

A mission of Wesley United Methodist Church, Bethlehem, Pa.

Merry Christmas!

Members of the Depot team created a greeting card which can now be purchased at the Hospitality Table when a donation is made to the depot in someone's honor. This is not specifically for Christmas but can be used anytime during the year. Here is its message:

Because you are so special

we have made a donation in your honor to the Lehigh ⟨ Valley Outreach Depot

Is there someone special in your life who needs to know they're really appreciated?

How about including the Depot when you do your holiday shopping? Pick up a multi-pack of toilet paper or paper towels. Or perhaps you might find a good buy on a coffee maker or a toaster – 2 things we find make a difference in people's lives.

Shopping on-line? Join www.igive.com and select the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot to get a percentage of every on-line purchase!

Here are other creative ways people have found to support the Depot:.

One woman who was hosting the family Thanksgiving dinner asked people to bring something for the Depot rather than cooking an item for the meal. Someone else asked her family to give her Depot items for Christmas. Members of another family have decided to buy items for the Depot rather than for their annual Christmas grab bag.

Can you find other ways to use your creativity to help us serve the needy this year?

Another God Moment

One of our many volunteers is a realtor. Working full time keeps Debby from volunteering at the Depot, but she's constantly working as an ambassador for this ministry. Whenever she attends a realtors' meeting, she lets them know that there's a place that will gladly receive left-over furniture and household goods.

Debby "popped in" one day to let us know there was a home with a couple of beds available but they'd have to be picked up before week's end. Two volunteers asked if they might follow her to the house that day. She agreed and shortly they returned with 2 beds.

A guest had been in earlier and was scheduled to return that afternoon to pick up the little furniture she had chosen. She had asked for 2 beds but we had had none. Now we could satisfy her need. She was, of course, pleased and explained, in broken English, that the county agency was coming the next day to see if her home was suitable for her children. She hadn't seen her children for two years. Her husband had bashed the face of one of them and the children had been removed. Now she had hope and shook with excitement!

She had been referred to the depot by a mental health agency. She went on to say that her mattress was on the floor and she needed to get it off the floor by morning also. We had no box springs and could only offer a frame, slats and a board. Lo and behold, two volunteers arrived with a complete full sized bed. It was suggested she take it and donate her mattress to someone else. At that point she had tears in her eyes and went around thanking all the volunteers.

As she left she felt sure she'd get her children back because of what she had found at the Depot.

God is good!

Outside Blessing

Our Volunteer of the Month



Zel Shifter

Regulars at the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot know "Zel" very well. Those coming to the Depot for the first time may wonder who this unfamiliar person is. Zel has become a regular volunteer on both Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Zel is a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on 3rd Street in Bethlehem. She is quite active in her church congregation. She's currently serving her second 3 year term on the Church Council. She is a member of the choir; member of the Christian Education Committee, a long-tme Sunday School teacher (currently teaching in the Nursery for 2-4 year olds); a member of the Task Force Committee and Chair of the Membership Evangelical Committee (that's where the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot first became known to Holy Trinity).

Zel periodically brings in members of her church to help assemble disaster relief kits. She actively recruits for donations and recently arranged to take the Depot's trailer to her church one Sunday in November to recieve items her church members no longer needed and were willing to donate. They filled the trailer

to overflowing and have successfully touched the lives of many of our guests!

Zel worked for Durkee Foods for 21 years and Penn Treaty Insurance Company for 12 years. Earlier this year Zel found herself among the Lehigh Valley's unemployed, having been part of a down-sizing action. While working to getting herself off the unemployed rolls, she discovered the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot and has been a regular ever since. She'll be starting a new part time job shortly, but if you're looking for a gal Friday, know that Zel could very well fit the bill!

Zel has earned a reputation at the Depot for not only being a hard worker but always arriving early and becoming our "stager". She creates a setting for each of the various pieces of furniture helping our guests to be able to visualize what the furniture might look like in their homes or apartments.

Zel has become a reliable member of the Depot team.

If you visit the Depot, please search her out and give her a sincere "thank you!"

Reminder! Sunday, December18th

The Depot trailer will be parked near the front door of Wesley Church. Please bring small appliances, sheets, blankets, comforters, bath and kitchen linens, dishes, glassware, pots, pans and lamps. We don't take books, clothing, stuffed animals, luggage or cribs (crib mattresses are OK).

Learn more about the Depot!
Visit our web site:
www.lvoutreachdepot.org



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Have you been to the depot lately?

Stop by any Tuesday or Saturday and you're likely to see cars and trucks waiting to load or unload furniture and household goods. You'll see people having a hard time getting into the depot because there's very little room to get by a truck or car occupying the ramp.



Inside the depot you'll find volunteers assisting one or more guests while those guests' friends and family wait outside or in a designated waiting area. Other volunteers will be sorting and displaying newly received donations, moving furniture in or out, helping guests load their cars or trucks, answering phones or scheduling future appointments.

Other volunteers will be working in the Kit Assembly area, sorting a variety of disaster relief supplies, assembling, packaging and palletizing disaster relief kits and making up bags of cleaning supplies that we provide to local quests.

What you won't see (unless they're unloading or waiting in line to unload more furniture) are volunteers who go all over the valley picking up furniture and other household goods from donors who share our passion about helping people who have nothing and need everything. On any given day you'll find that there are 20 or more individual appointments scheduled

between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. Each appointment is for someone specifically referred by a social agency caseworker.

God has blessed this ministry in ways we never anticipated or expected — that's the way He works! We knew there were needy people and we knew there were generous donors here in the valley, but we had absolutely no idea how many lives would actually be impacted by this ministry!

Since we started this 18 months ago, we've been able to touch the lives of more than 600 families. Hundreds of people living in the valley have donated nearly \$200,000 in used furniture and household goods. We, and they, have also assembled and shipped more than \$85,000 in disaster relief kits.

Now we need to consider expanding our outreach ministry by relocating to a facility with more space, better access and the ability to load or unload two or more vehicles at the same time. We've been searching the valley's commercial warehouse market but have yet to find something that works given our current and forecasted financial situation.

If you should know of any warehouse space that we might be able to lease for a reasonable price, please talk to any member of the depot team as soon as possible.



This Month's *Special Couple*Fritz and Marion Werner



Marion and Fritz are long time members of Wesley United Methodist Church and are known for rolling up their sleeves whenever something needs to be done. Some of us only got to know this special couple once the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot became a reality. Knowing that there were needs, Marion and Fritz were on-hand from the outset and have been consistent supporters of this important ministry.

As soon as we began assembling disaster relief kits, Marion and Fritz started showing up on a regular basis to put these needed kits together while at the same time looking for opportunities to add their creative talents to depot operations.

There isn't a tool that Fritz can't use well and there isn't a task or challenge for which he can't find a solution. Our "people" door can't be opened from the outside; it automatically locks when it is shut. Fritz came up with a very clever method of keeping the door unlocked during regular Depot hours. He also devised a way to have the door shut automatically to keep out the cold. Fritz doesn't have to be asked to do things like this, he just "jumps in" and takes care of something that needs doing.

Over time it became apparent that furniture shouldn't be placed directly on the concrete

floor. The water table in the area of Saucon Park is too high and sometimes penetrates the depot walls and floors. We cleaned out the drains and installed a sump pump, but that wasn't enough. Our landlord, Ed Sinko, donated pallets, but the pallets were dangerous to walk on! Fritz came to the rescue by putting solid tops on the pallets. Now, when we have to walk on the pallets carrying heavy furniture, we don't worry about twisting our ankles.

Marion not only assembles disaster relief kits (very well), but crochets baby sweaters and applies her chair weaving (cane or rush) skills to chairs needing that type of repair. She also unpacks and organizes donated household goods.

Marion and Fritz also pick up donated goods when necessary. Fritz is often seen on one of the trucks on a Tuesday or Saturday making the rounds for picking up donated goods. It is because of people like the Werners, who take the initiative and are hard workers, that the Depot runs smoothly and successfully helps as many people as it does. **Thank you Marion and Fritz!**

On The Move!

As you drive around the Lehigh Valley see if you can spot the Depot trailer. It's on the move. On November 6th, for example, it will be at 1st Trinity Lutheran Church, Bethlehem collecting donations, just as it does the 3rd Sunday of every month at Wesley Church.

Learn more about the Depot!
Visit our web site:
www.lvoutreachdepot.org

Reminder! Sunday, November 19th

The Depot trailer will be parked near the front door of Wesley Church. Please bring small appliances, sheets, blankets, comforters, bath and kitchen linens, dishes, glassware, pots, pans and lamps. We don't take books, clothing, stuffed animals, luggage or cribs (crib mattresses are OK).



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Do you have items to donate?

Last month we found ourselves scheduling as many as 20-24 appointments every Tuesday and Saturday. A few guests had to reschedule and others were "no shows", but most kept their scheduled appointments.

Because of the economy many of our guests need absolutely everything. More and more they arrive at the depot to find our inventory depleted. Donated items are picked up whenever there is adequate muscle power and a vehicle for transporting the items (mostly on a Tuesday or Saturday). It's becoming more obvious that we simply don't have enough to keep up with the demand.

We're asking that you search your attic, search your basement, search your garage and ask your neighbors to search their homes for unused but serviceable furniture and household goods, dishes, small appliances, linens, towels, bedding, glassware, curtains, TV's, etc. What don't you use?

Think about what you might need if you had been homeless and had just been offered an empty room or apartment to set up house. Think what you might need if you were an abused spouse who finally walked out with your children and left everything behind.

It's wonderful when donors can deliver the items to the Depot but please know that you can have your donations picked up. You'll find a "donate furniture" link on our web site or you can leave a message at 610-861-7373.

Reminder! Sunday, October 16th

The Depot trailer will again be parked near the front door of Wesley Church. Please bring your small appliances, sheets, blankets, comforters, bath and kitchen linens, dishes, glassware, pots, pans and lamps. We don't take books, clothing, stuffed animals, luggage or cribs (crib mattresses are OK).

Ways to help!

Perhaps you find that being at or spending time at the Depot is not for you. That's okay! There are other ways of helping out with this ministry,

- ◆ Do you have time to make phone calls?
- ♦ Are you a good public speaker?
- ◆ Do you like to organize social activities?
- ♦ Do you like to sew?

We periodically send dozens of letters to churches, social service agencies, hotels, dentists, retirement communities and others telling them about our ministry and asking for their support. A follow up phone call could be the key!

The Depot receives no funding other than monetary donations. Having someone to plan fundraising events would be awesome! As the word spreads about the Depot there are more requests to speak to groups. If this appeals to you please let us know.

One of the UMCOR kits includes a school bag. We have fabric available if you like to sew. The kits are very basic and do not require much sewing time. Just go to our web site and click on "VOLUNTEER". There's a comment block where you can let us know what you'd like to do and when!

Learn more about the Depot! Visit our web site:



This Month's *Special Couple*Bob & Carol Totten

By Barbara Reimers

Each month we;ve been featuring one person or a couple on the Depot team, but we haven't yet mentioned Bob and Carol Totten —



probably because Bob and Carol are the ones who usually write the newsletter. It's time to correct that because without Bob and Carol, there would be no Depot.

It was their vision and persistence that brought the Depot into being. Now that it is a reality, they both put in many hours doing whatever needs to be done to keep things running smoothly.

Officially, Bob's title is Communications Coordinator and Carol is a Volunteer Coordinator.

Bob designed, published and constantly updates the Depot's internet web site at www.lvoutreachdepot.org. He is cotinually looking for and implementing new ways to improve communications between our staff, our volunteers, our caseworkers, our donors and our guests. He also designs, creates and maintains a variety of publications promoting our ministry.

Bob also created and maintains the depot's data collection system used to track and quantify the results of our team's efforts. This information is used to keep people informed about what our ministry has been able to actually deliver and, of course, to

support preparation of requests for charitable grants.

Carol helps coordinate the volunteers' work schedules at the Depot, writes letters, makes phone calls and visits volunteer organizations seeking new ideas and resources to support this ministry. It was because of her initiative that we learned about Shari Noctor offering her moving truck to nonprofit organizations. That has enabled us to bring countless items of furniture to the depot. She has sent letters to hotels, nursing homes, extended care facilities, doctors, dentists and others letting them know about our ministry and how they can help..

Bob can either be found at the computer helping to create and maintain the data base used to track our progress or helping load items for guests to take home. Carol greets our guests and directs them in finding what they need and helps Bob and others deliver finished disaster relief kits to Mission Central in Mechanicsburg. This couple can also be found "down & dirty", mopping up leaks or floodwaters.

Together they're a fine examples of the Depot's motto: "People Blessing People".

Did you know?

When you volunteer your services at the depot you'll often find yourself working alongside others who are Lutheran, Moravian, Episcopalian, Methodist or Muslim. In other words, you don't know what you'll find. What a terrific opportunity to discover other members of God's family!

Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

Matthew 25:40.

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Introducing Our New Logo!



The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot has recently adopted a logo that defines what our mission is all about.

Three simple images — the World created by God and two of God's people working together to improve their lot in life. We are totally dedicated to the *idea* of "People Blessing People".

Two days every week we experience the sight of two kinds of people working together both at the depot and all over the Lehigh Valley.

The first group is those who desperately need help to get their lives in order in an increasingly challenging economic environment.

The second includes those who find themselves inspired to help others, both in the Lehigh Valley and around the world. This group includes men and women, young and old, parents and children, who want to act as the hands and feet of God.

Another God Moment!

In August a team of Depot volunteers went to the Bushkill Falls Resort in the Poconos and brought back another 20 beds — we're <u>always</u> being asked for beds and can always use more!



A week later a local church pastor sent us 8 guests from her congregation's local homeless shelter. We were able to give every one of them a bed to sleep on.

When our Depot Manager, Mike Krom, heard about this apparent coincidence, his comment was: "God knew these people were coming." How right he was!

Reminder! Sunday, September 18th

The Depot trailer will again be parked near the front door of Wesley Church. Please bring your small appliances, sheets, blankets, comforters, bath and kitchen linens, dishes, glassware, pots, pans and lamps. We don't want books, clothing, stuffed animals, luggage or cribs (crib mattresses are OK).

Come discover what you can do!
Visit our web site:
www.lvoutreachdepot.org

Lifting a Burden

A guest returns to pick up furniture she selected a few days before. As we move her furniture to the loading area, we notice a change in her demeanor. It's as if she has less stress in her life. She smiles! It's a moving experience in more than one way! As her newly found furniture, bedding, lamps, dishes, glasses and cleaning supplies are loaded into her car, (or her caseworker's or friend's car) it appears that a heavy burden has suddenly been lifted from her shoulders.

Most guests are in desperate situations. Some are women who had been abused, but finally took their children, and not much else, and fled to safety. Others are unemployed with no hope of getting a job, particularly in the present economy. All of them turned to the Salvation Army or another social service agency or church pastor who referred them to our ministry for help. Mostly we have what they need, but sometimes all we can offer is hope that we'll get more donations soon.

When we can materially help someone like this, we thank God that we've been given the opportunity to remove one of their many burdens.

If you haven't visited the Depot and experienced God's work in action, drop by and see for yourself!

This Month's *Special Person*Barbara Reimers

When we first discussed the concept of creating the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot, Barbara was one of our most passionate advocates. When we needed someone to set up and manage the Depot's International Relief Kit Assembly

Area, Barbara stepped up to the plate and has done a magnificent job!

Barbara always comes up with practical ideas for improving Depot operations! She suggested creating the popular volunteer "break" area which is always stocked with snacks, beverages, etc.

It was Barbara who first recognized that many of our guests had little other than a newly found living space and the furniture and basic household items the Depot gives them. They had no basic cleaning supplies. She came up with the idea of segregating donated cleaning supplies that failed to meet UMCOR standards and using them to provide our new guests with a full bag of cleaning supplies.

Barbara juggles a full schedule between helping with the church library to stocking and maintaining the 5 main UMCOR relief kit supplies. Shopping has become top priority for Barbara and some other willing volunteers. She is very conscience about having kit supplies on hand for volunteers to work with as they assemble kits (birthing, layette, health, school, cleaning and local health and cleaning kits). Please let Barbara know how very much she's appreciated.



Remember the Heat Wave?

In July we suffered a terrible heat wave. If you think you were uncomfortable, just imagine what it must have been like for our guests, many of whom didn't have the luxury of an air-conditioned car or air-conditioned home.

Once again, we had several God Moments. First, some generous donors provided a window airconditioner and a double window fan. Shortly after receiving them, a guest said his family was living in a third floor apartment that was always hot even with the windows open (before the extreme heat arrived). He was thrilled when we said we could help.

Another generous guest donated an older refrigerator which we now use for our volunteers. We finally have the ability to keep our volunteers' lunches and beverages cold. Then, as the heat wave rolled in, it became a source of refreshing cold water to offer to our guests. Again, they are thrilled with the hospitality and caring they find at the Depot.



A Message from Mission Central!

On July 13th at 2 PM a truck load of 12,000 school kits left Mission Central for Sagar Brown, LA where UMCOR has 6 shipments going out around the world.

I know that you can picture the kits that you have brought or sent to Mission Central because the majority of the kits were from the HUBs, plus what is assembled at Mission Central, plus a large load from the Western PA Mission Barn.

What a wonderful connectional system we are all a part of. With that shipment, we pretty much wiped out our school kit supply and because it is now school supplysale time, I would encourage you to either make school bags or help assemble kits at your HUBs.

Jean T. Norris Mission Central Volunteer HUB Coordinator

Become a Member of our Team!

As a HUB of Mission Central, we act as a staging point for other churches to bring UMCOR disaster relief kits. We then inventory and verify these deliveries before moving them on to Mission Cen-



tral's warehouse. Recently we received 55 Cleaning Buckets from several local churches. They will be verified by our disaster relief volunteers so we can move them along to Mission Central later this month. Come lend a hand!

This Month's Special Couple



Craig & Carol Beach

Many Tuesdays and Saturdays Craig and Carol Beach can be seen assembling disaster relief kits, loading and unloading furniture and appliances and helping our ministry in a hundred ways. Every few weeks they remove the seats from their van, either in preparation for loading another shipment of health kits, cleaning buckets, school kits, birthing kits and layette kits or for helping pick up donated items for the Depot's distribution. If going to Mechanicsburg, they spend a minimum of 4 hours driving to and from, delivering the cargo of many kits to our friends at Mission Central.

Since the depot first opened, this couple has logged more than 500 hours of volunteer time! And believe us....not all hours are counted for.

If you get a chance, please thank them both for their service not only to the needy here in the Valley, but to the needy all over the world where these disaster relief kits wind up. They are also involved with Trinity's Soup Kitchen, they assist church members with doctor appointments or shopping.

Also, don't be shy about asking them both what inspired them to commit so many hours of their valuable time to this ministry.

Depot Needs

Beds, dressers, linens and housewares are always in short supply. Have you purchased a new, thicker mattress and found that your old bedding no longer fits? Donate your clean used sheets and mattress covers to the Depot! Towels are also needed as long as they are clean and not frayed.

School supplies are being collected at church this month (see table in the Atrium).



An Unexpected Guest

Those working at the Depot know to expect the unexpected. There was surprise and shock, however, to find who was waiting at our door. This amazing creature appeared the day after an evening of very heavy rain. It was understandable, as Saucon Park and the creek are located at the end of the street.

Reminder! Sunday, August 21st

The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot trailer will be at the front door of church during both services. Place your items in the open trailer.

Accepted items include: Small appliances, bed sheets, blankets, comforters, bath and kitchen linens, dishes, glassware, pots, pans, housewares and lamps

Not accepted: Books, Clothing, Stuffed Animals, Luggage and Cribs (crib mattresses are OK).

Come discover what you can do to help at the Depot!

Visit the web site: www.lvoutreachdepot.org

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What happened in June?

Last month we were fortunate to meet 42 of God's children referred to the Depot for help. Because of the generosity of our neighbors in the Lehigh Valley, we were able to help them out with lots of donated furniture and household goods valued at more than \$9,000.



We assembled or verified hundreds of disaster relief kits which will help victims of floods, fires and other natural disasters all over the world. Most were assembled at the Depot, but others were brought to the Depot by other church groups.

This was all done with God's help and the hands and feet of 44 kind people inspired to spend more than 450 hours sharing the vision of the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot. Some of them received, tagged and arranged incoming donations so that our guests would be able to make good choices. Others helped pick up donations and delivered them to the depot. Others helped guests choose things that should make their lives more tolerable and bring comfort and joy to their children. Still others helped load our guests' vehicles with their new (to them) furniture

Volunteers are not only from Wesley Church. They come from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Trinity Episcopal Church: Community Services Group, Resources for Human Development, Cedar Crest students, plus "guests" wishing to "pay forward."

We were delighted to meet with Monica Guepet,

pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Hellertown, to talk about the possibility of partnering with her congregation and the congregations of two other local churches. She has been following our activities on the web site and even distributed our last newsletter to her congregation. We're excited about the possibility of perhaps being able to open the depot a few more hours each week to accommodate the dozens of needy families referred to us every week. We find that with our current schedule and staff we can only handle 24 appointments each week. It is heartbreaking to have to tell someone that, while we want to help, we can't fit them in for 3 or 4 weeks. For someone who has nothing, that sounds like an eternity. If we could open up an additional 3-6 hours a week, it would allow us to help 6-12 more guests!

Another God Moment!

We have lots of "God Moments". They just happen, usually when least expected. Saturday morning, June 25th was one of those moments.

Bob was on the way to church for an 8:30 a.m. meeting. Living in Easton, he takes the 13th Street ramp to Route 22. That morning found Route 22 a virtual parking lot just east of Route 33. Traffic was at a standstill for at least 30 minutes before Bob was inspired to seize the opportunity to promote the Depot. There on the back seat of the car was a box of Depot brochures (thanks to Becky Hess). Bob walked up and down the road passing out the brochures to waiting drivers! Most had cell phones but nothing to read — they could read about the Depot and maybe spread the word for us!

God only knows how many of those stranded motorists may benefit from having read about the Depot! Maybe they were looking for a place to donate things they no longer need. Maybe they were searching for help for their own families but had no idea where to turn. The outcome of the brochure distribution remains unclear at this time.



This Month's Special Person

Mike's dynamic personality and supervisory experience at Rockwood Pigments make him an ideal site manager for the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot.

Mike has been a terrific role model from the very beginning. He was the first to accept the daunting challenge that goes with the title of "Site Manager". His commitment to "becoming the



hands and feet of God" inspires all of us to do more. He not only devotes a great deal of his time and energy to the depot but also works tirelessly to help the youth of Wesley Church discover what Jesus Christ and His Father are all about.

On Saturdays (and often other days as well), Mike goes all over the Lehigh Valley (with oth-



ers that he personally recruits to help) picking up donated furniture and household goods and bringing them to the depot. He doesn't just magically appear with a large truck — he has to make prior arrangements to borrow the truck — or encourage others to bring their trucks.

How does Mike know where to go to pick up all that furniture and household goods? Every other month he checks the answering machine and email requests daily, creating a detailed list of addresses and lists of items needing to be picked up. At the same time he responds to dozens of caseworkers' requests for appointments for their clients.

Depot Needs

Linens are always in short supply. Have you purchased a new, thicker mattress and found that your old bedding no longer fits? Donate your clean used sheets and mattress covers to the Depot!

Towels are also needed as long as they are clean and not frayed.

School Kit Bags!

School bags ar3e needed for the UMCOR School Kits Do you have some extra heavyweight fabric you don't need and hate to throw it away—donate it to the Depot — or, even better, create a number of school bags. Patterns are available on our web site or see Kit Coordinator, Barbara Reimers.

Reminder! Sunday, July 16

The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot trailer will be located at the front door of church during both services. Place your items in the open trailer.

Accepted items include: Small appliances, bed sheets, blankets, comforters, bath & kitchen linens, dishes, glassware, pots, pans, housewares and lamps

Not accepted: Books, Clothing, Stuffed Animals, Luggage and Cribs (crib mattresses are OK).

Each Day We Open Our Doors God Helps Us Touch Lives!

Pleasantly Overwhelmed with Donations and Bursting at the Seams!



The depot's appearance changes on a constant basis. Items come and items go out! The month of May was a prime example of that. The donations of items needed to make a house a home have been coming in on a steady basis. Our inventory has grown to the point where we're almost bursting at the seams. For the first time, we have been able to boast 20 sofas and/or loveseats. We've had a selection of table and chair sets, several end tables, lamps and other items.

An attempt is made to arrange items to give an idea of how they'll look in someone's home environment. They are usually placed so they are easily accessible and clearly visible. That has been a real challenge the last couple of weeks. There isn't much room for anyone to move around. "Staging" has temporary become an impossibility.

Guests are given one week from their initial visit to arrange for their items to be picked up. They have the option of extending the deadline date, if circumstances prevent them from returning within that one week time frame, or if, for some reason they don't re-

turn by the deadline, those items are returned to inventory and become available to someone else.

Reminder! Sunday, June 21st

The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot trailer will be located at the front door of church during both services. Place your items in the open trailer.

Accepted items include:

Small appliances, bed sheets, blankets, comforters, bath & kitchen linens, dishes, glassware, pots, pans, housewares and lamps

Not accepted:

Books, Clothing, Stuffed Animals, Luggage.

Help Wanted

The depot is in need of a Moving Coordinator: Are you a take charge person? Do you have time to spare? Are you willing and able to make a difference in people's lives? The depot is in need of someone to coordinate picking up donated goods. You will be the middle "man" between the donation's owner and the volunteer movers. You will be responsible for Saturdays' coordination only. You are not expected to be part of the moving team, just the coordinator. If you feel the "calling", please contact Mike Krom at (610) 420-6847 or Bob Totten at 610-737-1640.

Refrigerator Needed

It's time to replace our dorm refrigerator, with same or something a little larger—to continue to offer cold water, soda & to store lunches.

Volunteers of the Month



The Awesome Duo: Harry & Karen Schaefer

Karen and Harry Schaefer have been involved in mission work for years. They had previously been active members of Wesley's Mission Team's VIM team, helping clean or rebuild homes destroyed by floods in NY and PA. Disaster relief mission work is nothing new to them. Most recently their energies have been directed to helping out at the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot. What a blessing they have been to the other volunteers and to the work being accomplished at the depot.

Karen can be found working in all areas of the depot—answering the phone, scheduling appointments, processing data files, greeting guests, processing the needs of guests, working in the disaster relief kit area, or even creating baby sweaters for layette kits. In other words, Karen can do it all.

Harry is always on-the-ready. He's willing and able to help with the manual labor requirements at the depot. Harry does not hesitate to hook the depot's trailer up to his truck and head to any area of the Lehigh Valley to pick up items (using his own fuel) that are being donated to the depot. If you've wondered how the depot trailer happens to show up every 3rd Sunday at the church, (making it more convenient for you to dispose of those small items) - it's Harry's doing!



Harry is there to help move furniture, appliances and other items into the depot, as well as into guests' vehicles.

Karen and Harry commit their time to the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot every Tuesday and Saturday from 9 to 3. They can always be counted on to help wherever help is needed.

The next time you encounter this caring couple, please thank them for their dedication to helping make Wesley's ministry a reality!

Visit the depot web site! www.lvoutreachdepot.org

Come discover what area you might want to help with at The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot. Various opportunities are listed. Check them out! A mission of Wesley United Methodist Church, Bethlehem, Pa.

Second Year of Ministry! "People Blessing People!

The Celebration!

On Tuesday, April 26th the volunteers at the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot celebrated the start of its 2nd year of operation by hosting Rev. (retired) Rob Visscher, Executive Director of Mission Central; Dave Nagley, Facilities Director; and Jeanne Earnhart, District HUB Coordinator who came to bless the beginning of our second year of operation. They came equipped (in a panel truck) to transport 561 Health Kits, 222 Birthing Kits, 32 School Kits and 8 Cleaning Buckets and used computer components to Mission Central. From there the kits will be shipped worldwide, wherever the need exists.



International Relief Kits

The Depot is truly making a difference in people's lives. Using Salvation Army donation values, we track the approximate value of items going out the door with guests. Since we opened our doors in April, 2010, we've distributed more than \$100,000 worth of furniture and household goods and nearly \$50,000 in disaster relief supplies. That figure doesn't account for all the items that guests take with them. There are some items that we put a nominal value on even though they probably have more value.

Some of the startling figures we have are that 270 chairs, 139 beds, 130 TVs and 117 dressers were placed in homes of those less fortunate. This list includes just 4 items. Think of what else makes your house a real home. Think about all of the convenience items that make your life so much easier. Periodically

each of us decides to get new, even though there is nothing wrong with what we already have. We hope that, as you replace items still in serviceable, clean condition, you'll remember The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot as a place that can find those items a new home.

Did You Know?

Our volunteers are not just Wesley Church members. If you've taken the time to review our recently published Annual Report you will have noticed that many agencies send volunteers to us.

Currently we have two young adults with challenges. Physical and/or mental limitations make it most comfortable for these individuals to work in the Disaster Relief Kit area. Both of our current young people are brought to the depot by their case managers, who work side-by-side with them. "T" is put to work cutting the tags and labels off hand towels and wash cloths that go into the Health Kits. "T" is not able to communicate but occasionally will utter what appears to be a scream. "T" has a short tolerance level but has found her work at the depot satisfying. One day she patted herself on the back, having not only done a good job but having a good morning.

"C" has some physical limitations. He is able to help sort out items that are stored for future kit assembly. He is also able to package some of the items that go into the local personal care kits (distributed to our guests, Turning Point, Victory House or Allentown Rescue Mission). "C" is also able to spread out the large garbage bags that go into the Cleaning Buckets.

Reminder...

Only 2 Monday left........May 16 & 23.......at *On the Border (Mexican Grill & Cantina)*, Airport Road....present our flyer (or ask the cashier for a copy) and 10% of your food & beverage purchase will go to support the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot.

Volunteer of the Month Forrest Taylor

When donors or guests arrive at the depot they often find a handsome older gentleman managing our inventory control and suggesting ways to improve displaying the variety of donations received from generous donors.

Forrest is a veteran, having served in World War II. Serving is second nature to his personality and he continues to give of his time at the ripe old age of 88. In 1943 Forrest was drafted at the age of 20, became an Infantryman, and went to Europe in 1944 where he fought his way through France, Belgium and into Germany. He attributes the success of his generation's to the sacrifices of those who lost their lives in the service of their country.

While known as one of America's "Greatest Generation," Forrest says the real credit for the outstanding success of those millions of "citizen-soldiers" belongs to three sources. First, their parents, who taught them love, honor and obedience. Second, their teachers, who taught them citizenship values. Finally, the churches and synagogues that gave them religious support.



Forrest says that unfortunately his body can't always keep up with what his mind wants to do, but he does his best to help in any way he can. He can be seen putting his years of experience into action by placing inventory control tags on the larger items that arrive at the depot for distribution to those in need. Forrest quickly finds those items that arrived in the depot without having been properly tagged.

Here is a splendid example to those who might be inclined to say "I'd really like to help out at the depot, but I'm just too old."

You may have seen Forrest at the entrance to Wesley Church on Sunday morning. He has probably held the front door open for you!

Forrest, thank you for your service!



Eye Opening Stats

We hear it, we read it, but let's look again at figures for our local area. These numbers were reported in the Morning Call, September 29, 2010. Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton's poverty level has gone from 8% to 10.2%. 1 in 3 Allentown residents live in poverty. That amounts to 29% versus 20.4% in '08. In Bethlehem, more than 1 in 6 residents were poor. Bethlehem's below poverty line rose from 15.1% in '08 to 17.3 in '09.

This reconfirms the importance of our mission. One day a father of 5 young children came in. He had lost his job, is struggling to pay the rent and provide food for his family, and was in need of family room furniture to provide seating for his family. He can no longer go out and purchase the items. Life, as they knew it, has changed and become a humbling experience, a challenge and a "hard road" to tow.

Visit the depot web site! www.lvoutreachdepot.org

Come discover what area you might want to help with at The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot. Various opportunities are listed. Check them out!

HE IS RISEN!

On April 24th the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot will have been in operation for one year! What a coincidence (if you believe in coincidences) that this will be the same day we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

A year ago the Depot was pretty bare, only a few social agencies had any idea where we were, what we were about or why we were doing what we set out to do.

Week by week, month by month, case workers have heard about our ministry, visited our web site, and started referring needy people to us for help. During the same period, generous donors, both individuals and businesses realized we could help them realize their need to give, give, and give more!

As we approach Easter, we thank God that He has blessed us and those we serve in countless ways. We thank HIM for allowing us to put practical Christianity to work. Everyone who walks through the door of the Depot and interacts with our "guests" finds that his or her life is changed forever. If you haven't been there recently, visit our web site at www.lvoutreachdepot.org and see our frequently updated photo album, read about our "God Moments", and then consider committing yourself to help continue this important ministry.

"PEOPLE BLESSING PEOPLE"

Thursday morning we opened our email and found a plea for help. The message read, in part:

"As you may have read in the newspaper one of our students was seriously injured in an automobile accident.

The immediate need of the family is they could really use a Lazy Boy recliner for the daughter who was injured in the accident..

She will be coming home this week and will do her rehab at home. She is still using a walker and they do not want her to lie in bed all day. A recliner would be helpful on two levels: one, she could spend part of the day sitting up and two; she can use the arms to help push herself up to use the walker."

We replied, saying we didn't know for sure if we had a recliner at the depot but would check. If not, we would send out a special request to get one donated – and would be



Amanda

surprised if we couldn't come up with a recliner by Saturday.

There were no recliners at the depot so we asked our church office to include a request in the Friday morning e-news. Within two hours we had a response! By Friday evening we had two recliners delivered to the depot and two more were donated Saturday morning!

God loves you, Amanda, and God's people love you too. Get well soon!

Reflections from Karen Schaefer WE ARE...

We are carpenters, servicemen, business owners, teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, librarians, builders, students, furniture restorers, technologists...we are many who greet, give, share, upholster, tag, clean, sort, pack, decorate, make kits, knit, crochet, pick up, shop, rearrange to

make room...we are many who nurture, love, applaud, amaze, wonder, pray, give thanks...we are many who come back, learn, support, receive, deliver, enjoy, laugh, embrace, believe, accept...

We are people who encourage, praise, acknowledge, listen, hear...

"This is such a wonderful thing you do..."

"This is surely God's work."

"Thank you soooo much..."

"You mean I can really have..."

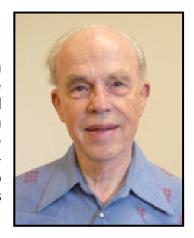
"God is good"

We are ordinary people who have found a way to do what Pastor Fries has suggested "extend our love in ordinary ways." We are more than a Village we are a fam-

ily, each of us choosing to be part of this wonderful creation, reaching deep into our hearts and souls to serve God's people. I see it, I feel it, I love it!

Volunteer of the Month

Dr. Don Follmer is our focus volunteer for the month. Dr. Don may be retired from the medical field but Dr. Don has become Dr. Fix-It. Not everything that comes to the depot is in good condition. Often the item will sit for a week or two or even longer. Dr. Fix-It gets out his trusty hammer, glue or furniture polish. It almost goes without saying that the item will be selected the next day the Depot is open. Our sincere thanks go to Dr. Fix-It (actually we call him Dr. Don at the Depot) for his time and talent and his many many other virtues.



Special Events in April

On Saturday, April 23rd, the Depot will be open as usual to praise God and do his business as usual, but we'll celebrate our one year anniversary by offering both our guests and volunteers (and visitors) assorted refreshments including birthday cake.

The following Tuesday, April 26th, we'll be open as usual and will have a special visitor — Reverend Robert Visscher, Executive Director of Mission Central in Mechanicsburg. You're welcome to join us one day or both.

A mission of Wesley United Methodist Church, Bethlehem, Pa.
Some Reflections on Effective Giving

By Barbara Reimers

As I shop for supplies for the depot --baby supplies in particular -- I often feel that I am participating in an exercise in cultural awareness. Things we might happily pick up for our own children or grandchildren are not necessarily good choices for a child from a 3rd world country. And, since we don't know where each kit will end up, we have to put our kits together as if all of them were going to an impoverished nation on the other side of the world. For example, we should not choose items decorated with the American flag or other patriotic symbols. That is fairly obvious, but we need to remember that football is an American game; Disney and other cartoon characters may be looked upon as something promoting Western materialism; and English language phrases are foreign to them at best, and "Daddy's Little Princess" or something similar may just be plain hurtful to someone who doesn't know her daddy. It is not necessarily the individual recipients of these kits who are put off by the things I have mentioned but the government bureaucrats who inspect the shipments and decide whether or not to allow them into their country.

On another note, I think it is important that we realize that when we donate something because we are touched by a particular family's plight, our item may not go to that specific family. This is not an indi-

cation that those in charge of distributing the donations are being irresponsible. I have seen situations where, for example, 5 toasters have been donated to help a particular family get back on their feet. Obviously, they do not need 5 toasters, so 4 of them are given to others who are equally needy. The response to the needs of one family thereby blesses many families.

And now for some facts:

Since the depot opened at the end of last April, we have sent the following kits to Mission Central for distribution around the world:

2,544 Health Kits (Value \$30,528) 727 Birthing Kits (Value \$5816)

- 22 Cleaning Buckets (Value \$1210)
- 92 School Kits (Value \$1012)
- 28 Layette Kits (Value \$980)

In addition -- and these are in response to emerging local needs so we don't yet have any statistics--we have been providing bags of cleaning supplies and personal care kits to first time guests and personal care kits for the men at the Allentown Rescue Mission.

People are always asking me "What supplies do you need the most?" and I want to say "Everything!" but let me make an effort to offer some specifics. The kits we make up the

most of are Health Kits, Birthing Kits, and local cleaning bags. The items we need the most are receiving blankets (30"x30" or 32"x32" flannelette), hand towels, soap (not lvory or Jergens), gallon size ziploc bags, travel size toiletries, and cleaning supplies (household cleaner, dish liquid, detergent, and clorox). We also need volunteers to sew school bags and to knit baby sweaters (We provide the patterns for these.).

Another "God Moment" Windfall! by Bob Totten

For several months we have had to tell dozens of our "guests" that the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot simply had no beds or dressers available. Our prayers often included pleas for help.

Recently, by way of a friend at Trinity Church, we received notice that the Bushkill Inn Resort (in the Poconos) needed to get rid of more than 50 rooms of bedroom furniture on a first come, first served basis. We called & were told that we were caller #3. As soon as the first caller took what they wanted, the second caller wanted to take what was left.

We decided to follow up with a second call (right after caller #1 had left) and were told that, because of what we planned to do with it, we could get up to 15 rooms of furniture if we could pick it all up the next day.

On short notice we were able to assemble a team of 8 volunteers, two pickup trucks with trailers, and arranged to rent a 24 foot truck!



Team Outreach at the Bushkill Inn & Resort



Randy Misko, Director of Marketing and Sales, Bushkill Inn & Resort

Using every cubic foot of available transport we moved many beds, dressers, nightstands, desks, tables, blankets, bedspreads and mattress covers to add to the Depot's inventory. As we arrived to unload the trucks, there was a "guest" waiting anxiously to take a bed, a dresser and an end table!



A mission of Wesley United Methodist Church, Bethlehem, Pa. The Hands and Feet of God by Patti Tironi

Over the past year, I have stood back and watched, amazed, as the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot has grown from a desire in the hearts of some dedicated people, to an actual concept, to a fullblown reality shaped by the compassionate hands of Wesley UMC members and countless others.

Just Watch, and Be Amazed

The Depot, as we've come to call it, is an official hub of Mission Central in Mechanicsburg, PA. A year ago, I remember feeling anxious about what the Depot would be, how it would come together and work. At our grand opening on April 24, 2010, Eric, Mission Central's director at the time, said "It will take shape, just watch. You'll be amazed." In other words, "You've built it, and you have the tools to run it... now trust that God will guide it to whatever it will be." And God has and continues to guide it, and us.

I am always astounded at how different the Depot looks at the start of the day compared to at the end. At 9:30 on a Saturday morning, it could be filled with furniture and house wares that our dedicated movers have just unloaded... and by day's end, it's empty. As we've gotten the Depot word out in the community, we continue to be blessed by donations.

Sometimes it's even us that do the donating. My boyfriend's roll-top desk was languishing in storage; he admitted that he would probably never use it. He donated it to the Depot, where a guest excitedly claimed it within two hours of our unloading it. I still smile when I think about that woman sitting at that beautiful desk, enjoying it.

I've spread the Depot word to my family and friends, too. "You got a new microwave? Can I grab your old one for the Depot?" One Saturday I barely got inside the Depot door with a donated microwave before it went right back out into a guest's car.

One Man's Trash is Truly Another's Treasure

I've always felt frustrated by how many usable things people in this area throw away or put out to the curb for trash pick-up. Furniture, lamps, artwork and more. About a year before the Depot became a reality, I started pulling things off the curb and storing them – I'm not sure why. I felt that eventually I would find someone who needed them. I've brought those curbside finds to the Depot and have seen them go home with happy people who will use them. As Eric intimated, "Build it and see what happens."

Many of the guests I've helped at the Depot are almost incredulous that they can simply pick out furniture and house wares, free of charge. Many peek at the pile of items they've chosen and sheepishly say, "I feel like I'm taking too much." A few even ask if they can come back and volunteer their time to help others in their situation.

I won't soon forget guests like Phyllis, who've made a mark on my heart, and for whom I pray the Depot has really helped create a new and happy start. Phyllis had been homeless but had just gotten a new apartment. It was completely empty—not even a chair to sit on. She arrived shaky, on the verge of tears and a mini-meltdown. After she stepped outside for a few minutes to collect herself, we chatted some more, and she felt ready to choose some items to take to her new home. She grew increasingly happier as we "shopped" the Depot. She was smiling when she left and gave me a big, tight hug.

Three Hours a Month

I sometimes can't believe where we are now compared to where we were last April, when we cut the ribbon stretched across the garage door of the Depot. Are we a perfectly well oiled machine yet? No. Do we have enough volunteers to share the responsibilities each Tuesday and Saturday? No. But we're slowly getting there. If you desire to put your faith into action, I ask you to please consider giving three hours a month to the Depot. I promise the time will fly by, and you'll leave with a renewed spirit.

I think the Depot will always be a work in glorious process – ever-growing and evolving into something better and better. As long as it has the loving, caring people I've come to know at its core, and God at the helm, it will always be a success and by God's grace, a help to those in need in the Lehigh Valley.

The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot is

open from 9 AM – 3 PM every Tuesday and Saturday. To sign up for a three-hour volunteer shift go to http://www.lvoutreachdepot.org/calendarinput.htm.

Some Facts and Figures

Question: When did the Depot open its doors to begin helping desperately needy individuals and families?

Answer: April 24, 2010.

Question: How many needy individuals and families have actually been referred to the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot since we opened?

Answer: 225

Question: What is the total estimated value of furniture and other household good given to those individual families?

Answer: \$50,0000.

How many volunteer hours have been dedicated to this ministry since it opened?

Answer: 2,500.

Question: Can needy people simply show up at the Depot and ask for our help?

Answer: No. Only needy individual or families referred by approved case workers or social agencies or clergy are helped by this ministry.

Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot A mission of Wesley United Methodist Church, Bethlehem, Pa.

Modern-Day Epiphany

by Emily Doll

Two thousand years ago, the Magi found Jesus in the most unexpected, unimpressive of places – lying in a manger amidst some oxen and maybe a donkey or two. With that kind of origin, I guess it shouldn't be so surprising that today, we can find Jesus in a warehouse. Although, like the stable, since He's come to this otherwise empty and forgotten place, it's become a symbol of something amazing; a place full of miracle-happenings; a place people journey to in order to find something they long for: hope.

Though our story didn't begin with a young woman about to give birth, it did include an eager group of people who were, like Mary and Joseph, endowed with a special and (at times!) seemingly insurmountable Convinced that God had called them to carry out His plan and that He would provide all needed, the Mission Team that they modern-day approached a innkeeper (warehouse keeper?) who, though he could not offer the most desirable or remarkable space, did mention that there was a basementlike area below that could be used as a temporary home. (Thankfully, our "stable" came without the donkeys.)



The first time I walked in to the warehouse on Auburn St., it was March and it was cold and there was no garage door, and yet I couldn't help being energized by all the ways God could clearly use this place for His glory. The whole building smelled of dust and overall dankness, and we had to clear out the rotten boards and fight through the spider webs to find the walls, which were crumbling in some areas and required multiple layers of paint. I remember looking around and wondering, "What will this place become?" and I remember feeling that, despite the smell and the cold and the potential for floods, there was something remarkable coming to this place. You could feel the potential and the excitement in the air: Jesus was coming to Bethlehem - Again.



I spent some Saturday mornings there, along with a dedicated crew of workers; for a few weeks last spring, I painted so much and with such fervor that I had permanent globs of it in my hair. Dirty cement was transformed by a bright blue ocean of rainbow fish, each of which represented a volunteer who had contributed to the project. The spider webs disappeared, toilet paper appeared in the bathroom, donations began to trickle in, Bill Arnold made a promotional video, and before we knew it, it was April 24th and time for the public grand opening ceremony.



I remember that morning, watching folks come in and mill around; watching a group of youth assemble birthing kits to send to Haiti; watching the ribbon-cutting ceremony and seeing the hope on every volunteer's face, as if we all shared the same thought: "It's really happening."



And it is. Fast forward 8 months and I am overwhelmed and speechless at what the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot has become. I recently spent another Saturday morning there, and was blown away by what was found inside. Like that stable in Bethlehem, it might not look like anything too impressive on the outside, but God teaches us to look deeper. Inside these walls is a sense of community; the permeating joy of people helping people; the love that goes into every baby blanket that's folded.



Hear Mike as he shows a family a dining room table, giving them advice on how it can be fixed up and helping them disassemble it and pack it up into their car. Hear the note of soul-deep gratefulness in this woman's voice as she says, "Thanks for all you guys are doing." Hear this child's excited giggle as she gets to pick out a toy to take home.

When Jesus came to that stable, He brought to that dark, cold, somewhat smelly place the warmth and joy and hope that can only come from God. Here in our own little town of Bethlehem, two thousand years later, He's still bringing those same blessings to unexpected places; still working through regular people like you and I to reach the world and make a difference.

Come see what's happening at the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot. Come pack some care kits with us; organize donations with us; or just greet people at the door and see their smiles. Be part of the blessings that are born here and pour from this place; come wonder at all that He has accomplished, and soak in the knowledge that He has so many other big plans for this project. Journey, like the Magi (though perhaps without the camels) to experience the world-changing miracles that occur in the simplest of settings, when we merely take the opportunity to trust God and let Him work through us.