

St. John the Merciful Outreach Ministry Newsletter

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"Guard yourself against luxury as against a plague. It greatly weakens a Christian's soul. It teaches you to steal what is another's; to offend people, and to hold your hand back from giving alms as is required of a Christian. St. Tikhon of Zadonsk



Holy Trinity Outreach wishes you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving!

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Psalm 107:1

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The Simple Act of Networking Can Help Many

It is amazing how just having a conversation or networking with someone can make a big difference in other's lives. The following are examples of what can be accomplished through just a simple conversation and action.

† We recently were called by someone who had a rental unit that a client completely abandoned. The owner of the rental unit donated almost everything left in the unit to our ministry. This enabled us to help provide clothing, furniture, and kitchen items to several different families via the *Lost Sheep Ministry headed by Rev. Phillip Brickle.

† Our Outreach Ministry was contacted by one of our parishioners who had a friend that is a realtor who had a house of furniture they wanted to donate to our ministry. Through the donation of a truck by another parishioner, and through the help of others, we were able to fill a 24 foot box truck with furniture such as, lamps, a TV, chairs, tables, beds and kitchen items. These items went to help a single mom and her 23 year old daughter who were living in an apartment with only the carpet attached to the floor and a 12" black and white TV on a milk carton. We completely furnished their apartment and had a few items left over to give to some of their neighbors who were also in need. We can't forget the daughter's comments to her mom thru her tears saying, "Look how good God is being to us".

*Over the course of the past two years we have been blessed to come into contact with other ministries doing the same work for God. We have worked with Plant a Seed Ministries Mission House, Passage Home, NDUCESON Outreach Ministry, The Women's Center of Wake County, Interact, The South Wilmington Street Men's Shelter, the Healing Place, Lost Sheep Ministry and Miles Ministry to just name a few. We should not be surprised at all of the results of this wonderful work, remember: "for where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." Matt: 18:20

Volunteers Needed: We need your time and talent. If you are interested in being on our email listing, please send your email to Deacon Gavrilo at gmilkovich@nc.rr.com

Examples of possible volunteer opportunities: loading/delivering furniture, delivering food items, picking up left over Panera Bread on Monday evenings at the Panera Bread location on Falls of the Neuse Rd, or helping to sort, bag, and tag clothing. There is something for everyone and every family. (We can keep our riches, but be inwardly free of them and serve Him through them, i.e. helping others.)

A Day With The Deacon

*“You should never be able to enjoy a glass of wine, especially when your brother is suffering!”
...St. John Kronstadt of Russia*

The homeless, who are recipients of services, know that if it were not for the additional helps of the faith-based communities, they would be in much worse shape than they find themselves in now.

Deacon Gavrillo, of the Greek Orthodox Church in Raleigh, has been a beacon of light to various organizations that offer assistance to the needy; including; to the men of the South Wilmington Street Center. Since his arrival, at the shelter, as a kitchen volunteer, Deacon Gavrillo is always received, by the men at the center, who eagerly await seeing the smiling and reassuring face of the one they affectionately call “Deac.” (pronounced “Deek”)

Upon his arrival to the Men’s center, the Deacon receives a hearty reception from these men who love him because of his care and compassion for them. Deac listens to the men, who sometimes, feel they may need someone else to talk to and Deac is readily available to be there for the men and they are appreciative of this attribute.

Even the Deac realized that visiting the center comes with some who will not be as gracious of his listening ear or his willing spirit, but that does not stop Deac from coming faithfully each week to bring experience, strength and hope to the men of the South Wilmington Street Center. When asking the Deacon of his experiences there at the center, he will candidly tell you, “I love coming here to talk to the guys. I always leave much richer than I did when I arrived.” I get such strength from the guys.”

Depending on his schedule, the Deacon usually comes to the center each Wednesday and the men wait with eager anticipation for the day he is to arrive. The men really love the Deacon who is a confidant, counselor and best friend to them and his presence is always welcomed there. He is such a down to earth kind of guy who wants to be able to relate to the men on all levels, so he decided one day to hang out with us to experience life “in our shoes.” Although, that was our plan, we ended up at the Women’s Center and had a wonderful day of fellowship with the staff of the center. After introductions, the staff of the center greeted this much revered man with hugs and words of praise and admiration. It was amazing, the level of respect given to this man, but it really should have been of no surprise as to why they spoke so highly of the Deacon regarding how much they all love and respect this hallowed man of God.

That day could not have been more enjoyable if it were planned.

Any day to hang out with Deacon Gavrillo is a blessed one indeed, so I invite one and all to first, volunteer at the South Wilmington Street Center to meet some amazing men there, then to meet Deacon Gavrillo; who will bless your heart, mind and spirit.

To contact the Deacon or to get more information on the Orthodox Church, please send him an email at gmilkovich@nc.rr.com

Michael Watkins, Editor of News From Out Shoes

Men’s Shelter 2009 Schedule

AHEPA—2nd Wed of each month
OCM—3rd Sunday of each month
GOYA—last Saturday of each month

**"God sells righteousness at a very low price to those who wish to buy it, a little piece of bread, a cloak no value, a cup of cold water, a mite"!
(Epiphanius Bishop of Cyprus)**

Project Homeless Connect is a one-day event sponsored by community leaders designed to provide housing services and hospitality to people experiencing homelessness in a convenient one stop format. The ultimate goal of the event is to connect people with the resources they need to become more self-sufficient. Project Homeless Connect is part of the Raleigh/Wake 10 Year Partnership to End Homelessness. This year's event took place on October 8, 2009 at Moore Square. Our parish's Outreach Ministry supported this event for the third year. This year our Outreach Ministry donated over 70 loaves of bread for the sandwiches that were served and several parishioners volunteered by serving lunch.

Memory Verse: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Ways To Truly Help The Homeless

What do you do when you see someone holding up a sign, "Will work for food"? Do you roll down your window and give them money? Do you pretend you didn't see them? Nobody likes to be confronted by the homeless - their needs often seem too overwhelming - but we all want to treat them fairly and justly.

From time to time we will run some simple guidelines to help you to truly help the homeless people you may come in contact with.

1. Never give cash to a homeless person:. Too often, well intended gifts are converted to drugs or alcohol - even when the "hard luck" stories they tell are true. If the person is hungry, buy them a sandwich and a beverage.
2. Talk to the person with respect. Taking time to talk to a homeless person in a friendly, respectful manner can give them a wonderful sense of civility and dignity. And besides being just neighborly, it gives the person a weapon to fight the isolation, depression and paranoia that many homeless people face.

Did You Know?



- More than 11 percent of Raleigh's population, or about 29,000 people live in poverty. ⁽²⁾
- Family homelessness is growing by an estimated 11 percent each year. ⁽²⁾
- Approximately 63 percent of more than 29,000 Raleigh residents living below the poverty line pay more than 50 percent of their incomes for housing. ⁽¹⁾
- In Wake County, there remains a gap of at least 25,000 units of affordable housing. ⁽¹⁾
- According to the 2006 Point In Time Count, each night approximately 2,000 persons are homeless in the Triangle area, with an average of 1,200 in Raleigh/Wake Co. ⁽¹⁾
- The number of homeless persons in Wake County has increased nearly 50 percent since 1993. ⁽²⁾

Sources:

(1) Wake County: The 10-Year Action Plan 2006 Annual Report

(2) Ending Homelessness: The 10-Year Action Plan. About the Plan. 28 Jan. 2004.

Angel Food

Angel Food Ministry - a non-profit, non-denominational organization dedicated to providing grocery relief and financial support to communities throughout the United States. There are NO qualifications, minimum income restrictions or applications for the Angel Food Ministry.

Angel Food is purchased from the nation's top food suppliers. By buying food from these supplies at substantial volume discounts, Angel Food is able to provide families with approximately \$65 worth of quality nutritious food for \$30. Generally, one box of Angel Food assists in feeding a family of four for about one week or a single senior citizen for almost a month. They do not use out-of-date food or inferior products.

In 1994 two pastors started this program from their back porch in Monroe, GA to help feed 34 families. Today, Angel Food feeds over 500,000 families a month in 35 states!

There are no commitments or long term contracts - this would be a great project for a group to take on or our Outreach Ministry could use this from time to time in order to help someone who might be in need of grocery relief. If you want more information on this please contact Deacon Gavrilo.

Philoptochos Outreach



Shoes for Orphan Souls



Shoes for Orphan Souls is a ministry of Buckner International and has distributed more than 1.5 million pairs of new shoes to at-risk children in the United States and to orphans in 55 countries around the world. Many children in orphanages receive one pair of shoes for the entire year and some don't have shoes at all. The National Ladies Philoptochos, the philanthropic organization supported by the ladies of the Greek Orthodox Church, took this as a project throughout the United States. When we attended the clergy/laity conference for our Metropolis, we were all asked to bring a pair of new shoes and socks and over one hundred pairs were collected. We brought the effort back to Holy Trinity in Raleigh and asked our youth groups, Hope and Joy and GOYA, to help as well. Our church collected 39 pairs of shoes which were shipped to the ministry. It was a lovely way to involve our children in philanthropy and teach them the joy of helping others. *Sydney Langford*



Baby Bundles

The Ladies Philoptochos has responded to a request by the IOCC/Church World Services for infant items. These items will be sent to Gaza where there are Palestine Orthodox, as well as Muslim, who are trapped and in need of humanitarian assistance. We have assembled 12 baby bundles which contain two shirts, two sleepers, two receiving blankets, six cloth diapers, a sweater and two wash clothes. Items were wrapped in a receiving blanket and secured with two diaper pins. We funded this project by "passing the hat" at a general meeting and the ladies whose hearts were touched gave generously. As women we were moved to reach across the world to offer basic needs to mothers and their babies. The IOCC/Church World Services gives assistance regardless of race or religion. *Matena Costakis*

Thank You Philoptochos for donating food to the Women's Center of Wake County. We filled their pantry with over 80 cans of variety items to help serve their clients!

Back To School Drive

Over the course of three weeks, the Philoptochos held a Back To School Supplies Drive benefiting Interact.

Assisting them was Maria Tsikerdanos, a Senior Girl Scout earning her Silver Award. Philoptochos collected 21 backpacks full of school supplies with some supplies left over along with about 250 dollars in donations. When Laura Saporilas and Maria took the supplies to



Maria Tsikerdanos delivering collected school supplies to Interact.

Interact, they filled up the entire closet designated for school supplies. Maria and the Philoptochos of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church thank all those that donated to the worthy cause.

Maria Tsikerdanos



Interact Holiday Bazaar



For the second year, Philoptochos will be collecting new, unwrapped toys and gifts for Interact's Holiday Bazaar. Rather than a traditional "Adopt a Family" program, Interact turns their agency into a store where mothers and their children are invited to "shop" for one another. Interact serves over 100 families as well as over 200 children through this event. For more information and a suggested gift list, see the flyer on the candle stand.



Donations will be accepted through Sunday, November 29.

A donation collection box is available in the fellowship hall.

Questions? Contact Laura Saporilas at (919) 630-2490



Angels, HOPE, & JOY

On October 9, 2009 the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox youth groups got together for some food, fun and a lesson about their faith along with an activity about giving. The three groups, Angels (4 year olds, Pre-K & K), HOPE (1st & 2nd grade) and JOY (3rd-5th grade) worked together to assemble trail mix baggies for the Men's Shelter. The children loved mixing all the different kinds of food together. Even though they occasionally asked if they could eat some of the M&M's, they never forgot the real purpose of their task: Helping those in need.



Frances Mathes

*Angels, HOPE &
JOY members
assembling trail mix
baggies.*

*Photo By:
Christie Demos*

GOYA

CROP Hunger Walk: Ten Holy Trinity GOYA members, along with Fr. Theodore Roupas, participated in the 2009 Crop Walk. GOYA has participated in this event for over 10 years, raising between \$500.00 to \$750.00 each year. In 1947 the Walk was established to help Midwestern farm families share their grain with hungry neighbors in post WW II Europe and Asia. More recently it stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty. CROP Hunger Walks are interfaith hunger education and fundraising events that support hunger-fighting development around the world, as well as in our community. Thank you for supporting this great ministry. *Nada Milkovich*



Making A Difference

"A few items laying around the house, enough to make a difference in someone's life"

Many of us receive occasional e-mails from the Deacon for various items that are needed to help place someone in a properly stocked home. Often times we delete them, unable to help, or forgetting unused items we have in our homes. This time, however, we were in a situation in which we could help. Both of us were in the process of consolidating two households to one as we were each married this year. It's amazing what we can store and hide around our homes. When combining two households you find that there are duplicates of everything: dishes, pots, pans, towels. With wedding gifts included, at times we found ourselves with triple of some things. All these possessions are items that each of us takes for granted: plates to eat food from, a rug to decorate the house, bowls to mix recipes in. After awhile these extra items are no longer enjoyed, but become a burden. Fortunately, Deacon Gavriolo's ministry was awaiting us. Through this ministry we were able to take these useful but no longer needed items to help individuals and families in need. Rather than polluting a junk yard with perfectly useful items, we were able to donate them to help families and individuals feel confident in themselves and be proud of the places that they can now call their own. Once you see how much these items can help a fellow person in need, you realize their true value. We took our home items to a family recently relocated to NC; a mother trying to set up a new, safe home for her children in a place they were not yet familiar with. They had to travel light and were missing those household items that we all take for granted. We were able to see how essential the belongings neglected and crowding our houses were to a family starting a new home and life here in Raleigh. Our eyes were opened showing us how much more thankful we should be for the items we have that make our homes special, comforting places. What a blessing from God to be able to help others in need.

David & Vickie Perryman and Jim & Dori Riley

St. John the Compassionate Mission A Mission With a Mission

I felt it instantly – as I walked through the oversized red doors of St. John the Compassionate Mission in Toronto, I was greeted by it, a feeling so strong, it wrapped itself around me like a protective blanket, a feeling which instantly crept inside me, stirring within me a deep love for that place.

A couple of years ago I was offered the opportunity to visit St. John the Compassionate and assist with painting an Iconographic mural in its refectory. Seeing this as a wonderful opportunity to experience and participate in this work, I eagerly accepted. Unknown to me at the time was the greater gift I was being offered – the opportunity to experience the beauty of the life and purpose of St. John the Compassionate Mission.

St. John the Compassionate Mission began welcoming the needy people of Toronto through its doors on January 30, 1987 and continues to do so today. Through the dedication and faith of Father Roberto and many volunteers, the Mission reaches out to anyone in need, offering food, clothing and above all healing. The Mission offers itself as a place of hope and of belonging to those who have seemingly lost all hope in their communities and in themselves. It seeks to heal the entire being, the heart and the body.

During my stay I had the chance to experience the rhythm and daily workings of the Mission. I was deeply touched and changed by what I experienced. Each day all the words I have ever read regarding theology, ministry, serving the poor etc. lifted off the pages of books and came to life.

As the doors of the Chapel would open following the daily prayers or services, the smell of incense would fill the refectory carrying with it hope and faith. The meals would begin with a prayer expressing our thanks and gratitude to God. Each of us - visitor, volunteer, homeless – would sit at the same table, together sharing a meal and always in the midst of the people gathered was Father Roberto, warmly and gently loving everyone. Beyond the activity and stress of running a Mission was a stillness and peace. The “world” of the Church (which always seemed distant and separate to me) seemed to merge with the “real” world – the two becoming one - reaching out to all those who entered.

Within the walls of St. John the Compassionate Mission is our faith – not in theory but in practice. What I felt instantly as I walked through the doors of St. John the Compassionate is an immense love – a love for every man and a deep love for God. While faithfully serving its community, St. John the Compassionate Mission faithfully serves God. Its presence brings Orthodoxy – faith, hope and love – to the people of Toronto and reaches beyond its physical limits by serving as a beautiful example to all, of Gods work through us.

My words fail to fully express the beauty of St. John the Compassionate Mission – please visit their website to find out more about their many programs and efforts. <http://www.stjohnsmisson.org/>

Ioanna Schmidt



“That person who’s in front of you is the most important person. The people who come here to receive become the givers. That’s the miracle.” - Father Roberto



This photo shows the mural painting in process.

Upcoming Outreach Ministry Events

Fall 09—Ongoing Food Drive for N. Raleigh Ministries

October 09—Clothing & Blanket Drive—please separate men’s women’s, and children clothing

November 1-29, 2009—Toy & Gift Collection for Interact’s Holiday Bazaar

December 3-5, 2009—Philoptochos’ Annual Holiday Café, Gift Shoppe and Bake Sale (10% of net proceeds will be donated to the *Pretty in Pink Foundation* and the remaining proceeds will benefit other charities)

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We wish to thank all those who have given of themselves unselfishly in His Name to all that is in this newsletter. Without your time, talents and stewardship, none of this would have been possible.
In Christ—Deacon Gavrilo