This morning we served breakfast to 115 people,” shares Michele Cooley, Executive Director at the Asbury Dining and Caring Center. “And that’s at the beginning of the month, when our numbers are usually lower.” A year ago, an average breakfast crowd totaled 75-80 people. Why the increase? “People are out of work, we’re seeing a lot of new people, especially a lot of homeless people, and the need just continues to grow,” reflects Michele. “Word keeps getting around that our food is good and that we’re a positive place to be, so more people come.” “And that’s a good thing,” she makes sure to add.

As the number of meals served has grown, so too, has the number of referrals Michele and other Dining Center volunteers provide. When asked how many guests she might talk with one-on-one, she chuckles and says, “Oh, maybe 35 or more a day.” Guests filter in and out of Michele’s office non-stop, often more than one at a time, asking for help with anything from finding a clean pair of socks to thinking about getting sober to figuring out how to locate lost relatives. “There’s never a dull moment around here.”

Your involvement with the Dining Center makes all this activity possible. Every dollar and every volunteer hour donated help guests like David and Frank, pictured above (l to r), get back on their feet. Frank talks candidly about the Dining Center’s impact on his life. “I’m originally from Queens, and when I first moved here in 1996 I lived in an apartment on Park Ave. Years ago a friend of mine told me about the Dining Center and I’ve been coming here ever since. ... I tell anyone I can about what a blessing the Dining Center is ... it’s like a 360, you can get everything here, food, clothing, job leads, you name it.”

He’s especially grateful to volunteer Rand Warner, for his help in finding work. “Mr. Rand has steered me in all sorts of positive directions. He helps me with my resume, we look things up on the computer, he’s even driven me to an interview.” Though it’s been a struggle for Frank to find permanent employment, he’s currently working the night shift, 11:00-7:30 a.m. as a machine operator at Austro Mold, and...
Dinner Among Friends Sets New Records

On Saturday, September 28, close to three hundred people took part in the 7th Annual Dinner Among Friends to benefit the Asbury Dining and Caring Center. Thanks to this record turn-out and the generosity of our sponsors, we raised net proceeds of well over $22,000, an all-time high!

For the seventh year, we were treated to a delicious dinner created by the talented kitchen staff of the Asbury Dining Center, and music by Laurie Kennedy and Beth Glaza, both of whom travel to Asbury First United Methodist Church, where attendees enjoyed appetizers donated by Jines Restaurant. Our sponsors, we raised net proceeds of well over $22,000, an all-time high!

Carol Kramer & Ron Stallworth
Timothy Johnson & Robert Miller
Dave & Sandra Holloway/Ray & Larry & Robyn Gage
Peter & Tess Doerner
Len & Nancy Davidow
Stephen & Emily Cady
Dick & Ann Standish
Phil & Morna Monahan
Diane Lucas & Maxine Morse
Betty Nichols
Jeanne Rowe & Linda Shevlin
John & Susan Shafer
Dick & Ann Standish
Al & Laura Swett
Carol Trout/Andy Dutcher/Dawn Reidy/Ruthellen Hoyle
Teddi Urriola


Last, but certainly not least, we thank the volunteers—most of whom also serve on Asbury First’s Embrace Team—who donated countless hours of time to make this year’s event so successful: Sandra Holloway, Martha Duke, Nancy Davidow, Andrea Adair, Jim Stinehour, Elaine Short, Mary Walker, Jeffrey Lamica, Cathy Bracht, Morna Monahan, Ann Standish.

Our guests cannot thank you personally. But, one cold morning this winter, please stop for a moment and imagine a crowd of hungry people gathered in a warm, inviting dining room, enjoying a hot meal and the comfort of good friends. Your participation in DAF makes that image a reality.

Continued from page 1

Frank has been donating his time to make repairs on the home, with the goal of getting her moved back in before the worst of the cold sets in this winter.

“They are so appreciative,” says Frank. “The warmth and the time and care that goes into everything makes this place special. Everyone here tries to take care of each other and I’m grateful to be part of it. There have been a few times I’ve drifted away, but I always come back. The people here, they’re like family, and that’s what really matters.”

Bottles and Doctor visits

DCC Partnership Provides Bikes to Those in Need

Howard Cone, one of the volunteers in R Community Bike’s partnership with the Asbury Dining and Caring Center this summer, shares a story that illustrates the importance of safe, working bikes to our guests.

Based in a warehouse at 226 Hudson Ave., R Community Bikes provides free bikes and bike repairs to people in need. In order to be as accessible as possible to clients, the group operates four satellite sites. We were extremely fortunate to have them on-site at the ADCC each Thursday from April to October this past year.

Howard recalls that one particular morning well. “This gentleman showed up at the shop and was really worried, we could see the panic in his eyes ... he had a 1:00 doctor’s appointment that afternoon and woke up to find his rear [bicycle] tire flat and wheel broken. That bike was his only way to get to the doctor’s office. We needed a new chain and adjustments to the rear wheel cones, crank cones, spokes, brakes, and gears. We were able to get him fixed up and he left a happy man on his now-safe bike, ready to go.”

Eric is another favorite memory. “After breakfast at the Dining Center he came out back to see us with his four large plastic bags filled with recyclable cans he had collected overnight. His bike needed a new tire and we were able to fix it.”

Eric left a happy man on his now-safe bike, ready to go. Howard shares, “We get a lot of repeat business. These guys aren’t just looking for a bike to get to work, they’re looking for something they can rely on for the long haul. They come back for more.”

Howard says that he’s learned a lot from the bikes themselves. “They tell me a lot about their owners. Sometimes you get a bike that’s been looked after well, and you can tell that the owner takes care of it. And then you get a bike that’s been neglected, and you can tell that the owner isn’t really using it. We try to help these people find a bike that suits their needs.”

It’s repetitive and for me, I really like the consistency of what I do. I really like the consistency of what I do. It’s repetitive and for me, I really like that. I’m grateful for the opportunity to work.”

Michele shares that “Frank has been exceptionally diligent about seeking employment and he has a big heart.” Another frequent Dining Center guest is homeless since her house is uninhabitable due to multiple, significant code violations. Frank has been donating his time to make repairs on the home, with the goal of getting her moved back in before the worst of the cold sets in this winter.

“’It’s a community here,’ says Frank. “The warmth and the time and care that goes into everything makes this place special. Everyone here tries to take care of each other and I’m grateful to be part of it. There have been a few times I’ve drifted away, but I always come back. The people here, they’re like family, and that’s what really matters.”

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