



## The Bethlehem Project's "Inn the News"

### Bethlehem Project Continues Fundraising

The spring and summer months were busy for the Bethlehem Project as the board continued to raise funds to aid in its mission of helping to prevent homelessness.

In late March, the Bethlehem Project was awarded a \$1,500 grant from the Rotary Club of Greensburg through its Madeline Nichols fund, established through the generosity of the late Harry Miller. Bethlehem Project was one of 14 local non-profits to receive a grant. The BP advisory board requested funds to support its quarterly project of purchasing personal use items for the three homeless shelters.

Accepting the award on behalf of the advisory board were Suzanne English, Rebecca Zuzik and Ray Hoehler. Expressing her gratitude, board president Suzanne English said, "This generous grant has allowed us to increase our support for three local shelters that welcome women, men and families in need, providing essentials that help them to obtain jobs and set up their new homes when they are ready."



The board's fundraising efforts continued in June with a summer-themed basket raffle. The board curated three baskets including a lottery ticket wreath, basket of libations and a stay-cation basket. Over 300 tickets were sold, resulting in an additional \$3,400 to help with the BP's mission of offering rental support or emergency shelter requests. Ann Miles, the fundraising chair, said the raffle was a teaser to the upcoming holiday-themed raffle. "This was the first in-person event, I believe, after Covid," said Miles. "Needless to say, I was thrilled with the response to the basket raffle."

.....Fundraising Pg. 3

### Fiscal Year 2022: Expanding Our Service

The Bethlehem Project continued its outreach to those in danger of losing their homes as well as the homeless during 2021 and elected to expand its giving amounts and areas of service.

During the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, rent support and emergency shelter needs decreased overall, but with rental costs increasing, the Bethlehem Project maintained its pandemic-era per-disbursement support of \$700, and to begin the new fiscal year 2023, voted to make that change permanent. Rent support for the year totaled nearly \$26,000 and emergency shelter nearly \$2,000.

In the winter months, the Bethlehem Project provided 30, \$10 gift cards for area fast food restaurants to give to the homeless served by the Cold Weather Shelter program.

.....Fiscal Pg. 2

**"Because there was no place for them to stay..." Luke 2:7**

## ***New Members Appointed***

The Bethlehem Project welcomes two new members to its Advisory Board.

Debbie Scarpitti joined the board and its fundraising committee this summer. She also serves as the board secretary. Debbie, who was born and raised in Greensburg, recently retired after working for Raytheon Systems in Maryland. She is also a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Parish.

Jerry Zufelt joined the board and its public relations committee after retiring from the Diocese of Greensburg where he worked as communications director and editor of The Catholic Accent. Jerry is a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 1480 in Greensburg and the Catholic Men's Fellowship at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Parish.

## ***Longtime Member Retires***

And, we are saying goodbye to our board secretary, Rebecca Zuzik, whose term has ended. Rebecca has served her entire term as secretary, for which our members are very grateful. Rebecca joined BP following her retirement from the nursing field, as both a registered nurse and nursing instructor at WCCC. She was looking for a project with meaning and saw a request in the Cathedral's bulletin.

Rebecca is pleased that the board has initiated various forms of fundraising during her tenure, noting that our levels of support for clients have risen in the past few years to keep pace with the rise in housing costs. "Newsletters go out each season to the community to make people aware of housing insecurity and the importance of their donations," said Zuzik. "During cold weather we make extra donations to the Union Mission and Welcome Home shelters to assist in the needs of the people who seek shelter for a night or two."

.....Retires Pg. 3

### ***Fiscal Year continued from Page 1***

The Bethlehem Project board also voted to expand the geographic areas served to include Mount Pleasant, New Derry and West Newton, helping to assist residents in a wider area.

In addition, with food and other costs increasing, the Bethlehem Project increased its quarterly support for the three area shelters to \$750 per quarter. The increase allows us to serve more residents to help them gain employment and establish their own homes. Examples of items purchased include phone cards, bus passes, steel-toed work shoes, as well as bed and bath needs and kitchen items for when guests are able to establish their own apartments.

The goodness of donors to the Home for the Holidays/Tree of Hope fundraisers resulted in nearly \$36,600 in donations to Bethlehem Project, and a new summer basket raffle raised an additional \$3,400, allowing these increases in giving and expansion of service areas to occur.

"We are so appreciative for the continued generosity of our donors, which has made it possible for us to increase our giving and expand our service areas," said Katie Zuzik, pastoral associate for Blessed Sacrament Cathedral and project liaison for the Bethlehem Project.

### ***FAQ***

*Does Bethlehem Project offer rental assistance in my hometown?*

BP has recently extended its service area to include **New Derry, West Newton and Mount Pleasant** in addition to the communities of Bovard, Crabtree, Derry, Forbes Road, Grapeville, Greensburg, Hannastown, Hunker, Jeannette, Luxor, New Alexandria, New Stanton, Penn, and Youngwood.

Although BP has limits on who is served, if you are seeking help, please call Catholic Charities at 724-837-1840 for intake and referral and possible other available assistance.

## SPRING AND SUMMER 2022 DONATIONS

### Fundraising continued from Page 1

Congratulations to our winners and a heartfelt thank you to all who supported the summer raffle.

Your generosity is deeply appreciated, and will help to keep our neighbors from losing their homes, as well as support those in need of emergency housing and others making the transition from our local shelters to homes of their own.



Summer Libations



Life's A Lottery



Family Fun

---

### Shelter News

The Bethlehem Project donated the following items for residents of local shelters during the second quarter of 2022.

Blackburn Center received coffee makers, shower curtains, drinkware, flatware, dinnerware sets and waste baskets.

Donations to Union Mission included bus passes, four bicycles, walking shoes and cable locks (to be delivered when available).

And Welcome Home Shelter received shower curtains, garbage cans, bowls, storage bins and coffee makers.

---

### Retires from Page 2

"During Covid we gave the shelters food gift cards for the clients to use during the day when they could not be in the shelter," she continued.

While members have come and gone from the board, Rebecca noted that the changes in members and their interests have been beneficial to keeping the advisory board current with "new eyes to look at our work and their opinions and ideas keep the board fresh."

Addressing the importance of the Bethlehem Project, Rebecca noted that she saw people suffering with housing problems in her former careers. "There is a need for assistance to the homeless in the community. While most people do not 'see' or feel there is a need in our area, there are indeed many who can benefit from a hand up and having a place to live and then be able to work and feed their family," she said.

While she has left the BP board, Rebecca is an active member of the Cathedral's knitting/crochet group which provides blankets, shawls, scarves and baby items to various agencies in this area. She is also joining the Cathedral's new Walking with Moms in Need group.

The board extends our heartfelt thanks to Rebecca and wishes her well in her new endeavors.

We are grateful to those who made donations after our last newsletter. In all \$3,300 was donated to the Bethlehem Project during the Spring quarter.

We thank the following donors: Ms. Carolyn Falcon, Mrs. Janice Garlock, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Jenca, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rhody *in memory of Joanne Mayers*, the Szwerc Family, Ghislaine DiBiasi-Hess, Mrs. Joan Miller, Eileen Katter, Mr. Michael Urick, Ms. Jackie Myers, Mr. Eric and Hon. Michele Bononi, Mr. and Mrs. George Smith *in memory of Megan Lynn Smith*, Mr. and Mrs. Van Kemerer and Ms. Mary Ann Laffey.



The Bethlehem Project advisory board has quite a few events planned for the upcoming months:

\* The Home for the Holidays event is back and in-person following a two-year hiatus due to the Covid pandemic. This year's event will be held on Dec. 11, 2022. The fundraising committee anticipates the letters seeking donations, both monetary and baskets, will be mailed out in mid October. More information, including tickets, will follow.

\* Also in December, the annual Tree of Hope will be placed in front of the Cathedral's parking area. As always, each dollar donated during the Advent season will help illuminate the hundreds of lights on the Tree of Hope. All donations are earmarked to help prevent homelessness in Greensburg and surrounding communities.

\* In 2023, The Bethlehem Project will celebrate its Silver Jubilee, marking 25 years of providing financial support, information and guidance to individuals and families facing homelessness, regardless of religious background, race, gender, disability or lifestyle. More information on this anniversary celebration will follow.

## How Do We Help?

Mike\* had moved to the Greensburg area with his former fiancé two years ago. Unfortunately, their relationship ended. Mike learned after his fiancé moved out that the utility bills had gone unpaid. Believing it was important to keep the utilities on, Mike paid those bills but fell behind on his rent.

When Mike called for help, he needed half of June's rent and all of July's rent. Although his landlord didn't want to evict Mike, he was not willing to wait much longer for Mike's rental payments.

The Bethlehem Project agreed to assist Mike because all of his bills would be caught up if his rent was paid.

Now in this better position, Mike feels he will be able to keep up with his expenses going forward, but stated that, without our help he would have been homeless.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

.....