

Getting on "Board"

As you know, Prince of Peace Center would not be able to function without the help our community so generously provides, through volunteers and donations. But there is another group of people essential to the function and success of the Center, though seldom acknowledged publicly: our Board of Directors. Among many other things, each year the Board assists us by:

- ✂ Adopting FSS families for Christmas.
- ✂ Organizing and facilitating the annual Bowl-A-Thon.
- ✂ Dressing up in costume (SpongeBob!) for our events.
- ✂ Planning the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.
- ✂ Guest speaking at FSS support groups.
- ✂ Attending staff events and getting involved.
- ✂ Volunteering, individually or with groups.
- ✂ Supporting us through financial donations.
- ✂ Giving their time and energy to ensure we are living and serving our mission.

The members of the Board are a branch of our extended family, sharing all of our greatest and most defining moments. Prince of Peace Center thanks them for all that they do, and for working with us to become a strong, helpful, stable presence in our community.

For Our Community

Prince of Peace Center has always been dedicated to serving this community. If someone in need comes to us, we do not hesitate to do everything within our power to give them all the help and support we can; if immediate needs are met, a person can spend more time focusing on learning self-sufficiency and bettering himself or herself. Through generous donations of food, clothing, furniture, and other items, we are able to meet a variety of needs for a variety of people, and give them the chance to work toward not needing us anymore.

This community is not *just* comprised of poor and marginalized persons; Prince of Peace Center is not a place for *just* poor people to "come and get free stuff." All are welcome at Soup Kitchen meals—dining with us, though you may not have the same immediate need for food as someone else in the community, will not be taking that food away from someone else who does need it. By the same token, shopping in the thrift store, though you may not be as impoverished as some of the customers around you, is not "robbing a poor person of something they need." We are here to provide what is needed, and we do, and of course we focus our efforts on giving impoverished persons a hand up, so that they can work to improve themselves and their lives. If someone comes to us needing something, we *give* it to

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Beginning in November, at the end of each month the Soup Kitchen will now celebrate the birthdays of all regular diners that fall within that month. Each of our November birthday individuals received his or her own cupcake at the party last month!



Many Thanks to:

Sharon HS Students for Charity

Holding a Food Drive

Family Video

Donating turkeys and hams to our program families.

Mechanical Contractors Association of NW PA

Donating Christmas hams

Je'riel Fashions

Donating Christmas toys and proceeds from the store

and each of our dedicated volunteers!



Happy Holidays! POPC's Thrift Store is decorated and ready for the Christmas Season, and stocked with lots of great potential gift items.



The Olive Branch

Volume 3

a Prince of Peace Center newsletter



Working at POPC

by Kerry Howell, Office Manager

As a newcomer to the POPC staff, I must say, I truly love my job. It is very rewarding, and each day brings a new challenge, leaving me with a blessing and a lesson learned.

I started my journey at Prince of Peace Center in 2009, as an employee with Senior Services. My duties included answering the phone, scheduling daily bread runs, and coordinating pick-ups for donations of clothing, furniture, and other items. I helped with various Center events—the annual summer block party, the school supplies giveaway, the Easter egg hunt, and the Christmas toy distribution—and assisted with applications for emergency food, as well as other office duties.

My mentor and friend during that first year was Ms. Nina Smith, who had been office manager at the Center for 15 years. Ms. Nina taught me every aspect of what it meant to be a good office manager. When she retired in 2010, our director, Joe Flecher, offered *me* the open position. I have to admit, at first I was scared to try to step in to Ms. Nina's shoes. Everyone knew they could rely on her, and she had been there for such a long time.

I prayed about it and accepted it, and even though I made some mistakes in the beginning, everyone at the Center was helpful and willing to guide me through correcting my errors and learning from them. Ms. Carolyn Harris, in particular, gave me some good advice: remember what people taught me, and then use that to lay out *my own* path for completing tasks. She told me that everything would work out once I found my own method of doing the job. I listened, and I have found my way, and everything is working.

The most important lesson I have learned at Prince of Peace Center is that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity, no matter what. I have been on the other side of this desk, needing emergency food and financial assistance, and I remember how it felt to ask strangers for help: embarrassing, and lowly. I remember the person then in my current position—Ms. Nina—smiling and giving me words of encouragement. I am so glad, now, to be able to do the same, from this side of the desk.



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them; shopping in our Thrift Store is just another way of showing your support. And there are some excellent and useful items to be found!

The strongest support we receive comes in the form of people visiting the Center and taking part in some of our programs in the ways they can, though they are outside the 'poor' demographic we usually serve. The presence of those who want to solidify our community motivates all of us to become a bigger and better part of it. Sometimes, we help others by being a presence; come and be present with us.

Thank you to everyone who picked up one of Peggy's Stockings for a child on Prince of Peace Center's Food Program this year. You have helped create a better and brighter Christmas for that child and his or her family.



News Bytes

To read these stories in full and see more photos, please visit the news page of our website:
www.princeofpeacecenter.org/news



FSS staff and friends learn how to gift wrap at Macy's. Find them in-store and get your gifts wrapped early!



Kennedy Catholic high school football team members pack bags for this month's food distribution days.



Several FSS staff members and participants march for the Mercer County Housing Coalition in Hermitage's Light-Up Night parade.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!