that first Easter morning fill you and your families at this holy time of year!**

### Wisdom of a Handyman, cont'd from page 2.

Jewish history from a Rabbi who owns an antique shop where he volunteers to dust and shelve merchandise. As an avenue of job training, Frank volunteers as a part-time security guard at Catholic Charities, Downtown.

It would seem Frank has little time for anything else, but he does need some money for rent and

incidentals. So, he does odd jobs and has some regular customers for grass cutting, yard clean-up and snow removal.

Frank's wisdom filters through his deep interest in community organizing and his generosity in providing help needed. Handyman of the Year for sure!



## You Can Help With Needed Donations!

There are many ways you can help support the mission of St. Joseph House of Hospitality. One is by donating one or more of the following items:

**New mattresses** (or financial donations designated for twin-sized mattress replacement). This tends to be an ongoing need in order to provide adequate bedding for our 60 residents.

**Twin bed frames.**

**Wardrobes** . Small wardrobes are needed to hang clothes provide fully furnished rooms for the residents.

**Reclining Chairs.** For resident rooms.

**Desk Chairs.** For resident rooms.

**Bath towels, hand towels, washcloths.** New or gently used items are a perennial need.

**Extra-large shirts, pants, jeans, shoes.** XL, XXL, and hard-to-find clothes sizes 3X and 4X, and shoes sizes 12, 13, and 14.

If you or someone you know can help with any of these requests, please contact our Operations Manager, Erik Germesin, at 412-471-0666 x212, or [egerme@ccpgh.org](mailto:egerme@ccpgh.org).

THANK YOU!



## Win a Trip for Four to *Italy* September 1-13, 2014

You can be the lucky winner who joins **CARL DOZZI** on an amazing "all inclusive" escorted tour to Italy that includes excursions to Rome, Sorrento, Florence, Capri, and lots more!

**Only 500 tickets will be sold.**

The winning raffle ticket will be determined by the number drawn from the PA Daily Lottery.

**DRAWING: JUNE 23, 2014 • 7:00 PM**

**Tickets:** \$100 each, includes two random, 3-digit numbers.

Tickets may be purchased by calling Catholic Charities at 412-456-6912 or stop by *Buon Sapore*, One Oxford Centre, 2nd Floor, downtown Pittsburgh.



Proceeds benefit Catholic Charities St. Joseph House of Hospitality and Catholic Charities Free Health Care Center.

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## Remembering St. Joe's When You Make Your Estate Plans

As those of you who read this publication are well aware, the work at St. Joe's is vital to our community, a necessity for those men who would otherwise be neglected and forgotten. Our work can only continue with the generous support from donors like you.

A popular and successful means of giving is to remember St. Joe's in your will. It can be as simple as including the following language: "I give to St. Joseph House of Hospitality the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be used for the work and mission of St. Joseph House of Hospitality whose address is 1635 Bedford Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219."

To learn more about other giving options, please contact Administrator Tom Kneier at 412-471-0666 x227.



Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, rooted in the Gospel and social teachings of the Church, is the primary social service agency of the Diocese. Our mission is to serve with excellence, professionalism, integrity and compassion, the human needs of individuals and families, regardless of their religious affiliation, and to provide leadership in mobilizing the resources of parishes and the wider community in addressing these needs.

Susan Rauscher  
Executive Director

**St. Joseph House of Hospitality**  
Thomas L. Kneier, LPC  
Administrator

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