

Serving the Indian Valley,
North Penn and
Pennridge Communities
with a comprehensive
continuum of
social services
since 1970



Keystone Opportunity Center

Providing Help • Offering Hope



Fall 2012 Volume IV, Issue 2

keystoneopportunity.org

Keystone Continues to Meet Increasing Needs with Limited Resources

So far this has been a very exciting and productive year at Keystone Opportunity Center. We have experienced continued support and successful food drives for the food pantry, which have kept our shelves stocked to meet the ever increasing needs of the Souderton Area School District Community. The expansion of food pantry hours has been a success with as many as 10 families showing up to get food between 5 and 7 p.m. on Thursday evenings.

This also provides additional opportunities for individuals, families and organizations to drop off donations or volunteer for a few hours in the evening. Thanks to the many individuals with home vegetable gardens and community gardens for sharing the fresh vegetables from their harvest.

We continue to develop partnerships and collaborations with organizations and businesses in the Bucks and Montgomery County communities. We have added two

We look forward to continuing to work with you providing service to those community members in need.

new housing units to the Keystone Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing program this year—a four-bedroom ranch house in Colmar and a three-bedroom apartment in Souderton. The renovation of this apartment unit was accomplished solely by many volunteers

from Indian Creek Church of the Brethren. The volunteers' hard work and dedication

to this project during the summer heat is truly an act of love in service to others.

The needs of homeless families in Bucks and Montgomery Counties continue to strain the resources we have available to provide assistance. With government cutbacks in funding we must continually look to our local residents, businesses, organizations and churches in the community for assistance in meeting the funding gap. Thank you to all who have supported us through our fundraising events. But there is no time to rest because there is so much more to do in trying to address the needs.

Our partnership with the North Penn School District, the North Penn Boys and Girls Club, Trinity Lutheran Church, Plains Mennonite Church, Souderton Mennonite Church and Advanced Living provides classroom space for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs. (See stories on pages 2, 3 and 4.)

The Interfaith Hospitably Network celebrated its 15th Anniversary this year. IHN Director, Sue Zomberg is continuing to expand the networks by finding new church participants so we can make the Upper Bucks Network a 12-month network. (See story on page 4.)

The next few months will be very busy as classes resume, we prepare for the fall food



THE NEW FACE OF KEYSTONE ON MAIN STREET

The "Faces of Diversity" mosaic art panels were revealed to the public at the Souderton Borough 125th Anniversary Parade in June. The renovated façade and creative art images provide a fresh new look for the Keystone Opportunity Center headquarters located in Souderton.

drives, roll out the Thanksgiving Meal Food Drive and the Holiday Giving program. If you would like to receive communications about Keystone's programs and events or how to get involved please go to our website www.keystoneopportunity.org and use the "Contact us" tab to let us know that you would like to be added to our "Green" e-mail communication list or become a Keystone Fan on Facebook. We look forward to continuing to work with you providing service to those community members in need. 🍷

Yours in Service,
E. Richard Aichele III, Executive Director

Meal-A-Month Dining

October 16
The Metropolitan
750 Upper State Rd., North Wales
11 a.m. - 11 p.m.

November 5
Chick-fil-A Rte. 309 Quakertown
5-8 p.m. FLYER REQUIRED

December 11 & 12
TGI Friday's Rt. 309 Quakertown
11 a.m. - 8 p.m. FLYER REQUIRED

See Keystone website for flyers to print and take to the restaurant
www.keystoneopportunity.org.



CROQUET CHAMPS WIN FUNDS FOR KEYSTONE

Keystone Opportunity Center participated in the 2012 "Whack & Roll" Benefit Croquet Tournament in June hosted by the Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania (MHEP). Three teams competed for Keystone with this mother-daughter pair winning second place and \$1,500 for Keystone. Executive Director Rich Aichele celebrated with Courtney and Donna Floyd.



Adult Education Program Expansion In Second Year

Keystone's Adult Education department saw a major increase in funding thanks to a three-year grant beginning in the 2011-12 school year. According to Adult Education Coordinator, Susan Clouser, the funds allowed Keystone to add staff and provide additional classes to serve more students and offer improved services.

As the department begins the new Fall semester, it will be able to offer classes at various levels and locations for more than 400 students in English as a Second Language, GED, and Civics, as well as individualized tutoring for ESL and basic skills like math, reading and writing. The goals for adult education state-wide have become more focused and outcome driven, explained Clouser and Keystone's program has adjusted to meet the requirements with great success. "We've implemented a lot of necessary changes in the last year," she remarked. "They will help

build a better education team at Keystone and the improvements will trickle down to the students."

One of the new things in the Adult Education department include the addition of a Student Advisor— Georgieana Hendricks—to assist students with job searches and daily living issues. "Having a Case Manager on staff has opened doors for our students. Working with her, they understand Keystone is more than just a place for ESL classes," Clouser remarked. "We are able to partner more with our social services staff and help meet student needs beyond the classroom," she said.

Another addition to staff is the Professional Development Specialist—Patrice Karcher—whose role is to ensure all teachers are meeting the state requirements for professional development and improvement. According to Clouser, Karcher has improved communication among the staff and has

created more cohesion and focus with the teachers. "She is also responsible for helping staff members develop their goals and work towards them. She adds a new layer of accountability for the department," said Clouser.

The Graduate Equivalent Degree(GED) program was doubled to meet the state requirements for Keystone to become a full service agency. New classes were created to address the needs of native speakers needing basic skills training in a pre-GED class. The tutoring program has expanded to include extra support for students in math, reading and writing so they are able to successfully complete the GED program.

The opening of the Independent Learning Center at the Indian Valley Public Library has expanded the ability of Keystone to provide distance learning opportunities for students unable to attend regular classes.

"The student response to many of the changes this past year has been positive," Clouser said. "They recognize that we are offering real help to improve their lives. We are looking forward to continued improvements in overall performance for all our students," she added. 🏆

Keystone Expands Tutoring Program to Include Adult Basic Education

In keeping with the state-wide shift in adult education funding and educational goals, Keystone Opportunity Center has expanded its tutoring program to include not only English as a Second Language, but also Adult Basic Education. The new focus will provide volunteer tutors for adult students needing help with basic reading and math, pre-GED studies and GED testing review.

Keystone's new Tutor Coordinator, Tina Nadzan, is excited about the expanded tutoring options and eager to recruit new tutors to match with a varied group of students. "As we focus on students needing help with basic skills, we are hoping to gather a pool of new tutors willing to teach math and reading to English speaking students," she said.

One of Nadzan's goals for the



Tina Nadzan took on the responsibilities as Keystone's Tutor Coordinator in July. She joined Keystone as a Family Literacy teacher last Fall and will continue to teach while also working with the tutoring program.

2012-13 school year is to build a sense of community within the tutor volunteer group by holding group meetings and training sessions as well as offering new professional development

opportunities. "I'd like to provide opportunities for tutor volunteers to ask questions, share ideas and get support as they work with the students," she added.

Community members interested in becoming a Keystone tutor may contact Nadzan at 215-723-5430x128. Tutors must have a bachelor's degree or be working towards a degree. Tutors should commit to at least one school year and be available to tutor three hours per week. 🏆

Photo Above Left: During the summer months, Keystone offered a limited number of ESL classes to help students maintain their language skills over the break. This conversation class had lots of fun playing interactive games and discussing current events.

Photo Above Center: Jeff Day joined the Keystone Adult Education staff for the 2011-12 school year as a GED instructor. His classes meet at Souderton Mennonite Church. Three classes managed by the Open Line in Pennsburg were also added to the Keystone GED offerings. Open Line is a Keystone sub-contractor.

Photo Above Right: ESL Students were recognized at the end of the 2011-12 school year for their accomplishments. Susan Clouser, Adult Education Coordinator(left) and Patrice Karcher, Professional Development Specialist and Civics instructor, congratulate several Civics students who passed the Citizenship Test. Twenty-four students achieved citizenship during the year. Thirteen GED students received their diplomas and 70% of all ESL students achieved advances in one or more educational levels for 2011-12.

Food Pantry Reaps Benefits from Community Gardeners

Through the summer months, the food pantry at Keystone often struggles to keep the shelves filled with the standard pantry items. According to Pantry Coordinator, Cindy Dembrosky, this summer has been especially difficult because the government supplies have been dramatically reduced.

"Regular donors are away on vacation and people aren't thinking about donating during the summer," she said. However, she added the pantry has been blessed with abundance of fresh produce thanks to the contributions from the "Cultivating Communities Campaign". Five community gardens located at the Indian Valley YMCA, Salford Mennonite Church, Salford Hills Elementary School and Vernfield Elementary School all shared their harvest with Keystone.

"It has been great to see the variety and quality of the produce and to know all the children and families who have been involved with the gardens," commented Dembrosky, who added that many other local gardeners have been generous with donations as well. "Our clients are enjoying the fruits and vegetables of their labor," she added.

Because many pantry users are not familiar with all the fresh produce options or how to use them, the pantry and representatives from CADCOM have been setting up sample tables at the pantry and demonstrating creative ways to use zucchini and other vegetables. Clients may take home recipes and produce to try on their own. "We try to provide healthy suggestions and inexpensive ideas for our clients," said Dembrosky.

Donations to the pantry are always welcome. Drop offs may be made during pantry hours or by appointment. Check out www.keystoneopportunity.org for pantry hours and a list of most needed items. 🍷



CADCOM representative Marcia Jones, visits the food pantry monthly to demonstrate healthy recipes for clients to try.

Fresh produce filled the entrance to the Keystone food pantry all summer thanks to donations from local gardeners, farmers, and members of the "Cultivating Communities" campaign. These Salford Hills Elementary School students were happy to share.

Independent Learning Center Provides Computer Skill Options for Keystone Students and Community



Richard Aichele (standing), Keystone's technology intern, is one of the staff members who assists students in the Independent Learning Center. Laptops were provided by JP Morgan Chase through the "Good 360" donation program.

The new Keystone Independent Learning Center, located at the Indian Valley Public Library in Telford offers free access to computers for Keystone Adult Education students and community members interested in learning new computer skills.

Staffed by Keystone ESL teachers and skilled computer volunteers, the center is open at scheduled times through the week so students can independently study and practice language skills using Rosetta Stone software, improve computer skills and obtain certification in various computer software programs. Students may also use the center to search for employment opportunities and job applications.

The center will also be open this Fall for use by interested community members. Check the Keystone website www.keystoneopportunity.org for ILC schedule.

According to Executive Director, E. Richard Aichele, III the ILC is a perfect example of community collaboration to benefit Keystone students with limited access to computers and technology skills. The library provided the space for the center and Keystone furnished the room with desks and computers donated by local businesses. Funds from the expanded Adult Education grant and contributions from the Harleysville and Souderton-Telford Rotary Clubs were used to purchase the computer software and other supplies.

Volunteers from both Rotary Clubs, along with community volunteers help staff the center to answer student questions and assist with their independent learning. During tax season, the center is shared with the United Way VITA and AARP Tax Foundation, who use the space to prepare tax returns for eligible community members.

"The ILC is another example of Keystone working with other organizations to



Adult Education teachers from Keystone and other eastern Pennsylvania agencies used the ILC for an E-Data training seminar put on by the Pennsylvania Department of High Education.

encourage, educate and empower community members to become self-sufficient," said Aichele. "We are using technology to teach people how to use technology for their benefit," he added. 🍷

Homeless Shelter Program Expands

The Keystone Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) was able to increase its services in the Upper Bucks community to eight months thanks to the partnering with several new host and buddy congregations. According to IHN Director Sue Zomberg, the IHN program currently involves 31 churches serving 12 months in the Indian Valley and eight months in the Upper Bucks area.

"Our motto has been 'All 12 in 2012'," Zomberg said, "so we can provide the program for 12 months in both areas. We are hoping to recruit several new congregations before the end of this year so we can begin 2013 with two 12-month IHN loops," she added. New hosts to the 2012 Upper Bucks loop are Christ Community Bible Church and Hilltown Baptist, which served previously as a buddy congregation.

The homeless shelter program celebrated its 15th anniversary this year. During that time, 472 people were helped, including 261 children. Host congregations



In April 2012, the Keystone Interfaith Hospitality Network celebrated its 15th year of providing housing for the homeless. An open house was held at Zwingli United Church of Christ, the first IHN host congregation. IHN Director Sue Zomberg (right) welcomed former IHN Director, Geri Hart (left).

provide one month of evening meals and overnight companionship at their church for up to three families. The IHN is a program of Family Promise.

Zomberg will be glad to talk with any congregation leaders from churches, synagogues, mosques in upper Montgomery and Bucks counties about participating in the program. She emphasized that the IHN is

an "interfaith" program open to all faiths.

For 2011, Keystone's IHN served in 17 families. In every situation the adults were unemployed when they arrived. Through the efforts of the Keystone staff and the business community, 15 of those head of households held a job when they left the program. Zomberg commented, "the community plays an important role in alerting us to job openings and housing opportunities for our clients. We are always looking for new suggestions and resourceful ways to help our families."

How Can I Help?



IHN Donor Suggestions

- Encourage your home congregation to become an IHN Host or Buddy
- Volunteer for the program in your congregation
- Purchase gift cards to donate for gas and necessities
- Donate personal care items for IHN families- shampoo (for men and women), conditioner, soap, razors, shaving cream (men and women), pillow cases, bath towels

With changes in government funding and housing philosophy, Zomberg explained the role of IHN case management has shifted, moving families out of the shelter program quickly and finding affordable permanent housing. "We are constantly looking for new housing options and creative ideas to get our families successfully out on their own," she said. "Partnering with landlords, and connecting more closely with our volunteers and congregations for ideas has helped," she added. 🏠

Summer Session Provides Cool Learning Experiences for Parents and Children

In partnership with the Indian Valley Public Library, Keystone's Family Literacy program held a summer session for parents and children to help families progress in their language and literacy learning while becoming familiar with the library and its many learning resources.

According to Sue Barrow, Family Literacy Coordinator, 19 families participated in the four-week course which met on Tuesday-Thursday mornings, including 19 mothers and 21 pre-school

children. "It was a lovely way for these women to spend those blazing hot summer mornings refreshing their English and keeping their children cool in the library," Barrow remarked.

The parents focused on English grammar and conversation, meeting in small groups with Keystone teachers. The children participated in group activities, singing songs, making crafts, reading stories and playing with summer student volunteers supervised by a Keystone staff member.

Children were also invited to join in several community activities sponsored by the library. At the end of the program, each child received a book to take home and encouragement to come back to the library and read, read, read!

For the Fall, Keystone's Family Literacy program will be held at two sites, Souderton Mennonite Church in Souderton and the North Penn Boys and Girls Club in Lansdale. Approximately 40 families have registered for the 2012-13 school year. 📖



Family Literacy children participated in many activities in class and with other library families during the summer session held at the Indian Valley Public Library.



Parents met with Keystone ESL Teachers in two separate classes at the Indian Valley Public Library for the Summer Family Literacy Classes.

"Sleep Out So Others May Sleep In."

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Spend the night outside with family and friends at the annual Sleep Out Night from 5 p.m. on November 10 till 7 a.m. November 11. Learn about homeless families in our area and how you can make a difference in their lives. Fun activities for all ages. Details and registration forms on keystoneopportunity.org



Keystone Housing Family Faces Health Issues with Faith and Friends

When Jamie and Anthony came to Keystone Opportunity Center from a domestic violence shelter in Fall of 2011, they had high hopes for making a fresh start and shared their positive attitudes and happy smiles while guests of the Interfaith Hospitality Network shelter program at Keystone.

When they successfully completed the IHN program in January 2012, they became Transitional Housing clients and moved into a Keystone housing unit with the help of Jamie's co-workers. She had secured a full-time position and was settled into her new routine.

Four-year-old Anthony was enjoying his experience at the Wigwam Day Care School in Harleysville and Keystone Transitional Housing Case Manager, Elizabeth Bertolet was pleased with their progress. "They were meeting their goals and taking care of their needs," she said. Bertolet was looking forward to their continued improvement.

In May, Anthony was complaining of a sore throat. After a doctor's visit and some tests, it was determined Anthony needed to have his tonsils and adenoids removed.

The surgery went well and Anthony left St. Christopher's Hospital the next day, a bit lethargic, but happy to return home with his mom. Jamie kept a closer eye on her little patient through the night. In the early hours of the morning, she realized Anthony was not responsive and she called an ambulance to get help. On the way to Grand View Hospital, Anthony had a seizure. When they arrived at Grand View, a MediVac helicopter was called to take him to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

Jamie was unable to fly in the helicopter and when she arrived at CHOP she was told that Anthony had a stroke and was having emergency surgery to relieve the pressure on his brain. The future of her happy, carefree son was uncertain and her world suddenly became a nightmare of fear and disbelief.

Jamie's employer (Interstate Building Maintenance/SKF) agreed to hold her position open and co-workers helped to supplement her income.

This allowed Jamie to stay by Anthony's side as he remained in a coma on a respirator.

During this time, Bertolet spent many hours comforting Jamie, reading to Anthony, and helping make necessary decisions regarding Anthony's care. After three weeks at CHOP, Anthony was fitted with a helmet and wheelchair and transferred to Weisman Pediatric Rehabilitation Center in New Jersey.

When asked how she made it through the first three weeks of trauma, Jamie replied, "God was with us definitely. I was living every day numb and praying He would bring Anthony back. They couldn't give me answers. We had no idea if he would be OK," she said.

At rehab, Anthony continued to improve dramatically. Jamie had to return to work, but travelled to New Jersey regularly to see her son. Her older sons, who do not live with her, visited when she could not. Bertolet worked with local churches, the YMCA, and her employer to gather financial support for the enormous expenses that were building.

Jamie appreciated the support from "God, my job, Elizabeth, Keystone, my sons, churches and friends. Elizabeth brought us clothes, food, gas cards, prescriptions and visited with us. Just the visits alone, having someone there was the best part, I felt so lonely. I didn't know what to do," she said.

Not knowing if Anthony would be able to walk when released from rehab, Keystone made arrangements to move him and Jamie to a one-story Transitional Housing unit. A volunteer team from Liberty Mutual spent a day cleaning, moving, arranging furniture, purchasing necessary household items and planting flower beds. "It was like Home Maker Over—Thrift Style," remarked Bertolet.

Care & Share Shoppes in Souderton contributed clothing for Anthony, who grew into a new size while in rehab and provided toys to help with his small motor skills development.

After three weeks in rehab, Anthony walked to the car and came home to the new location. Jamie is back at work and is working to deal with the trauma that



Case Manager Elizabeth Bertolet was a regular visitor at the hospital and here at the rehab center while Anthony recovered.

impacted her life. While she knows nothing in life is certain, she realizes that through her experiences she and Anthony have been blessed in many ways.

About Keystone, she said, "Keystone is like my best friend. They were there for everything I went through. Even now when we are trying to get back on our feet, Keystone is my backbone and a wonderful program. Keystone is one blessing God gave me."

Bertolet explained that while the cause for Anthony's stroke has not been determined, his outlook is positive. "The medical professionals are all very optimistic that he will have a full recovery," she added.

As for her role in managing and coordinating the extra support for Jamie and Anthony during his recovery, Bertolet said, "I was truly touched to see the outpouring of support and concern. The staff at Keystone checked in daily to ask for updates, churches started prayer chains. I received phone calls from people that heard about the situation and offered to buy food, make meals or help in any way." Bertolet felt like the ambassador of good will from the local community. "Each time I visited with Anthony and Jamie I was able to bring them good news and words of strength and encouragement. "We all look forward to their continued progress and cheerful smiles." 🍷

Jamie and Anthony both used positive attitudes and lots of smiles to help them through the therapy and recovery process. After three weeks in rehab, they were ready to go home.



In January 2012, co-workers and friends helped Jamie and Anthony move into their Transitional Housing home.



Jamie and Anthony joined the Interfaith Hospitality Network(IHN) program in 2011 and were the first guest to use the new mattresses purchased with donations from the IHN churches.



Keystone Opportunity Center

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SAVE THESE DATES

Be a part of Keystone's fun community events. Bring your family and friends along to help support the mission of Keystone Opportunity Center.

Check www.keystoneopportunity.org for registration forms and more information.

October 14th - CROP WALK

Partner with Keystone and Generations Senior Center for the new five-mile walk against hunger.

October 25th - PUTTLE TOURNAMENT

An exciting combination of golf and bowling skills for friendly competition. Tournament includes teams of four. Join the fun at Indian Valley Country Club from 6-8 p.m.

November 10th - SLEEP OUT FOR HOMELESSNESS

Spend the night outside to experience what life on the streets is like for many homeless people. Event will be held at Zion Mennonite Church, 7 p.m. - 7 a.m. with a rally by the railroad tracks at Main and Broad Streets at 5 p.m.

November 15th - SOUP NIGHT

Bring a bowl and a friend for a Soup Kitchen meal 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at Zwingle United Church of Christ, Wile Avenue, Souderton. Proceeds will benefit the Interfaith Hospitality Network homeless shelter program at Keystone.

November 17th - BOY SCOUT

FOOD DRIVE - Watch for bags to fill and leave at your door to benefit the Keystone Food Pantry.

Become a Keystone Key Holder

Seeking new donors—individuals, groups, companies or congregations to make a three-year giving commitment.

Call 215-723-5430x121 to discuss your "Key Holder" potential, or sign up at www.keystoneopportunity.org under Donor Info: Key Holder Campaign

Give Your Holiday Gift-Giving Extra Meaning

As you consider ideas for this season of giving, we hope you will find creative ways to add Keystone Opportunity Center to your gift list. There are many ways you can spread the joy of the holidays, giving hope and good will to families who might otherwise not have much to celebrate. Here are a few ideas you can share with family and friends to make your gift-giving extra special:

- Honor a family member, friend, neighbor, teacher or pastor with a designated donation to a Keystone program
- Suggest Keystone as an alternative gift-giving option for your office, social group or community organization
- Purchase Keystone "Faces of Diversity" note cards as gifts (\$10 per box of 12 cards) featuring creative tile mosaic panels
- Adopt a Keystone family and provide requested gifts and gift cards to make their holidays special
- Fill a Thanksgiving Meal Food bag and provide grocery gift cards for Keystone families

For more information about the Thanksgiving and Holiday Giving programs and registration forms to adopt a family, go to the Keystone website: www.keystoneopportunity.org -Donations-Holiday Giving. Deadline to register for a family is October 15, 2012.

Give Keystone!



Keystone Opportunity Center

Providing Help • Offering Hope

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The mission of Keystone Opportunity Center is to help community members in need by offering a comprehensive array of social services that educates, encourages and empowers them to become self-sufficient.

Find Keystone Opportunity Center of Facebook and "Like" us.

Keystone Opportunity Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community organization, donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. The official registration and financial information of Keystone Opportunity Center may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling toll free, within PA: 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.