



July 2014

Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot
A mission of Wesley Church - A United Methodist Community
1866 Auburn Street, Bethlehem, PA 610-861-7373

A Special Note and Drawing from a Guest

"For Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot:

I am Happy with every one because you work so very hard and good, I am thankful because everyone in here likes to help people that no have nothing.

Myrna and Granddaughter"



=====

New Digs" Ministry

Five years ago, when the Outreach Depot concept was little more than a germinating idea, we were touring Mission Central in Mechanicsburg and noticed an area designated "New Digs Ministry". This was one of a number of volunteer ministries occupying space in Mission Central's warehouse. Conversations with those in charge led us to propose our own version of "New Digs" right here in the Lehigh Valley.

Now we're both pleased and honored to have been contacted by leaders of "New Digs Ministry" who would like to visit our facility to exchange ideas and discuss lessons learned.

Members of the "New Digs Ministry" volunteer team will visit the Outreach Depot the morning of July 8th. They want to see our warehouse facility, observe our procedures in action and talk about what works for them as they help the needy in the Central Conference area. Given their experience and years of success in that area, we know this visit will be of great value to the Depot..

Asking for Forgiveness

by Karen Schaefer

I started my day at the depot with a young woman who was referred to us through a food bank. She explained that she hoped to qualify for food stamps because she had just lost her job. Unfortunately the family income was \$30 over the upper limit for food stamps. She came to us looking for things like garbage bags and maybe some dish

soap, so they could use the money her husband earned to buy food. I asked her what other things she might need and reviewed our list of furniture and household items. She said "maybe I could use a sofa because ours is getting old". She did not really need it; she needed garbage bags. I was beginning to feel that the case worker who referred her may have misunderstood our mission. During our conversation she revealed that her husband worked next door. I thought her need was a mismatch with our mission and explained the purpose of our work.

Our guest left without anything. For 20 minutes I kept thinking to myself that this is the type situation where individuals in need fall through the cracks. How could I do such a thing? I was afraid that if I gave her a cleaning bag, we would be inundated with individuals who need cleaning bags. This only made me feel worse. I thought about what Jesus would do in this situation. The gift would multiply so that everyone who needed only a cleaning bag would get one. I went in search of her husband. I found him and explained what happened. I wanted to give him a cleaning bag for her, asking him to tell her I was sorry. He was so gracious, walking to the depot with me to get the cleaning bag so I would not have to walk back to his place of work. Did this make me feel better? Not sure. I did learn that if I felt this bad again, I will know that I am the one who misunderstood and I need to trust my instincts.

Thank you, God, for giving me this opportunity to be open to my own errors and helping to guide me so that I can approach all that I do with love.

Above and Beyond

by Barbara Reimers

When people come to the Depot to select furniture, they understand that we offer no guarantees or warranties--everything is "as is." That being said, we often get items that are good but need a bit of repair. Don Follmer ("Dr. Don") will replace broken or missing drawer pulls on a dresser, assemble a table, glue down loose laminate, replace worn lamp cords, or touch up scratches where necessary. When things are slow, other volunteers will dust furniture (a lot of dust accumulates in our warehouse), wash glassware or stage furniture groupings to show things to their best advantage. Several times we have gotten refrigerators that are very dirty, and volunteers have cleaned them up so they look practically new. But two recent gifts of volunteer effort have particularly impressed me. Christine Potter-Jones is reupholstering a lovely small bench, and Carol Beach is sewing the binding onto an otherwise fine mattress. We are truly blessed by the generous way our volunteers share their talents.

Understanding the Need

by Mary Jean Cole

Several weeks ago, an elderly gentleman, accompanied by his daughter, came for his appointment at the Depot. As we began to talk about his furniture and household needs, it quickly became apparent that his English was quite minimal and that I would need his daughter to walk around with us and translate for him. As he selected furnishings for his apartment, the only item he could say in English was "DVD ...". His daughter completed his request by saying he wanted the DVD to play his Christian music. Mr. R was very clear about what he liked and what would best meet his needs but it was also clear that he would only take what he needed, shaking his head when I pointed out items I thought he might want. One plate, one glass, etc was all he needed – nothing more.

As the three of us walked together around the Depot I gradually learned, from Mr. R's daughter, why he had been referred to us. He was a native of Puerto Rico and had gotten extremely sick about a year ago. His weight had dropped to about 75 pounds and the doctors said that there was nothing more they could do for him – that he was dying. His daughter then decided to bring him here to the Lehigh Valley where he could be

treated. He was hospitalized for a lengthy time and placed in a nursing home where he continued to recuperate. After about a year, he now weighs about 130 lbs, has regained his health and was able to leave the nursing home and move into his own apartment. To help with furnishing his apartment, he was referred to the Depot.

What was particularly interesting about Mr. R was that he had his eye out for some decorative items. His eyes lit up when I saw him spot an artificial plant and, when told that he could certainly have it, he was delighted. His daughter said he would like a picture for his apartment and so we looked through the collection of pictures. He suddenly stopped at one picture. It was an old-fashioned looking picture – a roadside stand with two old fashioned scales hanging from either side of the roof. He was absolutely thrilled with this picture. His daughter explained that her Dad had worked at a stand, almost identical to the one in the picture, for 35 years. I asked if they would mind telling the story of the picture to another Depot volunteer. They replied that they would be glad to share. When Mr. R's daughter again shared the meaning of the picture for her father, her father burst into tears – as all of us did. It was truly a God Moment. One of the gifts of that experience was to learn that we, as volunteers, never know how we might impact the lives of our guests and how they might impact ours. People blessing people – it's a gift that keeps giving.

Look for the Depot Truck!

On Sunday, July 20, the Depot truck will be spotted in the parking lot of Wesley United Methodist



Church with the back door open and the lift gate lowered. This month we're particularly hoping to receive new bed pillows, bath & hand towels and washcloths, and bed sheet sets of all sizes .



June 2014

Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot
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Good Things are Happening!

Advance Special: The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot recently received conference approval for our ministry to be an "Advance Special". That good news means that we can finally reach out to other churches within our conference, spreading the good news of what the Outreach Depot has been able to accomplish during its 4 years of operation. We can now seek additional support for all we do and need.

The Apollo Grill (1): On Thursday, May 28th, artist Darrell George placed a number of pieces of his artwork on display at the Apollo Grill, 85 W. Broad St, Bethlehem. Darrell has generously agreed to give the Depot 30% of the proceeds of all art sold from May 28th through June 12th. Members of our church family were invited to get an early glimpse of the art. Two pieces had already sold by 8 p.m. !



Darrell George

The Apollo Grill (2): Please mark your calendar for Thursday evening, June 19th. Again the Apollo is offering a fundraising opportunity to the Depot. Between 5:00pm and 7:00pm a pre-determined amount of money from that evening's specialty drink will go to the Depot. Adding to the excitement will be an opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for a variety of special prize items.

Note: Thanks to Donna Giardina for setting up both of the Apollo Grill fundraisers.

Matching Grant: The annual "Matching Grant" is available once again. Between May 1 and July 31, a generous donor has agreed to match, dollar for dollar, up to a maximum of \$20,000. What a perfect way to make your giving go twice as far for a good cause!

Who and What is Mission Central?

Over the past four years you've read or heard us talk about Mission Central. Mission Central is an enormous 50,000 square foot ministry warehouse located in Mechanicsburg, PA. Mission Central is the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot's mentor.

Mission Central guided us in the original founding of The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot. Dozens of other ministries have also been helped and have formed what are called HUBS. The Outreach Depot is a HUB. Mission Central is there to answer questions; they are there to receive the 14,000+ Disaster Relief Kits and medical supplies we've collected and delivered to their facility in our 4 years of operation. Fortunately, for our bottom line, Mission Central covers the cost of shipping and postage for all kits and supplies delivered to their facility.

It is comforting to know that whenever there is a natural disaster anywhere in the world, Mission Central works in conjunction with the United Methodist Community on Relief to get much needed supplies to those going through devastating times. It is also comforting to know that we play a role in providing those supplies.

Wesley's Mission Team members first learned of Mission Central in 2006 when trying to find a way to help The United Methodist Committee on Relief after Hurricane Katrina. The fact that Mission Central was here in Pennsylvania and just a 2 hour drive made it that much better.

On May 8th Mission Central hosted a Networking event for all the HUBS. This picture shows all the HUBS being represented at that event.



Our HUB (the Outreach Depot) was represented by a yellow ribbon. That ribbon can be found hanging in our warehouse, giving us a connection with our mentor and all the other HUBS working to do the Lord's work in many different ways.

Reidler Foundation Awards Grant

by Karen Schaefer

Last fall Barbara Subber, a trustee with the Reidler Foundation, contacted me to make an appointment to learn more about the Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot. Her preference was to meet at the Depot so she could see the depot in action. She is an engaging, gentle person who was excited about our mission. After meeting our volunteers, observing them working with guests, and learning about the scope of our outreach she indicated that she might have some money for us. It "is not much" but "I think we can help you". She invited us to write a one page summary about the depot and how we would use \$2500.00 dollars. In her words, "I am very impressed with your organization and what you're doing to help those in our community who have fallen on hard times."

We received a check for \$2500.00 the week of May 20, 2014 to support the purchase of selected household items for our guests including toasters, coffee pots, dish sets, and pots and pans. God works through us every day of our lives to help us be the best we can be and it was this continued hard work by all the volunteers that made this grant possible. Thank you all!

Paying it Forward

by Karen Schaefer

For the first time in my life I was able to shop at the Boutique on the Rink, an annual sale that supports three St. Luke's University Health Network programs, including Hospice. What an adrenalin rush for those who like to shop for bargains! I was "window shopping" when I realized that I could "come back tomorrow" and get some dishes at half price for guests at the Depot! Well, I went back two days and on the second day while paying my bill, I realized that I was helping support the Cancer Support Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley, St. Luke's Hospice, and St. Luke's Cancer Center while also providing household items at no cost to our guests. It is mind boggling to think about the number of individuals that can be helped by just one small "pay it forward". I had lots of fun and plan to do this every year that I can. Come join me!

Creativity

The creative aspects of helping guests select furniture and housewares can be very satisfying—beyond answering the question "Do you think this chair goes with that sofa?" Often we do not have some of the items requested. Some items are always in shortage, such as beds, dressers and table & chair sets. It is such a joy to be able to suggest alternatives. Recently we received 15 very good quality entertainment units which had drawers and a couple of shelves. They went like hotcakes once we pointed out the possibility of using them as dressers. The shelves could hold sweaters and/or jeans. A futon that couldn't fold up went to a woman whose child had been sleeping on the floor. Various tray tables, work tables or similar items were repurposed when there were no kitchen or dining tables in stock. Besides helping our guests, it helps us think about other uses for miscellaneous pieces of furniture.

Look for the Depot Truck!

On Sunday, June 15th, the Depot truck will be spotted in the parking lot of Wesley United Methodist Church with the back door open and the lift gate lowered. Please place your donations into the truck



May 2014

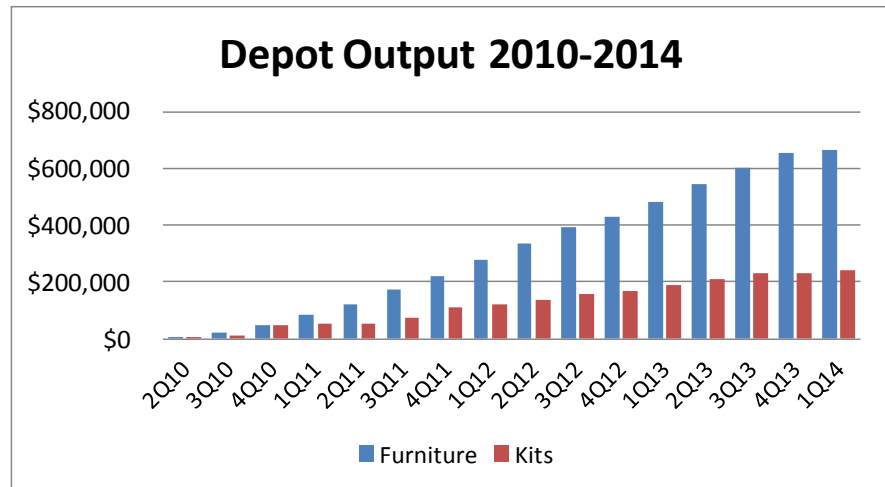
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Four Years and Counting!

by Bob Totten

What an experience this ministry has been for those who stepped up to the plate! Four years ago we were led to try acting as the hands and feet of God on behalf of the needy here in the Lehigh Valley. We were also led to assemble, verify and ship thousands of disaster relief kits for people all over the world.

This chart displays the cumulative value of all of the furniture and disaster relief kits distributed by the Depot since our doors first opened in April 2010. As you can see clearly, the needs continue to be out there!



Matching Grant Opportunity

An anonymous donor has generously agreed to match donations received by the Outreach Depot (up to a maximum of \$20,000) between 1 May and 31 July.

This is a great way to help the Outreach Depot continue to help those families referred to us by social agencies all over the Lehigh Valley.

Spring Cleaning

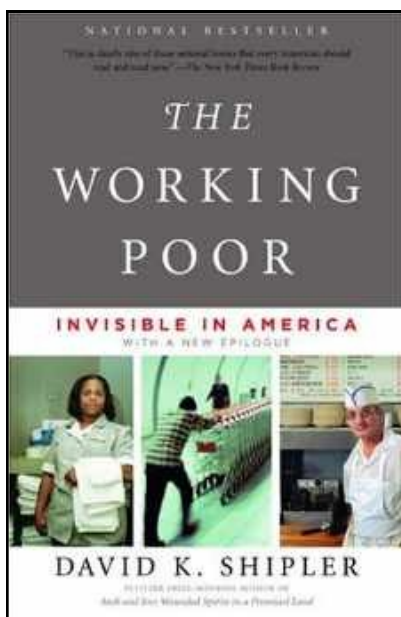
It's that time of year again – time for Spring Cleaning! We know you think of us when you are getting rid of furniture but please also think of us when you clean out your linen closet or kitchen cabinets. We accept sheets, pillows, blankets, quilts, dishes, glassware and pots & pans.

One Woman's Struggle

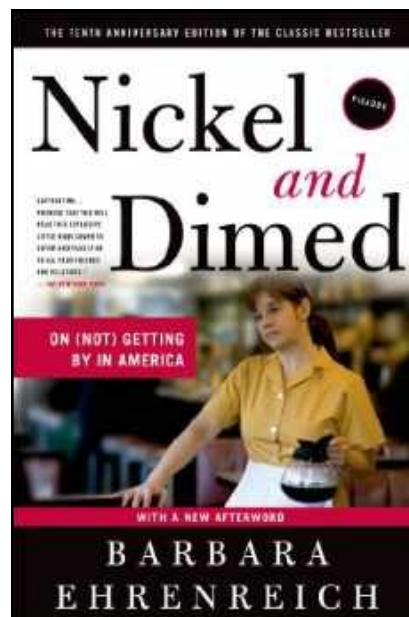
Volunteers respect a guest's privacy but find that some people need to share their story. Recently a guest arrived during a heavy rain storm. She came with a rental truck hoping and wanting to fill it with furniture for her home. She shares her home with two young children. The children both have medical issues which make each day a challenge. This woman found herself abandoned by the children's father. Struggling to take courses to better her earning capacity, she was financially "strapped". To make ends meet the furniture in her home had to be sold to help cover expenses. The agency referring this guest to the Depot explained that the family didn't have beds to sleep on or chairs to sit in. The truck left the Depot filled from front to back with beds, dressers, a sofa, chair and other items to make a comfortable home. The volunteers left at the end of the day knowing a family's life was going to be better that day. We played a part in being People Blessing People.

Good Books!

Those of us who work at the Depot are always trying to improve our understanding of the guests we serve – to overcome possible misperceptions of those in need. To that end, we've recently discovered two very readable & informative books:



“The Working Poor:
Invisible in America”
by David K. Shipler.



“Nickle and Dimed:
On (Not) Getting By in America”
by Barbara Ehrenreich

Anyone seriously committed to working with our guests is encouraged to read one or both of these books.

Health Kits Are Needed for America's Tornado Victims

Recent tornados have spread havoc throughout the south and there is a desperate need for Health Kits! Please consider donating the following items needed for these kits:

- Hand towels
- Washcloths
- Combs
- Fingernail Clippers
- Bath size soap
- Toothbrushes
- Adhesive bandages
- Plastic bags (1 gallon, sealable)

Look for the Depot Truck May 18th!

If you don't have the time to drop your donations at the Depot warehouse, consider bringing them to Wesley Church on the third Sunday of the month. We'll park the truck, with the rear door open, near the entrance.

Go to the Depot web site to learn the contents of each disaster relief kit. This month we hope to assemble birthing kits, so please bring receiving blankets, surgical gloves and sealable one gallon plastic bags.

Also needed: house wares, small kitchen appliances and flat bottomed paper or plastic bags with handles.



April 2014

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Volunteers: Disciples in Action *by Bob & Carol Totten*

As the Outreach Depot celebrates **four years** of doing God's work, we want to publicly recognize those regular volunteers, or disciples, who have unselfishly given of their time and/or talents, logging (as a group) nearly 17,000 hours of service to others!

The complete list of **People Blessing People** is incredibly long. It would include all those who initially helped clean-up, paint, and organize the Depot four years ago;. It would include all of our generous donors (who gave financially and/or material goods) and all those who have helped "spread the word" through various forms of communications media. It would include all of those who previously gave their time volunteering. This list includes only those who have been "hands on" in the time we've been in our current unheated, un-air-conditioned warehouse. It is truly a labor of love for those who endure the present challenging conditions.

<i>Carol & Craig Beach</i>	<i>Jack Bernstiel</i>
<i>Rich Chambers</i>	<i>Lois Donchez</i>
<i>Allan & Mary Jean Cole</i>	<i>Gail Dauscher</i>
<i>Donna & Vince Giardina</i>	<i>Don Follmer</i>
<i>Anne & Tom Henshaw</i>	<i>Ron Horizny</i>
<i>Chip Johnson</i>	<i>Mike Krom</i>
<i>Ginny Josar</i>	<i>Gayne Marriner</i>
<i>Don Mette</i>	<i>Bunny Miller</i>
<i>Joan Palisca</i>	<i>Barbara Reimers</i>
<i>Nina & Josh Reppert</i>	<i>Zel Shifter</i>
<i>Harry & Karen Schaefer</i>	<i>Sharon Schultz</i>
<i>Bob & Carol Totten</i>	<i>Forrest Taylor</i>
<i>Fritz & Marion Werner</i>	<i>Jeff Werkheiser</i>



It's Not About Us – It's The Giving Spirit!

The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot has been blessed by having an understanding, giving, Christian landlord. He believed in the vision of The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot 4.5 years ago. He still does. The Depot is still at the same address we moved into 4 years ago – just located in a different area of the warehouse. Although our circumstances could be better, we would not be celebrating our 4th year of helping over 5500 individuals, if it were not for a landlord who believed in us and in what we do. We thank Ed Sinko. He has maintained our rent at a rate that we can afford. That allows us to purchase items for distribution to meet local needs that aren't donated frequently enough. Ed joins us in being People Blessing People.

www.lvoutreachdepot.org

A Lesson Learned

by Barbara Reimers

One of my early encounters with a guest at the Depot taught me a valuable lesson in not making assumptions. The gentleman was moving into his own small apartment and needed everything. We were doing well in that we had almost everything he needed on that day – except a frame for the mattress and box spring he chose. I said “Well, at least it is cheap to buy a bed frame”, and the person with him said “Even that is difficult for him to get. At the end of the month, after he pays his rent and buys food, he has only about \$15 left”. Point taken. I have reminded myself of this often over the past few years and try not to impose my own understandings where they do not fit.

How This Ministry Has Changed

When we started this effort, we were told that this ministry would expand naturally to fill a variety of other needs within our own area. We didn't understand how this could happen but trusted the source. Now, as we look back, we see a number of ways this has happened. One of those ways is that we now try to supplement donated basic household items with new items we have purchased – plates, pans, coffee pots, toasters, sheets, towels, mops, brooms & toilet brushes. We do solicit monetary donations to help pay for these things, but actually, many of our generous volunteers often pay for these things themselves. It is so satisfying to see someone with nothing get, not just basic furniture, but what most of us would consider to be absolute necessities for creating a home.

A House Burns Down...

by Karen Schaefer

....Leaving four children and four adults with only the clothes on their backs. After spending Christmas in a hotel, they found a house and were referred to the depot to help them with furniture and household goods. When they were ready to leave, I stood in amazement of how much they were able to find to provide a home for themselves and the children. They found dressers, bedside tables, small table for a TV, sofa, several overstuffed chairs, an old washstand, dishes, glasses, pots and pans, bath towels, and much more. It was their humility and ability to see what things could become that made the

biggest impression on me. If they could fix it, re-finish it or paint it, or find a new use for an unusual item they selected it with grace and appreciation. It was a very good day for them and an even more awesome day for all of us because God showed his love once again.

The Joy of No Sew Quilts

Several weeks ago I assisted a young women select items for her home. She was a single mother with four children. She shared that her oldest daughter was actually her niece whom she is raising. Her sister and brother-in-law were killed when her niece was six years old. What a wonderful thing for her to do for her sister.

She was able to select most of the items she needed. For some reason I showed her our selection of no sew quilts, even though she did not say she needed blankets. She picked one out and asked if she could have it. "Of course." I encouraged her to take one for each child, and she carefully selected two more. She cradled them as if they were a small child and smiled.

WOW! We touched not one, but five lives today!



Look for the Depot Truck - But Not this Month!!

Because the third Sunday of April is Easter Sunday, the Depot truck won't be in the parking lot of Wesley United Methodist Church. If you have donations to be put into the truck, please place them inside the church entrance.

Go to our web site to read about the contents of each disaster relief kit. This month we hope to assemble birthing kits, so please consider bringing receiving blankets, surgical gloves and sealable one gallon plastic bags.

Also needed: house wares, small kitchen appliances and flat bottomed paper or plastic bags with handles.



March 2014

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Second Time Around

By Carol Totten

Yesterday was one of those days that we volunteers were reminded of why we're doing what we're doing. A past guest's story resurfaced. As we discussed that guest's life, it was impossible not to have tears in our eyes.

A man walked in - I remembered him. His name was Joe*. Joe explained that he had brought a guest to the Depot in June 2013 for her appointment. Joe is a volunteer with Second Harvest – he drives people to doctor's appointments and helps them with other needs. He had brought Mary* in for her appointment because she had just secured housing at a local low income housing project.

Mary has an inoperable brain tumor. Joe had shared that with me back in June. I had made a note of it on her file. Yesterday Joe explained that Mary is now in very bad condition and has been moved to a nursing home. She needed to have her apartment cleaned out by that Friday.

Mary remembered what our paperwork says about donating items back to the Depot and not selling them. That's what she wanted to do – donate them back to us.

I wrote down all the necessary info and our pick-up crew knows the deadline issue. We had helped her get 2 small sofa beds (brand new sofa beds that a local hotel had received by mistake and gave them to the Depot). Mary had taken minimal other items. The sofa beds were for her 2 children when they came to visit her. The children were about 9 & 12 at the time.

I asked Joe where the children are now. Apparently the father's new girlfriend sent the girl to live with her mother. I believe the son is either with his dad or went to his dad's family.

The brother & sister have not been kept together.

Joe is acting as the guest's representative since talking has become very difficult for Mary and she is hard to understand.

Bless Mary as she deals with her continuing health issues.

Bless Joe for his volunteer services in helping those who desperately need help.

** Names have been changed.*

Shopping for the Depot – Part II

Last month we talked about how the disaster relief kits require very specific items, and oftentimes the kits we receive contain items that don't fit those requirements. So what do we do with those non-compliant or "excess" items?

Most of the excess items come from Cleaning Bucket donations. We use most of that excess to populate "Cleaning Bags" which we give to local guests if they are just moving into a new found room or apartment (Food stamps can't be used to purchase such items).



Cleaning Bags

*(Note how shopping bags with handles are used)
Save those bags for the Depot!*



Personal Care Items

Other items get put into "Personal Care Kits" which we create for use by Turning Point or Victory House or Mary's Shelter residents .

School supplies we give to local school groups, individuals, and Teach Rwanda.

And the Learning Continues..

Those of us who volunteer at the Depot will often mention how much we have learned or come to understand by working there. Usually we are talking about the big issues like what poverty really looks like or how the social services networks function. But there are also a lot of odd bits and pieces that often pop up and surprise us such as:

- Toothpaste has an expiration date
- Wegmans is sometimes the cheapest place to buy certain items such as Kleenex or laundry detergent
- Some countries will reject humanitarian aid items if the tags identify the items as coming from the US or China, etc.
- The high moisture in some soaps (such as Ivory or Jergens) will cause the soaps to deteriorate when stored in closed containers
- Moisture content in soaps and sponges may cause rusting of metal items stored in the same container

- Oddly enough, in this day and age, there are still many dishes being sold that are neither microwave or dishwasher safe

Did you know?....

Since April 2010, the Outreach Depot:

- Has touched the lives of **5,911** people?
- Distributed **13,683** disaster relief kits?
- Logged **22,543** volunteer hours?
- Partnered with **58** social agencies and churches?
- Distributed \$910,000 worth of furniture, house wares and disaster relief supplies



Look for the Depot Truck!

On Sunday, March 16th, the Depot truck will be spotted in the parking lot of Wesley United Methodist Church with the back door open and the lift gate lowered. Please place your donations into the truck

Go to our web site to read about the contents of each disaster relief kit. This month we hope to assemble birthing kits, so please consider bringing receiving blankets, surgical gloves, single edge razor blades and sealable one gallon plastic bags.



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February 2014

Who are we helping?

By Karen Schaefer

Recently we've asked caseworkers, when requesting an appointment, to describe their client's situation. The purpose is to not only verify their need, but to understand better what has happened in their lives that brings them to the Depot.

I'm pleased to share with you a couple of those stories.

My hope is to open your hearts to all the possibilities that God gives us to serve in His honor.

"The family consists of a 22 year old mother with 3 boys, ages 2, 3 and 6. The father of the youngest child is involved and does work. Mother does not work due to the disability of her oldest child.

The family had to move due to the condition of the house they were living in. The oldest child was born at the gestational age of 25 weeks as a twin; his twin passed away. He is on a feeding tube and rodents have been eating through the feeding tube at night. The home was full of mold, compromising the health of the family, especially the children.

After living in a hotel for a week, the family found a home but was told to get rid of all their furniture because of infestation. The family is proactive and very thankful for assistance they have received. They have been compliant with the social agency and all medical treatment of their child.

After finding a home, they are left with limited financial resources to purchase furniture and household goods for their new place."

"I met her about two years ago when she was abused and had moved from a domestic violence situation. She was staying with a friend who had also been abused. She was trying to get an apartment of her own so that she could start her life over.

She went back to school and was placed on a waiting list for an apartment. However, her disability got worse and she had to relearn how to do everything for herself, including talking, walking, & eating. Even though she is severely disabled she has come a long way and is capable of caring for herself. She is ready to go out on her own.

Her name came up for an apartment and needs help with household goods and furnishings."

Weather, Weather, Weather

That is the main topic of conversation wherever you go these days.

For the first time since we opened we have had to close for several days. This causes a lot of rescheduling and backups in terms of guest appointments and pickups.

Even when we are open, the bitter cold is a real challenge for our volunteers who are working in unheated warehouse space. We are looking at a variety of ways to work around our situation. Creative suggestions are welcome from anyone.

And special kudos to our loyal volunteers who continue to come in regularly and stay cheerful in spite of the chill!

Shopping for the Depot

Shopping for the Depot takes a good bit of time and effort. You might wonder why – aren't kit supplies donated? Well, yes and no. The required items for Disaster Relief Kits are very specific in terms of type and size, and many times donated items don't match the specifications. And so we shop in order to fill in the missing components of the kits.

Garbage bags are invariably not the required contractor weight, detergent is powdered rather than liquid, household cleaner is the wrong size, and so on. This may seem like nitpicking but it comes down to shipping regulations plus the need to have each kit consistent in quality & content.

We make an effort to be frugal in our choices but the cheapest items are not always the best buys when you factor in the quality of the items and what they will be used for. Kit recipients have serious needs and deserve more than the flimsiest towels, tiniest scrub brushes, or thinnest work gloves to be found. They deserve our best.

More about shopping next month – what do we do with all that non-compliant stuff we get?

A Request from Mission Central

Mission Central, which ships our disaster relief kits, has an urgent need to replenish its supply of kits. Requests for the kits were up 28% in the past year. We will be sending out what kits we have on hand but will also be making up additional kits. Donations of kit supplies, especially receiving blankets and hand towels would be most appreciated.



Truck Problem

Lately we've had a problem starting the Depot's truck. This is the truck we use to pick up furniture and household goods donated by people all over the Lehigh Valley.

Because the truck is 12 years old, it is difficult to get parts, so we don't know when it will again be available for pickups.

Until we get the truck back in operation, please be patient.

If you've submitted a pickup request, we'll get to you as soon as we can, but it may not be soon.

If you plan to donate furniture, please consider delivering it yourself.

The Depot Trailer

The Depot trailer will be parked in front of Wesley United Methodist Church to receive donations on Sunday, February 16th.

Go to our web site to discover the contents of each disaster relief kit. This month we'll be making a concerted effort to assemble birthing kits, so please consider donating receiving blankets, hand towels, surgical gloves and contractor quality trash bags.



January 2014

Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot
A mission of Wesley Church - A United Methodist Community
1866 Auburn Street, Bethlehem, PA 610-861-7373

"Falling through the Cracks"...

...AND landing in the arms of God! A depot volunteer answered the depot phone one morning and found that she was talking with a young woman, transitioning from a shelter, who had tried for weeks to get assistance with furniture and household items for her "new" home. Having called several agencies in the Lehigh Valley, she was desperate because no one could or would assist her. The volunteer told her she would do what she could to help.

Moving quickly, three volunteers agreed to help. An anonymous angel of mercy at Wesley UMC validated her need and submitted an appointment request to the depot. Unexpectedly, the first appointment of the next day was available. She accepted the appointment.

She arrived with a truck, several friends to help with moving items and her mother whose first words to her when they arrived were "God is watching over you". Indeed He was! In a very short time she was able to select everything needed for her new home with the exception of a refrigerator. In general, the waiting time to return to pick up selected items was 2-3 weeks because of the Christmas Holidays. In this case there was no need to wait that long. She could come back the next day. God was walking right beside her! She left with tears and glad tidings for all. She just needed a refrigerator. We let her know that a refrigerator could possibly come in before her next appointment.

When she came back the next day, she asked if a refrigerator had come in. It had! What great joy! Now she was able to make a home for her child and herself. (In case you can't tell, I have a big ear to ear smile on my face now. I am so thankful she had called and asked for help. God made sure we were there for her! Such a happy day and awesome privilege to be able to help those in need.)
Karen Schaefer

Taking a Bite out of the Cold

Anne Henshaw, LVOD volunteer, has many talents. You may recall that she creates and donates flower arrangements in honor of her mother

for our guests. She also puts thousands of hours into making fleece blankets for guests. Ann has donated roughly 100 quilts in the last year.

These are no-sew blankets that involve putting two pieces of fleece together, cutting fringe through both pieces along the outer edge and tying each top and bottom fringe together using. Selecting and putting the colors together for the blankets is loads of fun. Because of the cold weather, there is an increase in need for blanket to "take a bite out of the cold." If you would like to help, there are several ways to do so.

- Buy the fleece and make a blanket for the depot
- Donate fleece for depot volunteers to make the blankets
- Make a monetary donation to help buy the fleece.

If you are interested, you can buy ready-to-make precut fleece kits at JoAnn's Fabrics on Rt. 309 in Quakertown. The kits are frequently on sale. You can also buy fleece by the yard and put your own creativity into the selection of colors and prints. You can choose 1½ yards for children, or 2 yards or more for a teen or adult. You can choose two pieces of the same pattern, two different patterns, two plain colors or a pattern on one side and a plain color on the other. The fleece should be 45 inches wide. Go to "Knot a Quilt" on the internet to get instructions" and think about individuals of all ages cuddling up with their new fleece blankets, feeling loved and warm.

Thank you for your support!

We would like to thank all those who supported the Depot through a 3 year pledge. It's hard to believe that we have completed our first full 3 years, isn't it? The pledges have allowed us to budget confidently and have covered our rent, utilities and more. If you are able to continue these pledges through another 3 year cycle – or if you would like to become a new pledger – it would be most appreciated. See Barbara Reimers for a copy of the current pledge form. (This is, of course, second mile giving (for Wesley UMC) above and beyond your church pledge.) Whatever you can afford is welcome. Thank you for your generosity.

Why volunteer at the Depot?

When I retired from my employment as a clinical social worker in 2008, I knew that, eventually, I would become involved in some kind of volunteer service. However, I took my time - I visited our children and grandchildren more often, my husband and I did some travelling, we did some work on our home - all things that one often postpones when working. At the same time, I periodically looked at volunteer opportunities both in the community and at Wesley Church.

Over time, I began to be drawn to the Depot. Its philosophy of People Helping People aligned very strongly with my life values and experiences. I grew up in a family deeply involved in the outreach opportunities of our church. In my professional life I heard story after story of struggle. For me, the Depot seemed a logical place to put my faith into action. I began to ask more specific questions - what happens there, whom are we serving, what is the time commitment, etc. I learned about our involvement with the larger Methodist community through our connection with Mission Central which distributes the various kits that we put together - cleaning buckets, birthing kits, health kits, school kits, layette kits. I learned about our local role - providing furniture, household goods - for those who are in serious need in our community. All of these

connections - locally and much beyond the Lehigh Valley - drew me to the Depot and, ultimately, I made the decision to volunteer.

I found there a community of loving volunteers who are extremely committed to the goals of the Depot - those who go out in the Depot truck picking up furniture all over the Lehigh Valley, those who pack the kits for distribution, those who answer the phones and organize scheduling, those who take guests around the Depot display area and assist them in choosing items they need, those who organize all the items that are donated to the Depot. We all have opportunities to interact with our guests - we see the smiles on their faces, their gratefulness at finding items that they need, the personal stories of struggle they often freely share with us.

Of course, all is not perfect - our warehouse is very cold in winter, some guests are more difficult than others, some take advantage of our good will, but that is life. Ultimately it is clear that The Depot is meeting an important need in our community, both locally and beyond, and it is one of the many ways that Wesley Church is a community of believers putting faith into action.

Mary Jean Cole

Calendar Year 2013 Results

Furniture & Housewares Distributed

Chairs	865
Tables	555
Beds	310
Lamps	291
Sofas	275
Small Appliances	226
Dressers	210
Cleaning Supplies	95
TVs	88
Wardrobes	29
	11

Value: \$218,990

Disaster Relief Kits Delivered to Mission Central

Health Kits	1,743	School Kits	304
Birthing Kits	618	Layette Kits	267
Cleaning Kits	348	Sewing Kits	35

Total Kits: 3,315

Value: \$65,615

Lives Touched

(within the Lehigh Valley)

Individual Referrals:	452
Adults	695
Children (≤12)	611
Children (13-18):	196
Total:	1,502

Volunteer Participation

Volunteers: 68
Volunteer Hours: 6,478

Web Site Activity

Total Visits: 5,514

Missed appointments: 263