



Accompanying the Emmaus Family... *– Sheila Austin, RN*



While we are “over the hump” in terms of the acquisition of Emmaus’ new home; the completion of a major renovation project to a “gift-ed” building; and the transition of our family and friends from 4335 South Salina Street to 127 E. Glen Ave., for me, this has been a spiritual renewal of our mission and relationship with those we serve. God always has a way of bringing to light that which is needed for His plan.

It is no mishap that the project was a few weeks behind our planning (Thanksgiving) pushing us into the last week of December. I am sure now God’s intent for us was to fully experience the season of Advent in anticipation and longing of the completion of His plan. We were reminded that

to truly “walk with” and “accompany” others to experience the goodness and love of Christ, it was important to have those we serve to be part of the process.

It was important that the message was not to be, “We are moving to a new location and we hope you come along.” We were in this together. Our guests were updated weekly on the progress of their new home from the beginning with details of gutting the interior to the larger details of a new roof, kitchen, and consultation area. Each week their eyes became brighter and their smiles bigger! In those last couple of weeks, one woman squealed and teared up with the excitement of what she was soon to experience.

Those final weeks of longing and anticipation affirmed their ability to trust us. They believed that the new building was for them! They were indeed part of the Emmaus Ministry family and no

one was to be left behind. This is the Church. This is our call to discipleship. This is how Emmaus accompanies all of God’s people to experience His merciful heart and love.



First day of meal service December 23, 2019

Please join us
for our Blessing,
Ribbon Cutting, and
Open House Event
of the new
St. Marianne Cope
Center for Outreach

Sat., April 4, 2020 @ 10AM

- Blessing & Ribbon Cutting
- Light refreshments
- Tours of the new facility available until 11:30 AM

127 E. Glen Ave., Syracuse

Parking available behind the building

Thank you to all the consultants, contractors, and laborers that created our new home for those served at Emmaus Ministry:

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An Oasis of Charity and Warmth



When I think of the new St. Marianne Cope Center at Emmaus Ministry, a quote from Pope Francis comes to mind, "Every Christian commu-

nity should be an oasis of charity and warmth in the midst of a desert of solitude and indifference." There is no question that the St. Marianne Cope Center offers that "oasis of charity and warmth" to so many in the City of Syracuse.

On any given day, all one has to do is walk into the Cope Center and see the community that has been formed by those who go through the doors. The

Center is so much more than a place for people to come to have their stomachs filled; it is a place where relationships are formed through the interaction that takes place by sharing a meal together. It truly is beautiful to see the socialization that takes place and to see people, who might not have the opportunity to eat with others on a regular basis, enjoy a meal with many people. These relationships that are formed, in a sense, become familial in nature as the people begin to look for each other, or, if someone is not present, there is a real concern about their absence that leads to the guests "looking out" for each other. In other words, the Cope Center is a home away from home for many of our guests where they

can experience the "charity and warmth" of the volunteers and each other.

As Pope Francis reminds us, our world can seem, for many, to be a vast "desert of solitude and indifference." The guests of the Cope Center know that reality better than anyone. The poor and marginalized have the unfortunate task of walking through that "desert" every day of their lives. Thanks be to God for the gift of Emmaus, through the goodness of its benefactors and volunteers, as it serves as a beautiful oasis of charity, warmth, and love and it reminds people over and over – just as the Emmaus story in the Bible reminds us – we are never alone; God walks with us and remains with us always!



JIM AND JULI BOEHEIM
FOUNDATION

Emmaus Secures Assistance Through Grants

Emmaus Ministry was blessed to be awarded a grant from The Dorothy and Marshal M. Reisman Foundation to assist us in our building renovations. The Foundation is committed to using its resources to enhance the quality of life through support of organizations located primarily in Onondaga County. With their generous support, Emmaus will be able to continue and expand our nutritious meal offerings to those in need. Additionally, through the support from the Jim and Juli Boeheim Foundation as well as our donors, Emmaus is expanding our Family Activity Days to include more access to books and educational materials for our younger guests. We send out a gracious thank you to those Foundations and our donors as we strive to feed and educate our most needy friends in Syracuse.

A Story of Determination, Faith and Hope

Natasha Gray is Emmaus Ministry's Meal Service Assistant but what she does for Emmaus Ministry is so much more than the duties of her position. She brings a story of determination, faith and hope to the many guests, volunteers, and service retreatants at Emmaus.

Born in Jackson, Tennessee to parents who were addicts, Natasha, her brother, and sister struggled in the throes of poverty – homelessness, unemployment, addiction, and incarceration. At the most

difficult point in her life, she gave power of attorney over her four children to their father's sister and mother. Seemingly in an endless trap, Natasha was determined to live a different life than what seemed to be her destiny. "I didn't want that to be my story. I wanted to push harder, strive to be better. This isn't what God designed me for."

Natasha turned to the God she knew from her early childhood. "I checked myself into a hotel in Jackson for a week. I prayed to God. I cried out to God!" The



Natasha with some volunteers

message He sent back to her was to go to Syracuse.

Natasha thought to herself, "Syracuse?! I have no family in Syracuse."

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We Opened Our New Doors!

Emmaus Ministry opened its doors at our new location on East Glen Avenue on December 23, 2019. What a wonderful Christmas gift it was! The excitement in the air was palpable. Our first guest to enter, Gladys, announced, "Get a picture of me! I'm the first one here!" Many others were hot on her heels as they marched in, eyes wide open in wonderment as they soaked in the grand size and beauty of our new facility.

The meal served was a scheduled bagged lunch, but each guest settled into their seats, eating their lunch on site, enjoying the surroundings and each other's company. Typically, conversations during meals at the Center are plentiful as our guests have developed

friendships with one another. However, this day those conversations were much more animated as they shared the excitement of being in the new facility.

In one corner sat a Christmas tree, intentionally decorated only partially. Each guest was offered a shiny Christmas bulb and a marker so they could write their names on the bulb and add it to the tree. Smiles and expressions of gratitude in response to this small, welcoming gesture were plentiful.

All of our guests felt at home at the new Center as they conversed with friends, thanked Sheila Austin, our director, and took turns adding their ornament to the Christmas tree...the Emmaus family Christmas tree.



Emmaus Family Christmas Tree



Gladys!



New LARGER kitchen with separate cleaning area



Lower level food pantry offers more space

A "Tour" of Our New Facility

With overflowing gratitude to our donors and the many contractors and volunteers who worked tirelessly to prepare our new Outreach Center, Emmaus Ministry proudly opened its doors on December 23. We called on our donors and our community to take a leap of faith with us and you responded with overwhelming generosity by extending your hands to the neediest of our friends in Syracuse.

The renovation work of the Center proceeded flawlessly with only minor delays. Each of the contractors and their respective workers demonstrated their understanding of our mission by putting forth the effort necessary to complete the work so we could transition from the former Center to the new one without delay. Each worker understood the role they played in serving those in need.

As a result of their work and the support of our donors, our guests have a much larger dining area in which to serve more guests and provide a more

conducive space for socialization. Our kitchen area is bigger as well with additional features including a large work area/island, more refrigerator units, and greater cooking space. Additionally, our dish cleaning area is larger and separated from the food preparation area. The upstairs also includes an office for our director, Sheila Austin, two bathrooms, one with a shower, a laundry room, and a private consultation room to address the specific needs of our guests confidentially.

A lift is available for handicap access between the main floor and the downstairs where our items of need for our guests are stored. The lower level also includes storage areas for our non-perishable items for meals and grocery distribution, food pantry, a walk-in cooler, and a large freezer. The downstairs also offers a meeting room, an office for our volunteer Assistant Director, Mary Catalano, and for our Meal Service Director, Joan Hantke.

Sheila is thrilled with the new location. "To say we are pleased with our new Center is a great understatement. God has provided us with a wonderful opportunity to continue to serve our friends and to expand on our offerings. We couldn't have done it without the generosity of so many through their financial contributions, the Renovations' Capital Campaign supporters, and the meticulous planning and execution of the renovation by our project manager, Ed King and his team of professionals. We truly are blessed!"



We Continue to Grow

The meal and program offerings continue to expand at Emmaus Ministry as we begin a new chapter in our Outreach Center on East Glen Avenue. Our meal service continues to provide eight nutritious meals, six days each week. As we secure more volunteers, we plan to expand the frequency of meals served.

Certainly, our meals constitute the major focus of our mission. However, there are many other programs available to our guests. As we have from the start of our Outreach Center, we continue to offer showers, laundry, and haircuts to those without access. Haircuts are now being provided two times per month. This service is provided by two different volunteer groups and is greatly appreciated by those who receive haircuts.

Another program that has grown by leaps and bounds has been renamed Family Activity Days. What started in mid-January 2019, as a bi-monthly Children's Activity Days with 2-6 participants, is now a regularly scheduled, two Saturdays per month family activities which attract 10-15 attendees. These sessions include academic offerings, books to read, and themed craft activities. When observing these sessions, one

will see parents and other adults joining in the fun with the children.

The coordinator of this program, Nancy Gorman, a teacher at Westhill High School, tells us that "there is always something for them to take home to reinforce what we worked on. The parents love it!" With the assistance of Beth Feeney, Terry Chylinski, and Karen Rutkowski, this program has become a highlight for many of our young guests, parents, and seniors.

With the addition of our consultation room, Emmaus is now able to provide outside agencies a private office to meet individually with our guests. Currently, we have scheduled visits from Veteran's Outreach Specialists from Easter Seals, Randi Matousek, a recruiter from the Federal Census Bureau, as well as representatives from Catholic Charities and Cornerstone Mobile Mental Health Services.

Our "Ask the Nurse" program offered by Ignatian Volunteer Corp, Geri Hall, NP, continues to provide health-related educational sessions. Geri has recently expanded to include grief sharing gatherings along with "Ask the Nurse" sessions. Emmaus continues to be a host site for weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

In addition to our weekly food pantry distribution, we offer 5 ½ hours a week of "request services". Guests can meet privately with a volunteer to request special needs. This also provides opportunities to build on the relationships and trust of our guests. Sheila offers, "Wherever He leads us, we will follow so that we will be able to improve the lives of those in need."



Family Activities



Reading time with Miss Karen

A Story of Determination, Faith and Hope

continued from page 2

But she trusted in God. She was given a one-way bus ticket to Syracuse from a church and headed north. On April 12, 2018, she arrived in Syracuse and discovered a friend was living in the area and stayed with her.

Two days later Natasha was working at the Taco Bell/KFC in Liverpool. Two months later she moved into her own apartment, quit her job at Taco Bell/KFC, and began working at Subway and Little

Caesars. Within a short time, Natasha took a manager position at a Dollar General store. As of September 2019, she has full-time employment as a cafeteria aide at Bishop Grimes High School.

Natasha fell into a clean, healthy routine that included work, going to the gym and prayer. On one of her walks to workout, "I stumbled across Emmaus Ministry. I saw the sign and went in. I wanted to volunteer and give back."

Additionally, Natasha wanted to regain custody of her children and bring them to Syracuse. Through her good

work habits and documentation and with the assistance of an attorney, she attempted to demonstrate to the court that she was, in fact, worthy of having her children. And the court agreed. On September 18, 2019, Natasha's oldest son, Natavis (17) arrived in Syracuse to be with his loving mother.

Natasha's faith guides her in her daily life, as she refers to Psalm 30 "Weeping endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning light." Faith is believing in what is unseen, but is hoped for. If He can do it for me He can do it for anyone!"



Thank you for your generous support for those Emmaus Ministry serves!

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Your commitment has made it possible for Emmaus Ministry to expand its facility and provide services to more individuals and families in need!

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On behalf of the Emmaus Ministry Board of Directors, we want to thank Ed King, Mike King, and Scott Clements for their vision, commitment, enthusiasm, and partnership to bring to life this beautiful building for God's work on the South Side!





The Light of Christ burns brightly!

The Light of Christ is constantly present in the love and commitment of the many volunteers that enter these doors. Their desire to be of service to all, no questions asked, is how God's love for all can be extended throughout humanity. And through that love, we can make a difference in the lives of others. Not only do we feed the body with nutritious food 6 times a week, but we also feed the soul with the attentiveness of our faith being the hands and feet of Jesus. Our volunteers nourish the minds and hearts of our guests through engagement, activities,

conversation, and being aware of good things and bad that our guests may be experiencing. Just like family. Being that extension of God's love for us through our Baptism and faith, and to offer that gift to others unconditionally – in simple acts of kindness.

Since moving into our new building on Dec. 23, 2019 and through the end of Jan. 2020, 380 volunteers logged 11,000 hours serving meals, distributing grocery bags, filling guest requests, and providing family and children's activities.



We need your help...

Due to your overwhelming generosity of gently used clothing – we have filled our shelves and closets! We kindly ask that if you have any clothing that you want to donate and reach the most people in need, we recommend giving it to the Rescue Mission or Salvation Army. These agencies do amazing work and have the ability to reach so many more people looking for needed clothing and furnishings. If you want to help us with specific daily items of need, please consider...“Emmaus Ministry Collection Wish List”

Thank you!
Sheila Austin, RN / Director



Emmaus Ministry Collection Wish List

We are frequently asked by schools, confirmation groups, or businesses, “What items do you need?” – These items are always needed!

- Regular sized bar soap
- Shampoo
- Shaving cream (men & women)
- Toilet paper
- Winter hats & gloves (adults & children)
- Toothbrushes & toothpaste
- Deodorant (men & women)
- Razors
- Paper towels
- Diapers (newborns to size 6)



Our services and activities...

- Shower and laundry access
- Children/family activities
- Clothing distribution
- “Ask the nurse” sessions
- Weekly AA meetings
- Foot care/hand care
- Holiday brunch (Christmas & Easter)
- “Sharing our grief” sessions



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To perform volunteer outreach ministry including Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, for the purpose of providing unconditional love, hope, support, and the presence of the Catholic Church to the poor, hungry, isolated, and homeless of the city of Syracuse, New York.

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Opportunities to help serve those in need...

Become a Volunteer...

If you would like more information on how to become a volunteer at Emmaus Ministry assisting with:

- Meal preparation
- Meal services
- Food pantry
- Shopping
- Sorting
- Organizing
- Hospitality or;
- Programming

Please contact:
Sheila Austin
@ 315-256-1982



Name _____

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- ___ \$500 to provide 200 hot breakfasts a week
- ___ \$250 to provide 75 hot lunches or dinners
- ___ \$150 to provide a holiday brunch, donuts or monthly birthday celebration
- ___ \$100 to provide 26 round trip Centro bus passes
- ___ \$75 to provide children's activities, crafts and lunch
- ___ \$50 to support monthly haircuts, foot care, and laundry services

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www.emmausministry.org/donate

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