



Opportunity House

Today's Answer, Tomorrow's Hope

Inside:
Your gifts needed more than just at the holidays.
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Winter/Spring 2008

Opportunity House Happenings

Volume 6, Issue 1

President's Message

As you read this, summer will still be a few months away. However, summer planning is well underway at the Second Street Learning Center.



Last year, children enrolled in the Learning Center had an action-packed summer filled with experiences hopefully they'll never forget. Each day, 60 children visited French Creek State Park; more than 110 children participated in the South Mountain YMCA's Bynden Wood Day Camp; 20 children were enrolled in our twice weekly yoga classes at GoggleWorks; 10 children participated in an Arts Program at Albright, and eight children attended a Science Camp at the Penn State Berks Campus. Children also got to visit Gettysburg, The Crayola Factory, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Herr's Factory, Lancaster, Crystal Cave, and GoggleWorks.

In addition to these activities, we are currently pursuing a new collaboration with the Reading Public Museum for children to participate in their weekly Discovery Camp program.

While many of our partner agencies have been generous in their efforts to provide partial scholarships to our children, our cost to provide these lasting summer memories exceeded \$20,000. Mindful of the fact that 90% of families enrolled at the Learning Center live at or below the poverty line, we do not charge additional fees to families for their children to participate in these programs.

In order to help offset these costs, we are looking for individuals and groups to once again step forward and designate gifts for our summer program. If you are interested in participating in our **2008 Summer Memories Campaign**, please contact Lorri Oziri, VP for Development at extension 226.

Mark Your Calendar ...

Souper Bowl
Monday,
May 5, 2008



*See Pages 3, 4
for details*



**Golf
Tournament**
Monday,
June 2, 2008

\$\$ Your donation multiplied! \$\$

Feinstein Foundation match kicks off

Please consider a gift to Opportunity House. When you make a financial commitment to this agency during March and April 2008, your gift will be multiplied. Mr. Alan Shawn Feinstein has created an annual campaign and has supported Opportunity House with thousands of dollars through this campaign for the past eight years. Your dollars and support will not only help keep the shelter open to all of those who need our help, but, it will encourage Mr. Feinstein to contribute more of his \$1 million dollar grant to our agency.

Thank you for supporting Opportunity House.

Our Mission:

Opportunity House is a multi-service organization ... that improves the quality of life for children, adults and families who face various obstacles and supports their efforts to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency and well-being.

Volunteer & Donor Corner

Barby helps Opportunity House personally and through his position at Citizens Bank

Chuck Barby started volunteering at Opportunity House about five years ago after taking a tour of the Second Street facilities with some of his co-workers.

He said he was particularly struck as he walked though the Second Street Learning Center.

As a vice president and regional manager for Citizens Bank he has been able to extend his personal involvement to the corporate level.

Citizens Bank has a national corporate program called "Stockings of Love" and a backpack donation program that Barby made sure Opportunity House was a beneficiary of the past few years.

All of the Citizens Bank branches collect toiletry items for the Stockings of Love and then the different regions

get to decide where the donations will go.

Barby's region includes 12 branches and he always sees to it that Opportunity House is represented.

He also comes in the third Saturday of the month with his church group -- from Atonement Lutheran in Wyomissing -- to cook at the Shelter.

Recently he was joined by his wife, Pam, and one of their daughters, Alexis, who is 14.

He said the politeness of the shelter residents made an impact on Alexis and she can't wait to go again.

"If you're looking for an organization to get into that really makes you feel good and that you've made a difference, you should volunteer at Opportunity House," said Barby.

Gift of a car brings independence closer

Having a car is a key to being able to get a good-paying job and Tom White made that happen for Shelter resident Deana Bowman this past Christmas.

About 10 years ago Tom became frustrated with coming up for ideas for holiday gifts for his clients at Morgan Stanley. That is when he decided to make a gift in honor of his clients to fulfill a need of a specific family. For 2007, Tom picked Opportunity House to find a need he could fill for a family or individual.

Delia McLendon, VP of Shelter and

Housing Services, told Tom how Deana was doing everything she could to make a better life for herself and her children.

"Deana Bowman came to Opportunity House in February of 2007," said Delia. "She was ready to do whatever she needed to make life better for her children (and herself). Within two months Deana was actively participating in the program. She found a job and had met all the requirements to move into

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Shelter Update

In December 40 people participated in the Shelter's Code Blue (when the temperature drops below 32 degrees) program, reports Delia F. McLendon, VP of Shelter and Housing Services.

In the Shelter Dorm program there were 25 single females, 52 men and 12 moms with 17 children during December.

Last fiscal year, it cost \$13.52 per day per shelter resident. For the same period, operating expenses were \$572,574 and our average monthly census was 116.

Redner's Reminder

Please remember that in order for Opportunity House to receive credit/donations from Redner's Warehouse Markets it is important that you:

1. must be registered at Redner's to participate in their Save-a-Tape program.

2. include the entire receipt and the bottom that identifies the Save-A-Tape program (partial receipts will not be counted.) Send them to Opportunity House at 430 North Second Street, Reading, PA 19601 (attention: Development Dept.)

Information:

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 Director of Case Management

Special Event

Annual Golf Tournament Monday, June 2, 2008 at The Berkshire Country Club

Highlights:

- **New Title Sponsor - Penn National Gaming Foundation**
- **New Venue - Berkshire Country Club**
- **Same Great Event !**

Once again, we are working on a great sports celebrity roster for this year's tournament. Last year's lineup included Fred Baxter, Brad Scioli, Omar Easy, Jim Nelson, Kenny Jackson, Blair Thomas, and Glenn Foley. Join us for a great round of golf, good food, and good times!



Interested in golfing, being a sponsor, donating a silent auction item, volunteering for the tournament? Contact Sue Stalnecker, at 610.374.4696, ext. 231 or ssstalnecker@opphouse.org.

Commentary from the Vice President for Development

The holidays are not the only time your help is needed

**By Lorri G. Oziri
VP, Development**

Sometimes when we least expect it life throws us a punch. We can't duck it, we can't avoid it and we usually can't stop it. But, we can learn to roll with it and get over the challenge. *That's what we teach people at Opportunity House.*

One of the most amazing organizations I've known is

Opportunity House! You might think I get paid to say this, but, to be honest I don't have to write anything I don't believe in. I *strongly* believe in Opportunity House and the programs offered to help our community. I could talk for a week about the great things that are getting done at the agency... about the families who come to us at the end of their rope, but leave with clear direction, self esteem and

respect for themselves and others. There is a nine-year-old boy living in our Transitional Family Housing. At seven he learned about being homeless – that's when he came to Opportunity House with his mom. His life could have gone in many directions, but with the help of our wonderful, professional staff his mom has guided him to set goals and reach

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Board of Directors

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Special Events



Monday, May 5, 2008
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Highlights for the
6th Annual Souper Bowl



Reading Eagle photo from the 2007 event.

Last year's Souper Bowl set a record attendance of 600 guests, and we have added highlights to make this one better!

NEW LOCATION – The Inn at Reading

A bowl making workshop at the Second Sunday event at The GoggleWorks Center for the Arts was held Feb. 10

Le Petite Artiste at 267 Carsonia Ave., Mount Penn, will offer discounts to individuals/groups wanting to paint bowls for Souper Bowl.

More Soup! We are working on more restaurants bringing more soup to satisfy the growing crowds.

And don't forget to check out our Silent Auction – very unique with beautifully crafted pottery pieces from professional potters.

Unbeatable Price!!!

\$20 in advance or

\$25 at the door

Tickets available starting March 1st at the courtesy counters of the local Boscov's Stores, The Inn at Reading, and Opportunity House. Cash or check. And only at Boscov's, the Boscov's credit card will be accepted. Tickets are limited and handmade pottery bowls are guaranteed to the first 700 attendees.

Receive a handmade ceramic bowl and a light meal of soup and bread....

An evening meal considered a feast by those who are hungry!

We need potters and restaurants to participate, volunteers, and sponsors. Please contact Sue Stalnecker at 610.374.4696, ext. 231 or ssstalnecker@opphouse.org.

SOUPER BOWL PREVIEW FEATURE

From 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM, a new feature to the day of the Souper Bowl has been added for those wanting first choice at bowls and a relaxed atmosphere prior to the hustle and bustle of the Souper Bowl.

Guests can arrive at The Inn at Reading an hour before Souper Bowl begins and have first selection at one of our pottery bowls. In addition for their \$75 admission ticket, they will enjoy hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine, a guest speaker, and entertainment in the Publick House Restaurant & Tavern area of The Inn. This admission also includes entrance to the Souper Bowl event to enjoy the sampling of soups, bread, and desserts.

More Information will be available shortly so check out Special Events on our Web site at www.opphouse.org.

Success of Special Events

Throughout the year, volunteer committees work tirelessly in the background to make our events a success. Lisa Wortman, VP of Susquehanna Bank, chairs the Souper Bowl Committee.

"Lisa and the Committee's dedication and drive for this event are so inspiring, and the reason this event has grown and succeeded," said Sue Stalnecker, Development Associate.

"Our Golf Tournament is headed by Dave Waligurski, aka Wally, and owner of Lifestyle Limousine. Each committee member puts their heart and soul into this tournament under Wally's guidance. We are fortunate to have all of these members volunteering for us."

Help is needed

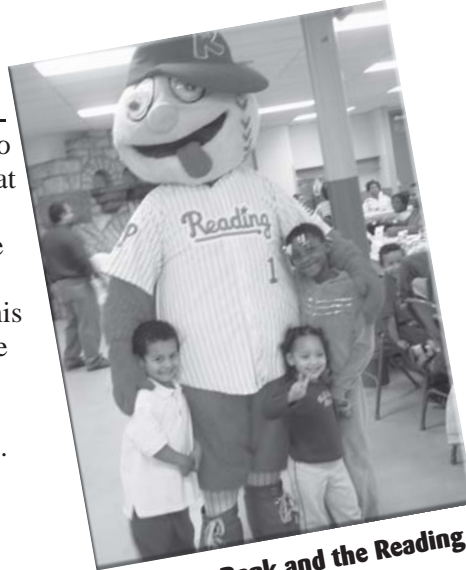
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success. A few weeks ago he came to the Administrative Office to share that he made Honor Roll... what a great kid! It's not the first time for him, he works harder than some adults I've met and has set a goal to always do his best. I've learned a lot from this nine year old!

Then there is the gentleman who has lived in our dorm for a few years. He came to us because he never learned how to save properly. So, when his company had a lay-off he had no savings and couldn't pay his rent. When he entered the shelter our case manager set up a savings account for him. 85% of whatever income he was eligible for goes into this account so he can pay old debt and begin to save for his future back in the community. The other 15% is for his weekly expenses. He's almost ready to move on, now. He'll re-enter the community in his own home in a couple of months. How great is that!

These stories can only happen with the help of the community and support from YOU!

Did you hear the one about the single mom with three kids...? True story! She works three jobs to meet the needs of her family. Her children all receive services at the Second Street Learning Center in Opportunity House. Some days she drops them off early in the morning before she goes to her first job. At 11:30 P.M. she comes back to pick them up on her way home from her third shift. Throughout the long day the children are cared for, fed, take naps and in some cases even sung to by our volunteers and staff. The school age children are transported to school and back to the Learning Center by our staff. After school they do their homework with the help of a tutor and they participate in after school activities, too. It's amazing, but, where else than Opportunity House can their mom find safe, affordable childcare and not have to worry about meeting all of these essential needs?



Sovereign Bank and the Reading Phillies bring holidays to Opportunity House.



Society For Teens - at their annual Halloween dance raised \$2,000 to benefit Opportunity House. They presented the check to Modesto D. Fiume in January.

I'm writing to share these few stories with you. They occur daily at Opportunity House. *But, not without your support!* During the holiday season our community stepped up with overwhelming kindness and charity. All of us at the agency thank you for your generosity! We need that support, and we need your continued support throughout the year. On a 70 degree day in February our shelter still fed more than 140 people at three separate meals. *The numbers don't change just because the holidays end.* We have 75 beds, but all winter long we might have 115 men, women and children sleeping in our dorms (some on the floor of our Day Room, if necessary.) We find room for everyone that needs our services.



Nancy Magee, OH Board member, makes calls to donors at Telefunding 2007 in December. Thanks for all who support our Annual Holiday Campaign.



Berks County Dog Training Club's therapy dogs visit OH at Christmas.

With this, of course, comes expense. The cost to house an adult in our men's dorm is approximately \$15 to \$18 per day. The cost to run the entire shelter program is over half a million dollars a year. Sometimes it's just hard to realize the cost to heat a huge building, provide showers for so many people, laundry facilities and meals.

There are many ways to help and give back. I'd like to thank you for sharing your warmth with our clients. I know they appreciate the community's support.

A Few Ways to Give: **Memorials & Honorariums**

By making a donation in the name of an individual to Opportunity House, you can perpetuate the good deeds, special events and memory of your

Help is needed

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loved ones, friends and co-workers. This is an option for any occasion. In honor of: birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, religious events, holidays, special honors, promotions, new home, well wishes (hospitalization, etc...).

In the event of someone's death, or the anniversary of a friend or loved one's death or birth date, a gift may be made in their memory.

All of these occasions can cause us to pause and remember the impact others have had on who we are and who we might yet become.

To make a gift in honor of or in memory of someone, mail your check (there is no minimum requirement) to Opportunity House with a note explaining your wishes. Please include the name of the individual and the occasion. The contact name is important so a card can be mailed to them or their family. Also, your name, address and phone number, so an acknowledgement of your gift can be forwarded to you, or if we have any further questions, is essential to help us process the request. The amount of your gift will never be shared with the honoree or their family.

Gift of car

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Transitional Family Housing. With the car that was given to her Deana plans to look for a better paying job so when she is ready to move on she will be able to find a nice home for her and her family."

Deana had received a donated car, but it needed a lot of work.

Tom called a mechanic he knew to arrange for the car to be repaired. While explaining the problems with the old car that had more than 120,000 miles on it, the mechanic came up with a better idea. "He said, 'I have a car that I service and the woman just passed away and she was meticulous about maintaining it'," Tom said.

The car was in much better shape and had 70,000 miles on it.

Attempts to get the car donated were futile, so Tom purchased the car and then the gift began expanding Tom wanted to make the car look nice for Deana and asked a neighbor if he could borrow his garage to wax the car. The neighbor came out and started helping Tom wax the car.

After the neighbor heard Deana's story, he and his family decided to buy gas giftcards and gifts for her children.

On Christmas Eve Tom and his assistant drove the car to Opportunity House so Deana could see it. The title transfer was going to take a bit longer, but Tom wanted her to see it in time for Christmas. When Deana gets a better paying job, it will be an even longer-lasting gift.

Tom also sold ornaments at his Morgan Stanley office in Wyomissing made by children living in the Shelter. He asked for a minimum donation of \$5, but he said some people gave as much as \$100. The office raised more than \$500 which was put toward the purchase of gifts for the teens living at the shelter. The ornament sale will probably become a tradition at the office Tom said.

www.opphouse.org
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Return service request

