



March 2017

## Director's Corner:



*Shannon Woloszynowski*

Starting this month, we will begin a new newsletter feature called, "Today You Became Homeless." We frequently do tours at House of Mercy and often go out into the community to give presentations to businesses, civic groups, and faith groups. Far and above, our most frequently asked question is, how does this happen?

Once people come to understand that the reality of homelessness does not fit their long-held preconceptions, and before they arrive at "how can I help?", they want to know how and why this happens. The reality we see in working with the community is that, in many cases, becoming homeless was not a fixed point in time, it was a slow process that these people never imagined would culminate in homelessness. We hope that by sharing composites of the stories we hear will impact you as it impacts us each day.

On a brighter note, our Easter basket collection is in full-swing. Please remember to drop your donations in the "Giant Easter Basket" in the Commons before Palm Sunday. We are requesting jelly beans, Peeps, a 3-5 oz. chocolate Cross or Bunny, grass, and an Easter Plush for each basket. We have already purchased the baskets and we have a large donation of chocolate candy generously donated by our local Target. We hope to have enough to assemble 150 baskets for local children in need.

If you, your small faith group, or your business is looking for a wonderful opportunity for service and team building, please consider sponsoring our monthly Mobile Food Pantry held the first Friday of each month at Williamsburg House of Mercy. The service fee is \$500 and this high impact fresh food distribution provides 700 individuals in our community with fresh meat, fruit, and vegetables each month. While the Upper County Mobile Food Pantry the following Monday has been fully-funded by a grant from the Williamsburg Health Foundation, this first Friday distribution is still largely unfunded for the year and presents a great opportunity for service.

As always, we are serving the poor by showing them the love of Christ.

~ Be Mercy

## Upcoming Events:

- The Williamsburg House of Mercy Mobile Food Pantry is **April 7**.
- The Upper County Mobile Food Pantry at Stone House Presbyterian is **April 10**.
- Easter basket distribution is **April 13**.

### "Today You Became Homeless"

For the last two years you and your husband have shared an apartment with your adult granddaughter and her child. Even though you and your husband were living on your social security, you grew up in a time when family does not turn family away. Other family could not assist her, and she and her child had no where to go. The apartment you rented was more than you and your husband could afford on your own. However, it was the perfect size for the four of you, and your granddaughter's income made it easily affordable. Life was going well until your granddaughter met her future husband. Seemingly overnight she announced that she was pregnant, getting married, and moving in with her new husband. You and your husband had not planned for this sudden change and found that you could no longer afford the \$1700 rent on your social security checks. Within a matter of weeks, you lost the apartment, you donated your furniture, and you found yourself using a winter shelter and day center for the homeless for daily meals and showers to bridge you to your next check. \*\*Not all of our stories have happy endings but this one does. This couple entered the Housing Program at Williamsburg House of Mercy and was rehoused within several weeks in an income-based unit. WHOM was able to assist with move-in fees, furniture, and housewares and this couple is once again stable and living out their retirement.



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