



SOCIAL ACTIONS NEWSLETTER WINTER 2012

WONDERFUL FOOD, MUSIC, FUN & FELLOWSHIP AT SONSET CAFE



The SonSet Café meals often feel like a holiday dinner. One of the volunteers said, "Isn't it sad that our guests can't eat like this every day!" MHC served as host six times in 2011; the next dinner is March 1. There are typically 75-100 guests ranging in ages from 3 to 90+. There is now a group of about 20 to 30 teenagers who are either homeless or bouncing between foster homes that enjoy the new addition of music to the evening. MHC has tried to enrich the

experience by adding raffle tickets to free dinners at Roush's, warm socks for the winter, and providing flower arrangements on the tables (The guests become quite excited about being able to take flowers with them when they leave.) Jane and Bill Doorley have inspired all the volunteers with their dedicated, cheerful leadership. In 2012 they were awarded a \$500 MHC Social Actions grant to help fund the dinners. Jane provided the following statistics: 40% of the homeless in our country are under the age of 18 with 42% of those being under the age of 5. 40% of the homeless are veterans. There are 1.35 million children in our country who experience life without a home. If you would like to help with Sonset Cafe, contact Jane at 879-5848 or jane.doorley @wright.edu

The Work of St. Vincent de Paul during 2011 at MHC

The St. Vincent de Paul Conference at MHC tries to bring Jesus' unconditional love to numerous poor families in Fairborn. During 2011, we responded to the following requests:

<u># Requests</u>	<u>Type of Request</u>
1450	Food for 2,996 adults and 2,380 children
497	Utility bill help
156	Rent assistance
35	Beds
17	Lodging at local motels
48	Medical prescriptions
24	Vouchers for St. Francis Thrift Store



With the current economy, we can usually provide only small amounts of support. For example, we can provide three days' worth of food no more than once a month, \$30-\$40 for utilities twice per year, even though clients have much larger bills, and a single night's lodging. The number of calls for food help in 2011 was 32% higher than 2010. Our yearly expenses increased to \$51,053. A donor who was providing a very large portion of our food donations died last summer. We continue to need your help. Your financial support, especially at our 3rd Sunday Collections, and your food contributions, both weekly and during our food drives, are essential to these efforts. In 2011 our income was \$49,120, considerably more than last year. We appreciate your generosity. When you or someone you know needs help, please contact us through our helpline at 937-424-0951.

OPERATION RICE BOWL

As Lent approaches, it's time to plan for what will make it a meaningful experience in preparation for Easter. One way to help the hungry of the world is to participate in Operation Rice Bowl. This program sponsored by Catholic Relief Services, helps us all to think about what we are asked to do for Lent.

The Gospel calls us to reach out to our brothers and sisters who struggle with hunger and poverty. Operation Rice Bowl invites us to pray together, fast in solidarity with those who hunger, learn about the joys and challenges in the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world, and to give sacrificial contributions to support those in need.

Pick up a cardboard rice bowl at the back of church beginning on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. Read the accompanying information or visit orb.crs.org to learn more about this program. At the end of Lent please return any contributions in the form of a check made payable to Mary, Help of Christians. Mark the envelope for Operation Rice Bowl.



Women's Network GED Program making a difference in many lives



With the economy still sluggish and jobs at a premium, Women's Network has begun a GED program that will allow women and men clients to get ready to take and pass this essential test for a high school degree. "Seeing so many of our clients struggle to apply for, then not receive the call for job placement was heartbreaking," said Dee Gysin. "Almost every job—even the most menial, require a high school diploma. We knew we had to find a way to help them reach this milestone." And as the Network looked, it could find very little help in Fairborn and knew most of its clients did not have the transportation to Xenia where many of the classes are held. So, after much planning, the Network has opened its doors to testing, tutoring, and training for the ultimate goal of a coveted high school diploma!! Dee has been testing the past few weeks and things are in order for tutoring the men and women who have signed up. Needed are tutors in all of the subjects—English, Literature, Social Studies, Math, and Science. One does not have to be an expert in the subject and there are tools available to help teach the students. What is needed is a love for helping and patience with teaching. Many of the students have never had a foundation for learning and some need help in learning how to learn. However, all are anxious and excited for a new chance in life. Please call the Network at 879-3313 for more information and volunteering. The times are adjustable depending on your schedule and that of the student. If you have a desire to give back to your community, this may be the place for you. Both the Network and the students will be most grateful.

Women's Network is thinking spring and getting ready for their second season of gardening.



Last year Denise Wetzel, Bev Jurick and Susan Takacs taught our young women how to garden in a container. We saw the results as some of the women brought in their tomatoes and other produce that they had raised. What a great feeling they had to realize they could control some of their own food and be able to provide fresh produce to their children!!! WELL, it is time to get started again. This year we would like to give our 'gardeners' a little more support and provide monthly picnics and classes for them to learn how to cook and preserve some of the foods they are growing. Volunteers are needed to help mentor these gardeners and encourage them to keep their gardens going and growing. Many have never eaten fresh, non-processed foods and do not know of the benefits for their children's health. Volunteers do not have to have a master gardener's certificate, or even a home economics degree—all they need is a love to help those who need encouragement in bringing good nutrition skills to their children. Please call the Network at 879-3313 to volunteer and pull out some of your good nutritious recipes for us to make a basic cookbook to share with our clients. We will begin with a class on container gardening in April. Times for the volunteers and clients can vary in both amount and days—depending on schedules. This is a great way to help Fairborn become healthier and to keep our kids in tune with good things to eat.