

# DIALOG

A publication of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

Winter 2011

## Oakland resident opens heart and home to seniors

■ Daisy Graham had two things she wanted to accomplish before she passed away. One was to ride an elephant in the circus and the other was to steer a boat.

One wish did come true for Graham before she died in September at the age of 101. Thanks to Oakland, Md., resident Lew Wheeler, who has a property and boat on Deep Creek Lake, Graham took to the helm of Wheeler's pontoon boat and enjoyed a scenic tour of the lake.

Graham, along with other clients of Diakon Adult Day Services at Mountain Glade, enjoyed the day at the lake, which included lunch, bingo, and a boat ride. Wheeler has opened his home several times in the past so that the Mountain Glade participants could create special memories.

"I enjoy doing things for others and have invited groups to my home a number of times," says Wheeler. "Many of the folks at the adult day center have never had the chance to be on a boat or at a lake and I wanted to give them the opportunity to experience something new."

To coordinate the events, Wheeler works with a group of local volunteers, including Suzanne Nicolas, Joanne and Harold Harsh, Rick and Donna Broadwater, and Peggy Davies. "These generous individuals give up their time to purchase and prepare food, buy prizes for bingo, and put together gift baskets for each of the guests," explains Wheeler. "They deserve all the credit because they handle all of the preparations for the day."

Diakon Adult Day Services provides daytime assistance and care, allowing older persons or those with disabilities to remain in their community as long as possible. The program offers an alternative to placement in a long-term nursing care center, at the same time providing respite for family caregivers.

Ann Glotfelty, Mountain Glade activities director, says participants look forward to their visit with Wheeler and appreciate his generosity. "We went twice this year and are hoping to go one more time. Our clients keep asking me when we are going back to Lew's home. They have such a great time."

Anna Upperman, a center participant, really enjoys the lake trip. "I like going to Lew's because we have a lot of fun," she says. "I enjoy the boat ride and playing bingo. I like the fellowship we have with everyone." Participant Mary Keefer agrees: "I enjoy going. It's a lot of fun. He is so nice; everyone is nice."

Wheeler gains as much satisfaction from giving to others as the participants get from their visit. "It is a fun day for all involved," he says. "The Mountain Glade group is so nice.

It is so rewarding to give back." ■



Lew Wheeler, donor and friend of Diakon, shares his home with Diakon Adult Day Services clients.

*'It's so rewarding to give back.'*

*Daisy Graham, Diakon Adult Day Services client, takes the controls of a speed boat during a picnic sponsored by Lew Wheeler. Diakon would like to express condolences to the family of Daisy Graham due to her recent passing.*



# OUR MISSION

In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries will demonstrate God's command to love the neighbor through acts of service.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries is a leading provider of senior living accommodations and social services, including adoption, counseling, home care, and youth programs in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. With many hands and one heart, Diakon staff members each year touch the lives of more than half-a-million children, families, and older adults. We are proud to continue a nearly 150-year tradition of hospitality and care for people of all faiths.

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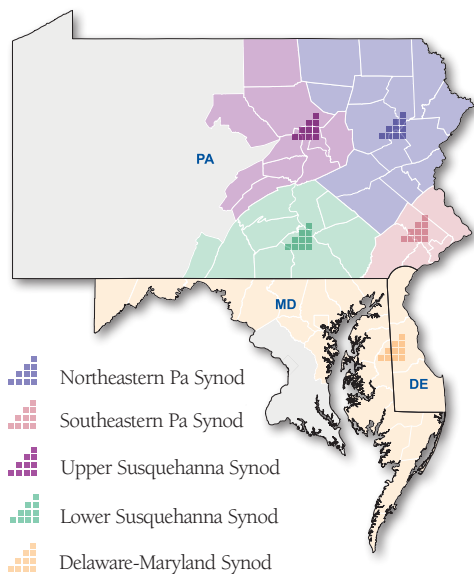
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# THE PRESIDENT'S DIALOG



Mark T. Pile, MSHA, MSW,  
 Diakon President/CEO

As I write this just before Thanksgiving, we are approaching days of waiting and anticipation!

In the midst of all manner of "busy-ness" that the Advent/Christmas season brings to us, we celebrate the gift of "God with us." May that gift of the Christ child continue to renew our hope as we move into the future that God sets before us.

By the time you will have received *Dialog*, you may have read news about Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries in relation to billing issues with our hospice program.

During an internal compliance review, we discovered that documentation for some hospice patients, who represented a small percentage of our overall hospice census, did not adequately comply with the complex regulations associated with federal Medicare reimbursement for hospice care. We therefore provided care and services to some hospice patients who did not qualify for Medicare coverage. For that reason, we had to repay the government for the services we provided.

I want to emphasize several key points:

- These issues occurred only within our hospice program and only with a small percentage of clients.
- When we discovered the potential issues, we voluntarily contacted federal officials to alert them and were accepted into the government's voluntary program for repayment.
- This voluntary action underscores our commitment to doing the right thing always.
- We restructured our compliance program to be in alignment with recent government emphases.

Nevertheless, the last year has been an especially challenging time for us and I want to express to you my personal regret that this situation arose. I also want to assure you that Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries remains financially strong and that we look forward to continuing to offer excellent services to our neighbors in need.

While in no way diminishing the seriousness of the payment issue, I want to emphasize the tendency of such issues to overshadow the wonderful other things occurring in organizations such as Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries.

For example, we will shortly hold a recognition ceremony for numerous youths who, through our Diakon Youth Services scholarship fund, have attended college or trade schools. Having been served by a variety of our programs, these young people present a stellar example of those who, with needed guidance and support, put their lives back on the right path, taking full advantage of all that education can provide.

A number of those youths participate in our Flight program—whose members volunteer to take part in Flight to gain guidance and mentoring as they transition into young adulthood, but also to be able to give back. Flight participants, for example, have spent time volunteering for Pine Grove Furnace State Park, the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater—which involves sailing the Hudson River and teaching third- and fourth-graders about the environment—the American Red Cross, the national park service, and Habitat for Humanity.

And that's just one small example of the amazing service offered each day by the staff members of this organization. Many of you support those efforts through your prayers, volunteer efforts, and dollars.

In this holy season, I ask for your continued support and prayers as, together, we form the Many Hands and One Heart of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries transforming the lives of children, families, and older adults.



# Children with disabilities lose training wheels, gain pride and confidence

■ Kathi Eichman knows firsthand how difficult it can be to teach bike-riding to children with developmental disabilities.

Eichman, manager with Diakon Family Life Services—Northeastern Pennsylvania, repeatedly tried to teach her daughter, who has Down syndrome, to ride. This activity ended unsuccessfully each time. “She gets on it, gets her picture taken, and never gets on it again,” says Eichman.

As a result, the family has a shed full of bikes of all shapes and sizes.

Learning to ride a bike is a rite of passage for most children. But for people with developmental disabilities, it can be an overwhelming task. They often have physical apprehensions along with difficulties with balance, coordination, and learning.

An innovative program, Lose the Training Wheels™, addresses these issues by introducing bike-riding in a non-threatening way. In five days or less, children, youths, and others are taught to balance, pedal, and steer a conventional bike with the use of specialized training equipment.

Impressed with the program, Eichman knew she wanted to involve Diakon Family Life Services in the effort with a goal of reaching more people in need.

She made that connection in 2010, with a partnership with the Eastern Pennsylvania Down Syndrome Center taking shape this summer.

“It has proved to be a huge success in the two years it has been offered in the Greater Lehigh Valley not only in terms of what the kids have accomplished, but also in the number of people who have participated in and volunteered for Lose the Training Wheels,” she says.

One such volunteer, Brian Sherry, returned this year to help to inspire the kids. Sherry, an avid cyclist and instructor, finds that volunteering is a rewarding experience. “I see what the kids and families get out of this. It opens up a new world of enjoyment and freedom for them.”

Lose the Training Wheels is about more than teaching people with disabilities to ride a bike. It also provides participants with a sense of confidence, helping them to gain assurance and self-reliance in many other aspects of their lives.

“A program like this gives kids a sense of achievement and attainment. It gives them the courage to go on and try other things,” says Steve Mould, whose son, Kyle, participated in the program.

Like Eichman, Mould tried many times to teach 16-year-old Kyle, who is diagnosed with autism and Down syndrome, to a ride a bicycle—with no success. “It’s been frustrating,” he says.

By the fourth day of the program, however, Kyle was not only balancing and stopping his bike, but also rounding corners like a pro.

“I’ve been a police officer for 22 years and I’ve seen a lot,” says Mould.

But when I saw him on two wheels yesterday, it was absolutely amazing.”

*Lose the Training Wheels Floor Supervisor, A.J. Budney, runs beside 13-year-old Kelsey Anthony as she prepares for her first solo ride.*

## While children learn to ride bikes, program volunteers learn more about life, themselves

Emotions and adrenaline ran high throughout the week as volunteers worked with Lose the Training Wheels participants. They laughed, they cried—and they did a lot of running. But they never gave up on themselves or the kids, which proved to be a life-changing experience for many of them.

*Here’s what some volunteers had to say:*

*“Seeing both the struggle of riding a bike (at the beginning of the week) and the progress made as the week went on makes me question how many times I say ‘I can’t’ when I really can!”* —Anonymous volunteer

*“This is my first year doing this and I absolutely love it! The smiles on the kids’ and parents’ faces are priceless. I’ve always wanted to work with kids when I’m older, and this week made me finally realize these are the kinds of kids I want to work with!”* —Angela DeCaprio

*“I really learned a lot this week. It made me think about ‘when to hold on and when to let go’ in so many different aspects of my own life!”* —Anonymous volunteer

*“I really enjoyed seeing and being part of the progress that the kids made during the week. It changed me and made me realize how much I underestimated the abilities of these kids.”* —Jake Pacheco

Lose the Training Wheels is subsidized by foundations, corporations, and individual donors so that the program is affordable to families. Lead sponsors for this year’s event were IronPigs Charities and Bike Line Cycling stores. ■

📍 To support, participate in, or volunteer for next year’s event, contact Diakon Family Life Services at (610) 682-3700 or via email at [fls@diakon.org](mailto:fls@diakon.org).



# Sometimes families can be found where you least expect them

■ Seventeen-year-old George wanted more than anything to be adopted. Living in four foster homes since he was less than a year old, he longed for permanency and a sense of belonging.

With his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday quickly approaching, he was about to “age out” of the foster care system without support to transition into adulthood. “I’ve been waiting to be adopted for a long time,” he says simply.

George is just one of the approximately 25,000 U.S. teenagers who annually face similar situations—leaving them vulnerable to homelessness, depression, lack of education, incarceration, and early parenting.

Unfortunately George’s situation was even more complex as he is autistic and has additional special needs.

Fortunately, he was referred to Family Finders, a program of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care’s DiaKINnections service. The program uses many avenues to develop a

support system for older youths. Acting as “private detectives,” family finders seek out people involved in youths’ past to gauge their appropriateness and willingness to support them in the future.

“A single support person in a youth’s life increases a young person’s chances of success by 200 percent,” says Heather Gillette, child-prep and profile specialist. “That says it all.”

Support can range from contacting the youth on a regular basis via email, phone calls, and mail, visiting in person, or helping with such tasks as banking.

Joshua Lieb, child-specific recruitment specialist and family finder, paged through stacks of George’s files and came across a former guidance counselor—Kim Price—who showed interest in George’s life when he was living with a former foster family. She and her partner, Sue Schwartz, spent time taking him to sporting events and other special outings.

“I researched all the schools George had attended and found out where she worked and contacted her. She cried on the phone the first time I talked to her,” says Lieb.

Because of privacy laws, Price and Schwartz had lost contact with George when he moved to another foster home. Before his move, they had attempted to adopt him but were misinformed that a foster family had been assigned permanent guardianship. For the past three years, they had struggled with their loss, attending grief counseling and continuing to wonder about George.

“Because we didn’t know where he was, when Sue and I would go to Walmart or Target, we hoped to spot him. When Josh called me that day, I just cried. I was scared, too. As much as I wanted this, I didn’t want him ripped from us again,” says Price.

She had met George when he was just a fourth-grader. Schwartz—a life skills teacher who was a substitute at the time—met him shortly thereafter.

“The first time I looked at him, I fell in love with him—he was three feet tall, cute as a button with mischievous eyes,” says Price. Schwartz and Price just knew he was meant to be part of their family.

Having been contacted, they re-declared their intent to adopt him, making George’s story a happy one. The adoption will be finalized this winter.

“He truly trusts Kim and Sue and looks to them for support as he learns about things,” such as his birth family and the events that led to his initial placement in foster care, says Gillette. “It’s clear that he feels safe with them.”

“I can’t imagine life without him now,” says Schwartz. “He belongs here.”

“He was the missing puzzle piece,” adds Price. “We call Diakon our angels because they brought him back to us.”

Now for the first time in his life, George knows he has a family to stand by his side. He laughs with excitement when he talks about getting his first real bedroom set and preparing for a birthday party.

“I am so excited and happy to have a family. Kim and Sue are awesome,” he says as he blows his parents kisses. “I waited for this for a long time. I have a real future. I might go to trade school and even get married someday if I meet the right girl.”

“This will change his life forever,” says Lieb. “In this case, non-family members came forward with the ultimate support for him. That just goes to show you that ‘family’ comes in many forms.” ■

## Dialog Digest

### Diakon hears of potential impact of health-care reform

Diakon Lutheran Social Services of South Central Pennsylvania, and Luthercare recently co-sponsored an educational session by nationally known health-care expert James E. Orlikoff. The event, attended by more than 100 people, examined the potential impact on the organizations of federal health-care reform legislation.

The changes will have an impact on non-profit organizations that provide both Medicare- and Medicaid-funded services, said Orlikoff; those organizations need to spend time preparing for changes and investigating various affiliations.

Orlikoff was named one of the 100 most powerful people in health care in the inaugural list by Modern Healthcare magazine. He leads a consulting firm specializing in health-care governance and leadership, strategy, quality, organizational development, and risk management.



By your support and donations you can help Diakon Adoption & Foster Care touch the lives of children in need. Your gifts provide financial assistance to help subsidize families’ adoption fees or provide necessary personal care items and clothing for foster children and youths.

Not Actual Photo



## Clock tower says “home” to those who live there

■ For more than a century, the clock tower on Old Main at The Lutheran Home at Topton has loomed over the small Berks County town and the rolling fields that surround it.

The tower has meant many things to many people: A focal point of the town, a directional indicator for those who may be lost, and “home” to hundreds of people.

Founded in 1896, The Lutheran Home at Topton was established to provide care and accommodations for children who had lost one or both parents. Many of the children who lived there originally came from loving homes, while others, particularly in later years, were admitted to escape dysfunctional families and deplorable living conditions.

Today, The Lutheran Home at Topton is a Diakon senior living community and also serves as the site for several Diakon programs for children and families.

Yet, despite such changes, one thing remains constant—the clock tower.

“It has been a focal point for the community. Everybody knows it,” says Launette Brewer, a previous resident of the children’s home. “For us, it marked our home. We could see it from anywhere.”

This summer, alumni of The Lutheran Home at Topton returned to celebrate the institution’s 115<sup>th</sup> anniversary, tour the top floors of Old Main, and visit with old friends.

Because access to the clock tower is considered unsafe, it and the bell located in the tower were not available for viewing.

“It’s unfortunate that people didn’t get to see the bell. The orphans etched their names on

it. Many of the orphans who have come back to visit over the years have asked to go up to the clock tower just to see their name,” says Sue Lippy, Diakon vice president for Home & Community-Based Services. “I hope we can make the bell available for viewing through the restoration of the building.”

Currently, \$130,000 is available through distributions from a trust fund established by William and Twila Sote, long-time residents of The Lutheran Home at Topton, to restore the clock tower. However, additional funding is necessary to cover the total cost of \$200,000.

“Funding is needed to repair the clock tower, chimes, and bell,” says Joie Barry, Diakon major gifts and planned giving officer.

Over the years, many of the children served at The Lutheran Home at Topton have found ways to “pay it forward” by volunteering or donating, as Brewer has done. They realize the importance of keeping memories of their childhood alive and encourage others to do the same.

After all, says Brewer, this was a place that created many memories for hundreds of children, memories still important to them. “When people ask where I’m from, I tell them I’m from Topton,” says Brewer. “It’s the only home I’ve ever known.” ■

💡 *Support for renovations to the clock tower is still needed. If you would like to contribute to the fund, please contact Joie Barry at [barryj@diakon.org](mailto:barryj@diakon.org) or (610) 682-1254.*

## Former orphan builds replica of Topton

Donald Gum, a resident of The Lutheran Home at Topton for 15 years, wanted to keep memories of the children’s home intact.

Fifteen years ago, Gum’s sons gave him a kit to build a miniature village. It turned out so well that Gum was inspired to build a miniature replica of the orphanage’s Old Main building, including the clock tower. Construction of the model, which took two years, was based on Gum’s memory and vintage photos.



*Donald Gum stands beside the detailed replicas of the various buildings of the orphanage that he constructed by hand. The models are kept under glass for their protection.*

“It shows what the home was like when I was there,” says Gum. In 2003, Gum drove the replica from his current home in Gulfport, Miss., to be dedicated at the 107<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Lutheran Home at Topton. It is now permanently housed in Old Main.

## Grandson of orphanage superintendent shares memories

The grandson of a former superintendent and matron of The Lutheran Home at Topton was a featured guest at the recent 115<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the former children’s home.

Frank Henry of Dallas, Pa., spoke to 160 alumni, their family members, and friends who gathered to celebrate the anniversary. Grandson of the Rev. Dr. J.O. and Ida Henry, a former superintendent and matron of the home, Frank Henry remembers hearing a whistle as the train passed nearby when he visited his grandparents at the orphanage.

Even now, more than 50 years later, the sound of a train whistle brings back good memories of his time with his grandparents.

In 1909, J.O. Henry, his wife, and three children moved to the home, which they served for 37 years before retiring in 1945. They were strict people who expected the children and youths to work hard, live wholesome lives, and have a strong faith in God. The children attended church twice daily and had assigned chores to do.

The boys and girls were separated most of the time, but would sometimes meet at a rock, going against the Henry’s expectations. Yet as strict as the Henrys were, they also showed the orphans what it meant to be loved. “They taught it and they meant it,” says Frank Henry today.



*Frank and Dottie Henry, left, pause for a photo with Diakon President and CEO, Mark Pile, and his wife, Susan, on the porch of Old Main.*



## Summer jobs offer students means of restitution, sense of pride

■ ■ ■ “When I got my first check, it made me feel proud,” says Angel Gonzalez. “I didn’t have to rely on my parents anymore. I could rely on myself.”

Landing your first paying job is a big deal for anyone. But for some Lancaster County youths, this newfound sense of responsibility has gone a long way to putting their lives back on track.

Thanks to a \$95,000 two-year grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, students enrolled in Diakon’s Turning Point Evening Reporting Center in Lancaster gained valuable summer work experience while also benefiting the Diakon Wilderness Center, Boiling Springs.

Hired as Diakon employees, the youths completed an entire job-application process including interviews and background checks.

“They went through all the things an employee must go through to be hired,” says Tanisha Negron-Bailey, supervisor. “Many of them didn’t have work experience. Now, once they are released from Turning Point, they can put Diakon down as a prior employer.”

Each day the young men, ages 14 and older, spent five hours mowing grass, painting, and doing other labor to reduce the financial obligations they have to the court system, while also gaining an appreciation for hard work.

“They’re students who owe large amounts of money to juvenile probation,” says Ron Davis, who oversees southeast region programs for Diakon Youth Services. “This program gives them a chance to pay that off.”

The financial incentive made a big difference to Gonzalez, 17. In addition to putting money in an

escrow account to pay court costs, he helped his mother and purchased school supplies. The pride he felt was evident in the way he approached his job, says Negron-Bailey.

“From Day 1, he was the most enthusiastic of all the participants. You could see real pride in his work,” she says. “He didn’t complain. He was always ready for the next task.”

By the time the program ended, the students had completed 242 work-hours and earned nearly \$2,000, a good start for a program Diakon hopes to expand next year and begin earlier, says Davis.

“I was really pleased with what we accomplished in such a short period of time,” he says.



*Angel Gonzalez prepares to do yard work as part of the Turning Point Summer Work Program offered by Diakon.*

“You could see a real change in the students as they recognized the work as a job. They were receptive to employment and the responsibility that comes with it.” ■ ■

♥ *The Diakon Wilderness Center depends on your generous giving to continue making a remarkable difference in the lives of at-risk young men. Please use the enclosed envelope to help.*



*Chou Gabikiny*

## Degree completion made possible by Diakon scholarship

■ ■ ■ Chou Gabikiny, a 2010 Diakon Youth Scholarship recipient, now holds an undergraduate degree in her hand and Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries in her heart.

“I wanted to go back to school and complete my degree, but I didn’t have the money to pay for it,” she says.

Gabikiny talked with a Diakon Family Life Services staff member, who suggested the scholarship fund.

“These funds are made possible by generous donors such as the Charles Merritt Singer Memorial Trust,” says Corey Carothers, Diakon Youth Services administrator, who oversees the program. The fund is open to any youth ages 16 to 24 who has been served by a Diakon program.

Since the fund was created two years ago, approximately 40 scholarships have been awarded. Awards can be up to \$5,000.

Gabikiny’s scholarship underwrote 12 credits, or four courses.

“The generosity of Diakon made it possible for me to complete my education, earn my bachelor’s degree, and graduate summa cum laude,” she says.

“As a result of their circumstances, some applicants are eligible for significant federal and state aide; however, they often do not have money for things such as books, a computer, and room and board,” says Carothers.

The use of scholarship funds for ancillary expenses can sometimes make all the difference in educational pursuits, he adds. “Many of the youths have little hope of ever obtaining education or training beyond high school. Because this scholarship comes from a place applicants often have fond feelings about, it brings them hope and encouragement that they can indeed succeed with post-secondary education or training. This fund has become one of the most significant ways Diakon can support the growth and development of young people.”

Gabikiny is a perfect example of how the scholarship fosters positive change in the futures of young adults.

Now with a bachelor’s degree in multidisciplinary studies with concentrations in business, psychology, and Christian counseling from Liberty University, she wants to work in the human services or non-profit fields to give back to others.

“I am so grateful to Diakon for offering me the scholarship. When so many had given up on me, Diakon and its staff believed I could complete my degree and succeed,” she says. “With their help and encouragement, I did. And I can’t thank them enough!” ■ ■

## Chaplains aid grieving children at summer camp

**Kerri Wadzita is no stranger to summer camps.** Having spent her last few summers working at camps in Florida and Iowa, she knows about campfires, cabins, and kids. But the thought of attending Camp Evergreen—a three-day two-night Diakon camp for children and youths who had lost a loved one—left her with butterflies in her stomach.

“I was a little nervous because I did not have previous experience with children who are grieving significant losses in their lives,” says Wadzita, summer chaplain at Cumberland Crossings, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Carlisle, Pa., and second-year student at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

The butterflies quickly fluttered away as she and five other chaplains assisted with the recent Camp Evergreen as part of Diakon’s Clinical Pastoral Education program. Diakon’s CPE program provides training and hands-on experience for chaplains and others offering ministry, under guidelines developed by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education.

“In the world of professional chaplaincy there are standards,” says the Rev. Rhoda Toperzer of Diakon and an ACPE supervisor. “CPE is one requirement toward becoming a board-certified chaplain.”

The Camp Evergreen experience is an essential facet of the CPE process, says the Rev. Colleen Kristula, chaplain with Diakon



*Kerri Wadzita, left, helps a camper use the low ropes during trust-building exercises.*

Hospice Saint John, which offers the yearly Camp Evergreen. The camp “provides hands-on experience in bereavement support, which is a critical skill of the pastorate for which CPE students are preparing,” says Kristula. “The chaplains did an awesome job with the campers!”

Side-by-side with other camp volunteers, the chaplains assisted with crafts, enjoyed time with the campers, offered prayer, and participated in activities such as hiking and singing.

“We all worked together,” says Wadzita. “We took walks to the creek. We helped the kids with a craft in which the kids broke a clay pot, glued the pieces back together, and painted it. They were told that the pot was like their heart. It may have some scars on it, but it is still beautiful.”

Wadzita also spent time with a camper who appeared to be socially isolated by other campers. At appropriate times, she sat with the camper and did what chaplains do—listened to him, tried to understand how he felt at that moment, and offered understanding.

“My encounters with this camper helped to illustrate to me the ways I am able to love others ... because of how God loves each of us and how far love and patience can go in building relationships,” says Wadzita. “I will hold on to this experience as I continue my seminary education.” ■

💡 *Camp Evergreen depends on the generosity of donors and volunteers to bring hope and healing to children who grieve the loss of a loved one. Gifts can be made at [www.diakon.org](http://www.diakon.org) or by using the enclosed envelope.*



## Your generosity is appreciated

💡 *In 2011, Diakon will provide approximately \$14 million in benevolent care to the people we serve. We need your continued support to provide that level of care to people in your community with limited financial resources.*

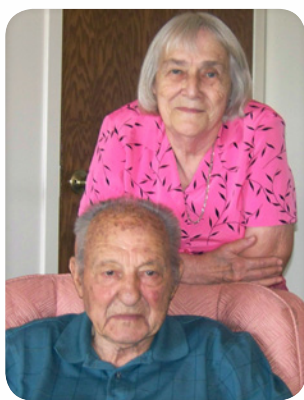
*Most of the Diakon services depicted in Dialog provide benevolent care in a variety of ways. Diakon depends now more than ever on generous donations from corporations, synods, congregations, and individuals to enable it to serve so many people.*

*You can join us in making a difference in the lives of people in need. Simply use the blue envelope in this issue of Dialog or log onto our web site’s convenient and secure donation form to make your gift.*

*For further information on how you can support one or more of Diakon’s ministries, please call the Office of Development at 1-877- DIAKON-7, option 2, extension 21219, or visit [www.diakon.org](http://www.diakon.org). Thank you.*



## Retirement = A full + busy life



*Roger and Marie Rose*

■ ■ ■ For some people, retirement is a time to kick back and relax. For others, such as Roger Rose, the end of a professional career is the beginning of the next “big thing.”

For the 89-year-old resident of Frey Village, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Middletown, Pa., that next big thing was painting—paintings of houses, barns, landscapes, and the roses he and his wife, Marie, 85, had grown around their home.

“He told me one day that he had bought 50 dollars’ worth of paint and brushes,” says Mrs. Rose. “He had never picked up a paint brush, never taken a lesson.”

After retiring from Agway in 1984, Rose says he knew he couldn’t just sit around. And so over the next 20 years, he completed some 900 paintings. Many of them went to family

members and friends, but many sold at arts and crafts shows, at which he and Mrs. Rose, a talented craftsperson, became well-known.

“I grew up on a dairy farm doing everything by hand,” Rose says. “Painting took a lot of time, but I painted only what I like to see.”

In addition to painting, he spent years cultivating roses—smiling at the obvious connection of the pastime with his last name—even selling the rights to one of his creations, a butterscotch rose.

Before painting filled his days, he had been an avid stamp collector, acquiring stamps from around the world. Now he makes hand-painted greeting cards, mostly for friends and family, and he and Mrs. Rose volunteer at Frey Village.

“Roger and Marie are so friendly, it puts people at ease,” says Heidi Murray, senior living activities coordinator. “They are always willing to help—and always with a smile.” ■ ■ ■



*Some of the artwork created  
by Roger Rose.*

