



# CENTERPEACE

News from the Asbury Dining & Caring Center • Fall 2012

## YOU CAN FEED 100+ GUESTS

**A \$36 Donation Underwrites Breakfast;  
A \$108 Donation Underwrites Sunday Dinner**

As the number of guests coming to us for meals has increased, so, too, have our food expenses. Though much of our food is donated through FoodLink or other efforts, each week we must purchase items to round out our offerings. As we approach the Holiday Season, we invite you to **help us maintain the high nutritional quality of our guests' meals** by making a secure on-line donation at [www.asburydiningandcaringcenter.org](http://www.asburydiningandcaringcenter.org). By leveraging your gift with our donated food, you can provide breakfast or Sunday Dinner to our typical crowd of 100+ with a donation of **\$36** or **\$108** respectively. If you make the donation in honor of someone, we'll send your honoree a note letting them know of your gift.

### MISSION STATEMENT

We are a welcoming outreach ministry of the Asbury First United Methodist Church that nourishes the bodies, minds, and souls of our sisters and brothers in the Rochester community. Through our ministries of meals, hospitality and supportive assistance, we reflect God's love and work to transform our lives and the lives of our guests.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### 2012 BOARD MEMBERS

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### Donor Option No. 2202

When you contribute to the United Way of Greater Rochester, please consider designating AD&CC. Thank you!



## Bringing the "Caring" Alive: How You Make it Happen

Affordable housing for a family of nine. A hat that doesn't itch. Resume writing assistance. And help with finding a substance abuse treatment program. Asbury Dining and Caring Executive Director Michele Cooley worked individually with guests to address all of these issues one recent morning, "...and that was just during breakfast," laughs Michele with her characteristic smile and calm demeanor.

During the past three years, the number of meals served at the ADCC has more than doubled, including an average monthly increase of 30% in 2012 alone. While remarkable, these increases don't reveal the rapidly growing number of guests seeking assistance in resolving personal issues.

"More people are asking me to serve as their case manager," explains Michele. "They're not linked in with social services and don't know where to go. We've seen more activity at the Dining Center generally, but it's not just the volume, it's that people are coming with greater needs. I'm especially concerned about the growing number of people who are homeless."



And just what happens when someone finds themselves without a place to stay? "It's a process," sighs Michele. The first step is to get them qualified for emergency shelter through Monroe County's Department of Social Services (DSS). "These days, almost all of the shelters require a referral from DSS, but it takes about a month to get approved."

She tells the story of one guest who is a veteran and would qualify for housing through the Veterans Administration if she could get him connected. "We'll get there, but it's going to take a while. He's called the VA a few times from the Dining Center, but when they call back, he's gone and I can't reach him. ... It's sort of ironic that his homelessness makes it so hard to get him qualified for housing."

Michele shrugs off any suggestion of accolades. "This is second nature to me,

## Dinner Among Friends Raises Record \$20K

Held on September 29, this year's Dinner Among Friends, our annual fundraising event, was a smashing success! Approximately 250 attendees gathered at dinners in private homes and then moved on to Asbury First to enjoy a lavish dessert buffet, the music of Robert Wells, and our first ever silent auction. Guests lingered at the church well into the night, enjoying the festive mood that dominated this year's affair. Special thanks to co-chairs Meredith Pixley and Lynn Peck and silent auction Chair Bunny Dugo for their enthusiastic leadership.

Finally, thank you to our sponsors for their generous financial support: Presenting Sponsor Federated Clover Investment Advisors, Silver Sponsor Howe & Rusling, Dessert Sponsors Joe Floreano and Dutcher & Zatkowsky, and Bronze Sponsors Edward Jones, Powers Law Firm, and Wegmans.



### Our deep appreciation goes to this year's hosts:

- Wendy and Ed Baird
- Melissa and Brian Bohrer
- Judy and Tom Bristow & Bonnie and David Kay
- Diana and Jim Carter
- Nancy and Len Davidow
- Judy and Hank Dixon & Gwen and Tom Zink
- Diane Dudley & Nina Hurd
- Barb and Jeff Edwards
- Carolyn and Fred Hamil & Cathy Bracht
- Libby and David Hearne & Lynn and Glenn Peck
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- Marguerite and Jim Quinn
- Jeanne and Ed Ristau
- Jeanne Rowe & Elsie Wiberg
- Rev. Susan and John Shafer
- Ann and Dick Standish
- Laura and Al Swett

### United Way Donors Give at Record Levels

*\$18,000+ in Donations Key to Serving Growing Number of Guests*

The news of record level giving from donors who contribute to the Asbury Dining and Caring Center through the United Way came at the end of August. Perhaps all of you who donated heard our collective cries of celebration. Our tight budget allows little wiggle room, especially as we look to finish the year with a balanced budget despite feeding and caring for significantly more people than we'd anticipated. Thank you to each and every one of you! Your donations will provide us with a steady stream of income for the next several months, which helps to ensure that we can serve a growing number of guests without compromising the quality of our programs.

*This newsletter was printed at no charge to the AD&CC by*



it's just what I do ... sometimes I have three guests [in my office] at once, but we never turn anyone away. I work hard to keep up with all the programs available and to find new ways to get our guests connected, and I love it. I love my job."

Your involvement brings the "caring" part of our name alive to our guests. Whether you care for our guests through volunteer work, financial support, or hold us in prayer, you make sure our guests have a safe place when they find themselves in need of a caring presence.

The family in need of housing? They left with a Housing Council's list and an appointment to see a unit. The young man who needed a resume worked on the computer with a volunteer and left pleased with the finished product. The man seeking to reenter drug treatment left with a fuller understanding of the implications of his decision to drop out of treatment and a promise to come back the next day.

And the man who wanted a hat? "We didn't find exactly what he wanted — he has serious schizophrenia and is sensitive to what touches his head — but he

connected with one of the volunteers and took a shower and left in better spirits."

Thank you for caring about our guests. It is by design that we call ourselves the Asbury Dining and Caring Center. We exist in order to feed hungry people, and equally important, to offer a welcoming, caring presence to people who are hurting. Thanks to your involvement, together, we will continue to help our guests understand that they matter.

One breakfast, one referral, and one hat at a time.

## Bill Lisi Named Finalist for The Farash Prize for Social Entrepreneurship

*Selection Recognizes Bill's Life of Service to People in Need*

It is with great pride that we announce Bill's selection as one of four finalists for the Farash Foundation award, created in 2011 to honor the legacy of Max Farash by recognizing local leaders who use innovative approaches to address social needs in the Rochester community.

Though many of us know Bill as the founder of the Asbury Dining and Caring Center, his pioneering efforts on behalf of vulnerable people started in the 1960's when he was working as a P.E. teacher for the Rochester City School District and felt called to give up his lunch hour to offer an adapted P.E. class for children with disabilities. At the time, there were no best practices or widely accepted theories on how to teach children with disabilities. Bill figured it out as he went, and drew on his innate ability to connect with "his kids." "It just came to me," recalls Bill in his typically self-deprecating manner, "I don't know if I did it or God did it...probably God."



He went on to become the City School District's first Coordinator of Special Education and to develop a curriculum for Nazareth College's Master of Special Education Program. Though it's impossible to list all of Bill's acts of service (largely because he's too humble to list them!), he has also founded the Asbury First Grocery Bag Ministry, helped to found the Rochester Area Interfaith Network, and of course, our beloved Asbury Dining and Caring Center, which he conceived of at the urging of the late Rev.

Margie Mayson to develop new social ministries for the church. Rev. Susan Shafer says, "Bill combines creativity, acumen and compassion in unique and life giving ways. And because of that, he has helped hundreds, if not thousands, of adults and children in our community to find success and to feel valued."

Several members of Bill's family and the Asbury Dining and Caring Center community joined him for the award ceremony on October 10, 2012, where Tom Ferraro of Foodlink, Inc. was named the winner. It was with deep pride that we sat alongside of our beloved Bill. In recognition of Bill's selection as a finalist, the Farash Foundation will make a grant of \$10,000 to support our operations. Thank you Bill, from all of us, for your example of a life defined by quiet, fervent service to people in need. You inspire all of us to find new ways to care for God's kingdom.