



Road to

Emmaus Ministry

of Syracuse, Inc.

the Way

Newsletter



SUMMER '25

*“The righteous cry out, the Lord hears and rescues them from all their afflictions.”*

*—Psalm 34:18*

## Creating a Culture of Hope



While we still mourn the passing of our beloved Pope Francis, we continue his call to accompany those who are struggling, lonely, hungry, sick, and afraid during this Jubilee Year 2025 of Hope. As people of faith, we strive to be Pilgrims of Hope embracing our brothers and sisters in their suffering.

We see this quiet suffering firsthand at Emmaus Ministry. Our guests find themselves navigating yet another day in poverty, homelessness, crime-ridden neighborhoods, and the inability to advocate for themselves drowning in

an endless state of despair.

Every day, we have the honor of welcoming our guests into an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and hope. Our goal is for each guest to experience a renewed sense of hope when we encounter them with a smile, look into their eyes, offer hospitality, a hot meal, conversation, and a prayer for God's help and peace.

When we show compassion and tenderness to the suffering, we reveal our Heavenly Father's love in its most human terms. The Holy Father said, “The poor and suffering are the ones who teach us how to live in hope. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them.”

I suspect we can all identify individuals who can benefit from our acts of kindness and compassion in our families, schools, workplaces, and churches. Through our compassionate encounters, we become conduits of hope for a loved one or stranger in a world fraught with loneliness and fear. I propose we challenge ourselves to find those opportunities, bringing hope to all humanity in doing so.

Thank you for your continued goodness and support of our mission of creating a culture of HOPE at Emmaus Ministry.

Sheila Austin, RN  
Executive Director



Feeding the hungry



Accompanying guests during Lent



In 2024, Pope Francis declared that the Jubilee Year 2025 (the 2,025th anniversary of our Lord's birth) would have the theme of "hope."

It is so important that people throughout the world focus on "hope" because we live in a world where we can encounter so much despair. One of the aspects of the Jubilee Year of Hope is for us to be "Pilgrims of Hope." Typically, when we think of a pilgrimage, we think of going to far-off places like Rome, Italy, the Holy Land, or any place with some spiritual and religious significance. As we celebrate the jubilee year, I would like to invite all of us to become "Pilgrims of Hope" at Emmaus Ministry.

Part of being a pilgrim means that we accompany others on this journey. Daily, hundreds of guests go through the doors of the St. Marianne Cope Outreach Center and the St. Marianne Cope Health Services to have their basic needs met. I have always said that Emmaus is an oasis of hope for all who go through its doors. I am inviting us to join them on this pilgrimage. How do we do this? If you can volunteer at Emmaus, that would be a powerful way to walk with the guests. Your prayers are another way to journey with our

brothers and sisters at Emmaus. Pray for the guests, volunteers, staff, and benefactors that this mission will continue to reveal the love and compassion of Jesus to all. If you can share your financial resources, you will accompany so many by making it possible to provide meals, dental care, health care, and personal care on so many levels and make a lasting impact. I truly feel God is inviting us to walk together during this year of hope and, in doing so, experience the presence of a loving God in our midst.

If you read anew the Gospel story of the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus, you'll see that they are, in a sense, on a pilgrimage. On this journey

from Jerusalem to Emmaus, the disciples encounter the risen Lord, and he instills in them a deep and profound sense of hope. So much so, they say to him, "remain with us Lord." God is inviting us to be Pilgrims of Hope for Emmaus Ministry. God is asking us to journey with Emmaus Ministry through our prayers and by being generous with our time, talent, and treasure to keep His mission alive and well. I have confidence that if we do this and commit ourselves to being this type of pilgrim, with God's grace, we will bring hope to every soul that comes to Emmaus!

Reverend John D. Manno  
Vice President



*Meeting Jesus*



*Emmaus' families*





## We would like to thank **Monsignor Robert Yeazel**

for his time and dedication to Emmaus Ministry as he retires from the board of directors. His commitment to Emmaus began in 2009. He was instrumental in providing a collaboration between Holy Cross, a suburban parish, with an inner-city outreach parish, St. James Church. He became a member of the board of directors when Emmaus incorporated in April of 2016. Throughout the years he has been a staunch supporter of our work, opening many doors for us within the Syracuse community and beyond. His innovative ideas were always an inspiration moving us forward in programming and services. His leadership led to connections which provided new developments and strong community support. Emmaus Ministry would not be what it is today without his dedication and commitment.

We wish him a joyful retirement and will be forever grateful for his footprint at Emmaus.



### **Emmaus Staff & Team:**

Sheila Austin, RN  
Executive Director  
Carol Antonacci  
Administrative Assistant  
Denise Headd  
Director of Development  
and Grants  
Kathleen O'Connor  
Director of Operations  
Brenda Casinella  
Assistant to Director of Operations  
Stefani Latimore  
Director of Meal Services  
Mary Radford, LCSW  
Director of Social Services  
Dr. Stephen Streiff  
Director of Dental Services  
Dr. David Mason  
Director of Medical Services  
Teresa Metallo  
Clinic Manager  
Kathleen Mason  
Assistant Clinic Manager  
Willie Mack  
Director of Maintenance  
Nancy Gorman (Volunteer)  
Coordinator of  
Children's Activities  
Noele Puglisi (Volunteer)  
Coordinator of Food Pantry  
Melissa Demjanenko (Volunteer)  
Coordinator of Meal Services

**Emmaus is seeking  
a volunteer hair-  
dresser to cut hair  
and trim beards  
once a month  
between 11 AM – 1 PM,  
preferably on a  
Tuesday or Thursday.  
Call 315-928-5191**

# Development Greeting



Greetings from the Office of Development. It's hard to believe another busy year has passed at Emmaus Ministry. Throughout the

last year we've seen changes in our guests, volunteers, staff, and programs and services. The one thing that has remained steadfast is the hope we witness daily. Hope is a very personal word, and it means something different for everyone. As staff members, we hope that we can meet the needs of each guest we encounter. Our volunteers hope that their efforts in helping to prepare meals, preparing the Outreach Center for Meal Service, and receiving dental and medical patients at the clinic show our guests how much we care. Collectively, we hope our presence and experience can help lighten the load of every person we meet during the day.

Hope for our guests means something entirely different. We serve one of the poorest neighborhoods in the

nation. Many of our guests don't know where their next meal will come from. Some live in motels, waiting for the hope of supportive housing. Some live in rental properties that lack heat, hot water, and sometimes, a lock on their door. They present a multitude of case management issues that require assistance, advocacy, and the hope for some kind of resolution. Our Children's Activities program allows our youngest guests to participate in learning exercises, reading, creativity and imagination with the hope for a better future. Guests who come to the clinic have no insurance or proper medical care but present with a toothache, an injury, or an illness. It's hard to think of living in situations such as these and wondering how our guests can still come in with a smile, saying "thank you" and "God bless you." That is where hope comes in. The hope they receive at Emmaus Ministry.

By the grace of our donors and supporting foundations we can offer hope to every guest in need. We are blessed to have amazing donors who share their treasure and talents so that

we can continue to serve this community. Generous foundations have responded positively to the grant requests we prepare as we present the stories and statistics of the complex situations we see. It is this hope that helps us to continue to believe we will be able to meet the rapidly increasing numbers of guests registering for our programs and services in their greatest time of need.

During this year of hope in the Catholic Church we pray that our donors and the foundations who support us know what these gifts have meant to our staff and particularly our guests. Without hope there is despair. I have seen firsthand the transformation of those who come to us burdened and overcome with worry, and who leave with a smile and sense of peace that there truly is great hope for tomorrow. It is with a full heart and so much gratitude that I thank you for your generosity.

Denise Headd  
Director of Development  
and Grants

## Thank you to our foundations for their support!



# NEW Programming at Emmaus

## Emmaus Ministry's Mentoring Program

was created to offer healthy opportunities to Southside neighborhood youth through mentorship with interested and dedicated volunteers. Christopher Barrett is a Syracuse Academy of Science student and a regular Saturday volunteer. He has demonstrated dependability and a willingness to learn new things. After presenting the opportunity to Christopher's mother, Chuck Davoli and Joe Silino laid the groundwork for this intentional relationship by volunteering side by side on Saturdays. Through volunteering, mutual interests emerge and opportunities arise to model positive male behaviors and expectations for life.



*Joe Silino, Christopher Barrett (Mentee), Chuck Davoli*

## Board Spotlight: Robert Ryan



### What brought you to Emmaus Ministry?

Several years ago, I attended an information session about Emmaus Ministry announcing the expansion of the facilities including a review of its outreach activities on the South Side of Syracuse. I was familiar with the work from my wife's involvement

with the Social Justice Committee of our Church, Immaculate Conception in Fayetteville. Consequently, I was interested in becoming more involved in meeting its mission.

### Why did you agree to accept the responsibility of being a member of the board of directors?

By applying my professional experience in finance, I thought I might contribute in some way to the growth and continued success of Emmaus.

### What is your role on the board of directors as a representative of the Investment Committee?

I feel my role on the Investment Committee is to help build our investment portfolio by ensuring professional management of the assets. It can become a vehicle for individuals to make commitments to

Emmaus and a permanent source of funding for its operations.

### What is a priority for you to accomplish or achieve as a board member?

My priority as a board member is to help ensure the continued successes that have been achieved and to provide access to the resources necessary to meet the needs of our guests.

### What makes Emmaus unique from other boards you have served on previously?

The Emmaus Board is different from other corporate and not-for-profit boards I have served on. The concentrated effort of this small group of dedicated people is focused on the unique needs of the South Side residents. While important, fundraising and administrative issues are ancillary in this service mission.



# Hope at Emmaus



*Kathleen O'Connor*

I am blessed to spend five days a week at Emmaus as the Director of Operations, and I believe that the presence of “hope” makes Emmaus unique. For me, my “hope” is rooted in faith and is the expectation and confidence that all will be well in the end. Emmaus is a place of hope, and the staff, volunteers as well as guests exude this hope every day, making Emmaus a special place.

I work with a wonderful group of people who choose to dedicate their talents and time to making life better for people in our community. From selecting the meals guests enjoy to reviewing invoices for accuracy and from scheduling guest appointments and Medicaid cabs to get them there to meticulously cleaning the kitchen and dining room, the Emmaus staff members work in their own roles to make life a bit better for our guests. This core group forms the foundation of the hope present at Emmaus.

Each week, more than sixty people generously volunteer their time to serve and give hope to our guests. Our volunteers slice deli meat, make hundreds of sandwiches, serve coffee and hot cocoa, wash countless dishes, stock shelves, pack grocery bags, pick up canned goods and bread, clean teeth, provide medical care, set tables,

package and distribute meals, and clean everything! They fulfill their responsibilities with compassion and concern for our guests. With genuine kindness, they greet guests, ask about their family or health, and overall demonstrate dignity to all people who walk through the door. This group fills and refills Emmaus with hope with their presence, their conscientious preparation, and compassionate interactions with guests every day.

Lastly, our guests bring their own hope to Emmaus every day. We often serve more than 150 meals a day to people in need of hot meals or bagged lunches. Despite the desperate circumstances that bring guests through the door, our guests express sincere gratitude with their smiles and words of thanks. Guests regularly share their good news about jobs, a new apartment, or the arrival of a new baby. They greet us with “I am blessed,” “God is good,” “I am blessed to be here, and to have another day to get things right,” and “I am blessed by the best and too blessed to be stressed!” Our guests too contribute to the sense of hope at Emmaus.

I look forward to going to work every day. I am surrounded by people who believe that today will be better than yesterday and that we can make things better tomorrow. This “hope”

energizes me. While I don’t expect we’ll solve every problem at once, it is my privilege to walk with Emmaus staff, volunteers and guests along our common path.

Kathleen O'Connor  
Director of Operations



*Hot meals*

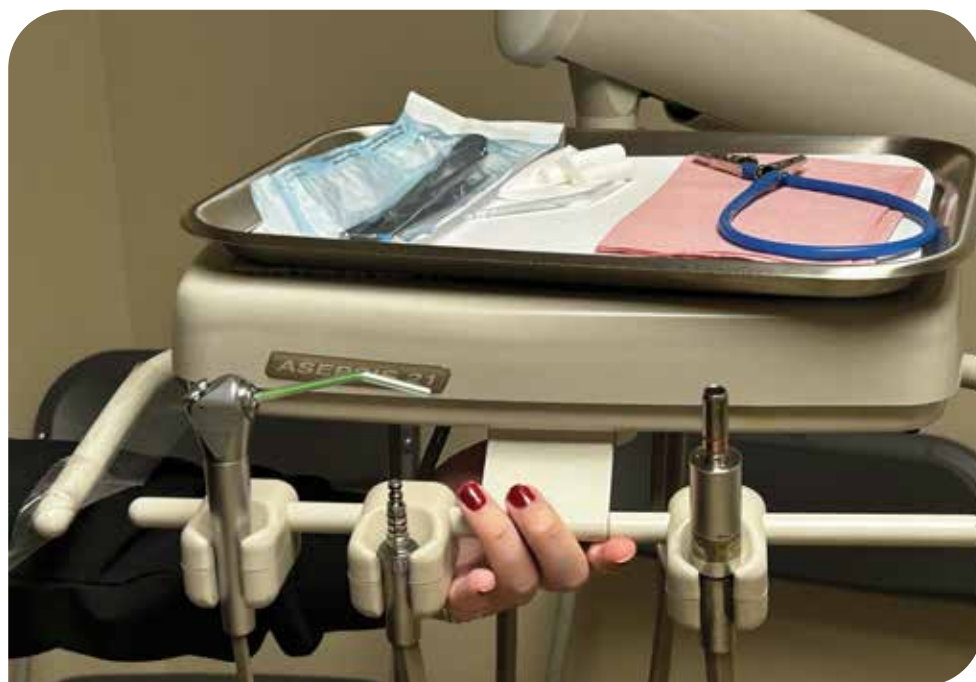


*Sandwiches*



*Kathleen and Guests*

# Dental Clinic Highlight



## *Preparing for a Dental Appointment*

The clinic has had an outstanding year in 2024, providing care to numerous patients thanks to our incredible team of Volunteer Dentists, Dental Hygienists, Dental Assistants, Doctors, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Nurses, and front-end assistants. We are excited to announce that our dental clinic has added root canal treatments to our offerings, while our medical clinic now provides stitches and orthopedic injections.

One of our dental patients came to us after a distressing experience at another office. She was so anxious that she was visibly shaking when we seated her. In addition to her anxiety, she was also in significant pain and had been unable to be seen by any other provider for months. We took the time to reassure her, and our dentist carefully explained each step of her treatment. By the end of her appointment, she was in tears of joy, expressing that our office was the best place she had ever visited.

Another patient was visiting her son when she unexpectedly underwent

surgery. She came to our clinic for post-operative wound care and has been a patient of ours for almost a year. During this time, we have also been managing her blood pressure and diabetes. Despite the language barrier, we have developed a profound, unspoken connection with her. She trusts us completely, and we have become like family to her. Her son often expresses his gratitude, calling us “angels” for the care we have provided his mother.

Our volunteers leave each day filled with gratitude for the work they do for our patients. It can be difficult to determine who is happier—the patients or the volunteers themselves. We are committed to continuing our support for this community, as the need is great. We believe that we could achieve even more for those we serve if we had additional providers for our clinic. **If you can volunteer your dental or medical provider services, please call 315-961-3067 to speak with Teresa.**

Teresa Metallo  
Clinic Manager

## CALLING ALL DENTISTS, DENTAL ASSISTANTS AND PHYSICIANS

We are in need of volunteers for one 4 hour shift a month. Call 315-961-3067 for more information! YOU and YOUR TALENTS can make a difference in the lives of our guests!

### SERVICES AND

### PROGRAMMING STATS

Jan. 1, 2024 – Dec. 31, 2024

#### 1. MEAL SERVICE:

Unique Households served:	965
Meals served:	111,653

2. FOOD PANTRY: 944

3. CASE MANAGEMENT: 936

#### 4. CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES:

In-house & Take-Home:	1,308
Back to School:	154
Christmas:	205
Winter Coats:	40

#### 5. CLINIC VISITS:

Dental:	356
Medical:	448

#### VOLUNTEERS TOTALS:

Volunteer Hours:	11,825
Adult Volunteers:	150
Student Volunteers:	45



# Donor List

January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024  
Thank you, Contributors and Foundations

## In-kind Donations

With gratitude we acknowledge all those who offered in-kind donations to Emmaus Ministry in the past year. These important gifts of goods and services allow us to save money by using our budgets elsewhere in our ministry. Whether you donated food, a handmade gift, participated in purchasing items from our Amazon Wish Lists or participated in our Children's Christmas program – your gift made a difference in the lives of those we serve.

– Thank you.

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Mother Cabrini Health Foundation  
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The Richard Mather Fund

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Michael and Lynn Madden  
Anonymous

## 2021 Dental/Medical Clinic Campaign

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## In Honor of

**Sheila Austin**  
 Reverend John Manno  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Russell  
 Mr. John Young  
**Sheila Austin's 70th Birthday**  
 Reverend John Manno  
**Joyce Bressette**  
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**50th wedding anniversary**  
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**Monsignor Robert Yeazel**  
 Reverend John Manno  
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 Ms. Karen Hamel

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**Richard Alden**  
 Mrs. Rita Beard  
**Chester Bartkowski**  
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Holy Family Church  
**Christmas Meal**  
Mr. & Mrs. John Brusa, Jr.

## Tithing

### Lent

Mr. & Mrs. John Brusa, Jr.  
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church

### Easter

Church of the Immaculate  
Conception

### Christmas

Church of the Immaculate  
Conception  
Holy Cross School

### Christmas

**Giving Tree Program**  
Church of the Immaculate  
Conception

# 2024 Highlights

## EXPANSION

- Outreach Center Expansion Opened in May 2024

## MEAL SERVICE

- Expanded Meal Service Hours from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm

## SECURITY

- Onsite Security Agent During Meal Service Hours

## BUSINESS

- Developed Business Plan Presentation

## NEW HIRES

- Director of Meal Service and Clinic Manager Assistant Hired

## PRAYER

- Developed Pastoral Prayer Group for Men & Women with Fr. John Rose

## RETREATS

- Held Annual Volunteer Retreat Day in January

## COMMUNITY

- Hosted Numerous Open Houses and Community Visits/Tours

## SERVICE GROUPS

- Welcomed 11 New Service Groups

## PRESENTATIONS

- Participated in 6 Off-site Presentations

## A Year In Review

2024 was a momentous year for Emmaus Ministry. Our expansion literally opened doors for some wonderful new developments. We were able to increase our Meal Service hours to welcome more guests in a much larger dining area. This allowed guests a safe space to gather, share a meal, socialize, visit during inclement weather, and be among friends. It also served as our monthly Grocery Bag Distribution site. As this program continues to grow, the new space has given our Coordinator and volunteers more room to distribute grocery bags to our guests. Fr. John Rose created a prayer group for the men and women at Emmaus. A lovely space to gather for Pastoral Care ministry.

Our Children's Activities Program also benefitted greatly. Throughout the year our Children's Coordinator hosted bi-monthly, in-house programs

where children gathered to read, learn, create projects, and use their imaginations in a warm and supportive environment. It served as the site for our successful Children's Backpack Distribution and the Children's Christmas Program.

We hosted Open Houses in our Outreach Center and welcomed many guests for tours of our new space. These included a visit to our downstairs addition which houses the supplies for our Children's Program, the area which serves as our Grocery Bag Distribution center, storing all the non-perishable food items and basic care needs, and storage of stock for the dental and medical clinic.

Lastly, a beautiful conference room with Wi-Fi access allows for staff and board meetings, and additional space to gather when meeting with community members.

We are incredibly grateful to the benefactors, foundations, architects, contractors, and board members who made this dream a reality.



*Back to school giveaway*



# Children's Activity Program Spotlight

"All kids need is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them." This quote by Magic Johnson rings true for all children but especially for children who live in tougher circumstances. The Emmaus Children's Program tries to provide that help and hope to the children and families in the 13205-zip code through fun, interactive, and meaningful activities during Meal Service two Saturdays a month. We started out doing puzzles and crafts with a handful of children. This past year we had a few

hundred that participated in our various programs! We provide the children with a safe, supportive environment where they work collaboratively on projects and engage in structured play. These activities encourage creativity, problem-solving skills, and imagination while also building self-confidence and pride in themselves and their work. When they receive support from us and truly believe in themselves, they begin to feel hope and hope is critical for the children of Emmaus.

Our Children's Program also puts intentional focus on building self-esteem. We provide lessons, books and activities on feelings, health, good habits, nutrition, and self-love. We reinforce school topics like reading, STEM, and history while trying to instill a love of learning. We ensure that the children are ready for school with our back-to-school program which provides necessities like backpacks, school supplies, socks, underwear, and even sneakers. We provide activities and projects that promote independence, creativity, problem-solving and a sense of accomplishment. We

embrace the diverse backgrounds of the children that come to the center through our different cultural celebrations, and we provide a large collection of very diverse selections for our book giveaways. The children feel seen, heard and accepted at Emmaus. This helps them feel proud of who they are. When they believe in themselves and their abilities, they can have hope for a better future for themselves and their families.

My hope for our program is that our generous donors continue to see the positive impact we have on the amazing youngsters who come to Emmaus. Our families can feel the love we offer, and they come to us with gratitude for all they receive in a peaceful and non-judgmental environment. Their time spent at Emmaus shows both the children and adults that there is a light that shines in each of them and that they have the potential to be better than their current situation. If they know they have support and believe in their potential, they are able to have hope for a better tomorrow.

Nancy Gorman (Volunteer)  
Coordinator of Children's  
Activities



*Dental hygiene day*



*Creativity Day*



*Empowering our youth*

# Emmaus at a Glimpse

## Volunteer Health Care



*Vision Screening by Aurora of CNY*



*Dr. Revercomb*



*Dr. Mason, Medical Director*



*St. Marianne Cope Health Services Center*



*Dr. Michael Fallon IV*

## Restoring Dignity





## Meeting Them At Their Level

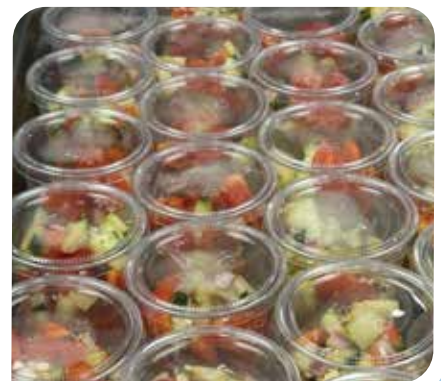


## Special Day

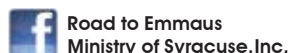


*All guests' birthdays celebrated*

## Feeding the Hungry



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**MISSION STATEMENT**

*A comprehensive faith-based outreach ministry providing sustenance while bringing Christ's presence to the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable in Syracuse.*

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- Dental & Medical Clinic
- Meal Preparation
- Meal Distribution
- Organizing
- Food Pantry
- Children's Activities

## COLLECT ITEMS OF NEED

- Bar Soap
- Diapers & wipes
- Deodorant
- Paper Towels
- Razors
- Shampoo
- Toilet Paper
- Toothpaste & Toothbrushes

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- Monetary Donations
- Monthly "Angel" Donors
- Gift cards – Wegmans & BJ's