

# DIALOG

A publication of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

Winter 2010

## Group sets sail for a brighter tomorrow Flight participants embark on educational adventure at sea

■ ■ ■ Memories of long days, gentle waves, hot decks, and sore muscles will be forever etched in the memories of four young men who sailed the Hudson River during a “Young Men at the Helm” three-day adventure.

The men, participants in the Flight Program at the Diakon Wilderness Center near Boiling Springs, Pa., spent three days on board the 106-foot-long sloop, *Clearwater*. “They spent all day on the boat and we camped on shore each night,” explains Rob Kivlan, Flight Program supervisor. “It was a working trip. It took a lot of effort to stay alert and focused.”

“It was hard,” recalls Chris Chilton, 20, of Philadelphia. “We had to lift a 3,000-pound sail.”

Chilton says he learned that carrying the weight in sailing, as in life, is a group effort. “We all had a part to do. I had to learn my part,” Chilton says. “If somebody messed up, the whole team messed up.”

The *Clearwater* first set sail in 1969 and was one of the first vessels in the United States to conduct environmental education aboard ship. Since then, more than half-a-million youngsters and hundreds of thousands of adults have participated in studying estuary ecosystems aboard the ship, according to Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.

“Each day they threw out a net and caught fish and spent the day identifying and learning about fish,” Kivlan explains. “The point of the trip was to get the kids out of their comfort zone and expose them to something new, to expose them to different people and a different environment.”

The Diakon Wilderness Center annually serves more than 1,000 youths from across Pennsylvania referred by county children and youth services and juvenile probation offices.

The Flight Program, however, is a voluntary program for young men previously aided by youth services, such as those at the wilderness center, who now seek mentoring and supportive help to become successful, productive citizens.

“It was an amazing trip,” says Flight participant Eddie Osowski, 18, of Lancaster. “We hiked up a one-and-a-half-mile cliff. The view of the Hudson River was amazing.”

A student at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology and a stand-up comedian who performs across Pennsylvania, Chilton said the trip definitely took him out of his comfort zone. “The deck was hot. I started looking at the water and getting dizzy and light-headed,” he recalls. “But I got through it.”

Chilton says now that he has his sea legs, he’d definitely go back on board if given the opportunity. “It taught me to get along with people I wouldn’t have otherwise met. I learned lots of new things.” ■ ■ ■



Flight participant Eddie Osowski shows off a crab that was caught by the group.

💛 Funds are needed to help keep the Flight Program operational as grant funds diminish. Please consider supporting this life-changing program.

# 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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### Carolyn L. Doerr

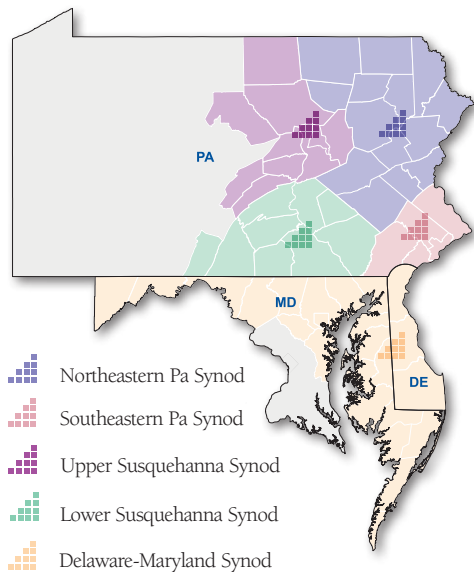
Director of Internal Communications & Publications, editor  
 (610) 682-1292 • doerrc@diakon.org

### Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

798 Hausman Road, Suite 300  
 Allentown, PA 18104-9108  
 1-877-DIAKON-7 • www.diakon.org

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# THE PRESIDENT'S DIALOG

The two men, garbed in Civil War uniforms, gaze sternly ahead, rigid and imposing. It's difficult to surmise from their expressions, traditional for photography from that era, that this father and son would eventually establish a home to care for orphaned children.

But that is exactly what Colonel John and Captain David Tressler did. Soon, the Lutheran church would purchase their institution, extending the home's legacy of care for children as the Tressler Orphans Home.

Those two portraits occupy a corner of the archives at Diakon's Mechanicsburg, Pa., Ministry Support office. Similar paintings hang in Old Main at The Lutheran Home at Topton, which also began, some decades after the Civil War, as an outreach to orphaned children.

It struck me recently that I am the latest in this long line of people, stretching back to those children's home founders, who have had the privilege to guide this ministry of the church. That honor of shepherding such a storied heritage of care and concern, entrusted to me by our boards of directors nearly a year ago, has been both humbling and gratifying.

While the Tressler and Topton orphanages may be long gone, services to children—as well as to families and older adults—continue, just as they have over the last nearly 150 years despite all sorts of financial and societal challenges. My goal is to make certain that tradition remains unchanged.

Early in my presidency, I set a goal for myself to focus on two key tracks, the first revolving around Diakon's overall strategic initiatives, the second related to organizational relationships.

Our five goals were established early in 2010 through a collaborative process involving a new leadership group consisting of our management team and programmatic executive staff.

Those five goals, on which we have made significant progress over the last 12 months, have served as our priorities. They are:

**Business and Benevolence Sustainability.** This effort involves maintaining efficient and effective business practices that allow us to continue to serve even more people while also providing a level of benevolent care consistent with our mission.

We continue to provide approximately \$1 million a month in care and service for those who have exhausted their financial resources. And our new Diakon Kathryn's Klostet in Baltimore has increased our annual service number to around half-a-million people!

A pivotal part of our strategic efforts involve what we call "repositioning" of our senior living campuses to enable them to continue to be providers-of-choice in their communities. Along those lines, significant expansion continues at Luther Crest in Allentown, an apartment-renovation project is beginning as the first phase of changes at Twining Village in Bucks County, and our capital planning committee is ready to announce plans for significant expansion or renovation efforts at several other senior living communities.

**Integrated Continuum of Care.** There is no question the future demands creative links between senior living communities and community-based services such as those provided by Diakon Help at Home. These links will help us to support, supplement, and enhance our residents' lives.

Already, Diakon Help at Home is provided in several senior living communities; the lives of students at the Diakon Wilderness Center are regularly enhanced by their interaction with residents of several Diakon senior living communities. And a task group continues to meet to develop innovative ways to mesh community-based and residential services.

Program and service growth opportunities in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Diakon seeks



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

necessary growth from two approaches: one, expansion of existing programs into new markets or integration of these services into other programs and, two, potential acquisitions or other forms of affiliations.

This goal was particularly important because it established our service territory as the Mid-Atlantic region; in addition, among growth efforts, we have expanded our hospice and palliative home health services into several new areas served by our senior living communities. And we continue to explore acquisitions or affiliations as long as they make sense in light of our mission and sound business practices.

Organization-wide engagement in fund raising. As noted, Diakon provides more than \$1 million a month in benevolent care. It takes significant resources to do that, meaning we depend on generous donations to help serve those with limited financial resources.

This emphasis seeks greater involvement of senior leadership and our boards of directors in donor relations, as well as staff understanding that the quality care and service they provide and the relationships they develop with those we serve also positively affect our ability to receive financial support.

Refining the Diakon culture. Perhaps our most wide-reaching objective, this goal means that we successfully continue to incorporate throughout Diakon emphases on quality, compliance, safety, and gracious service and hospitality.

The five key parts of our culture are:

- Our mission to serve the neighbor;
- Our values of respect, stewardship, service, and quality;
- Our business purpose of having a sustainable organization that delivers quality services to ever-more people;
- Practices derived from the concept always of “doing the right thing;” and
- Attitudes of shared accountability and openness to new ideas, which we believe are embodied in our *Many Hands. One Heart.* philosophy.

*Continued on Page 6*

## Kathryn's Kloset volunteer pays it forward

■ Lisa Yeager knows firsthand how support from others can touch a life.

“I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason,” says Yeager. “My story and that of Diakon Kathryn's Kloset go hand-in-hand.”

In 1996, just a month and a half after Yeager's husband of 12 years died of cancer—leaving her to rear their 8-year-old son and care for her mother, diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2004—she was gunned down and left for dead.

“I was a manager at Kentucky Fried Chicken. I was closing up one night and as I left with the money, I was shot behind the left ear and the bullet lodged in my brain. He (the robber) took the money bags and just left me lying there. I just kept thinking about my son. He is my pride and joy. He means the world to me. He had already lost his father; I didn't want him to lose me, too,” she says.

Clinging to life, the 34-year-old was bedridden and unable to move or talk. As Yeager recovered, she needed intensive physical, occupational, and speech therapy to tackle even the simplest tasks.

“It was like I was starting out as a baby—only as an adult,” she says.

As soon as word of her tragedy reached the community, she received an outpouring of support.

“There were fundraisers and dances, and churches sold sandwiches. . . There was just so much community love and support. It was incredible, and it means so much to me—it helped me over the long haul.”

Now, after years of therapy, she still suffers from double vision, tremors in her right hand, impaired speech, and balance issues. Although she still can't walk freely and is unable to drive, she has an unconquerable spirit for life, a strong desire to help others, and a sense of humor that makes everyone smile.

“I didn't have a full recovery. I just have to do things differently now. Laughter has gotten me this far and it will continue to do so,” she says.

Giving back to others has also helped her. Recently, through her home congregation—St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Shamokin Dam—Yeager obtained the position of coordinator for the Upper Susquehanna Synod's partnership efforts with Diakon Kathryn's Kloset.

Baltimore-based Diakon Kathryn's Kloset acts as a conduit for corporate gift-in-kind donations by connecting multiple corporate partners with organizations serving those in need. The



*Lisa Yeager at her home.*

program collects, stores, and distributes new and unused products, such as shoes, school materials, cleaning supplies, and personal care items, to non-profit organizations that, in turn, give them free of charge to people in need.

Wade Brown, program executive director, says, “Kathryn's Kloset was formed in honor of my mother. As a practical nurse and a mother of 10, she was an individual always willing to help. She was constantly meeting the needs of the neighborhood's sick. Carrying on her tradition is our goal. Volunteers and staff alike help make this possible.”

In response to Diakon Kathryn's Kloset, the Upper Susquehanna Synod has formed a localized distribution network with sites throughout the synod's territory to make sure goods reach people in need. Since January of this year, about 1,600 families and 4,400 individuals have been assisted with approximately \$36,000 worth of donated items, says Yeager.

“Lisa has embraced our Diakon Kathryn's Kloset efforts with great enthusiasm and passion,” says the Rev. Wayne Muthler, pastor of St. Matthew. “She continues to secure shipments from Baltimore, organize volunteers, and coordinate the distribution of supplies with other ministries within our Upper Susquehanna Synod and our community. She sees this as her ministry in which she can give back a measure of our Lord's saving love and grace that she has known throughout difficult times in her life's journey. All persons who encounter her are enriched by her laughter, her warmth, and her genuine care for them.”

Yeager simply sees the ever-expanding program as an opportunity to help others.

“It is my way of giving back,” she says. “Hearing the testimony of those served is gratifying and comforting. Just to know that I am able to help others experiencing hardship for whatever reason is an overwhelming feeling.” ■

💡 *No money is ever exchanged for items distributed through Diakon Kathryn's Kloset. Your generous gift will help not only to cover current operating costs, but also to build the endowment needed to support this vital program.*

## STAFF MEMBERS HONORED FOR FINDING CHILDREN FOREVER HOMES

■ Thanks to their singular focus on helping children find families of their own, Elisa Esh and Matt Shaffer, staff members of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, recently earned national recognition as 2010 Angels in Adoption.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI), which orchestrates the Angels in Adoption program, honored Esh and Shaffer, along with more than 190 other “angels,” at an event in Washington, D.C.

Director of recruitment and family development, Esh was overwhelmed by her selection and referred to the three-day celebration as the “Oscars’ of adoption.” Award recipients met with members of Congress, participated in a pinning ceremony, and enjoyed a gala.

“It is a credit to Diakon, its service, and its mission that two people were selected from one agency,” she says.

Esh, who has made finding homes for older children her personal focus, credits her work in developing the DiaKINnections program for her selection. The program puts an emphasis on placing children, who have been in care for a long time, with relatives.

“A large percentage of the kids I work with are in residential treatment,” she says. “They have rooms, but it is not like living in a home with a parent. There isn’t anyone there to hug them when they are having a bad day.”

Shaffer, who has worked for Diakon less than two years as a child-specific recruitment specialist for the “Wendy’s Wonderful Kids” program, is equally committed to the children with special needs he serves.

“Even though I lack personal experience

with adoption and foster care, I understand that it is tough for everyone involved,” he says. “It is really important for me to stay on top of everything I’m doing, when I’m working with families and kids.”

“Although he approaches every child’s situation with the same effort and attention, he has advocated every step of the way for one child in particular. The youth lost his status as a ‘Wendy’s Wonderful Kid’ when his social service agency decided he would remain in foster care for the foreseeable future,” says Lauren Conzaman, executive director of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care. Instead of ending contact with him, Shaffer continued to guide and mentor the young man, bringing stability to a challenging situation.

The family seeking to adopt the child nominated Shaffer for the Angel in Adoption award. “They said I was the only true advocate for the child,” Shaffer remembers of the nomination. “I had the best interests of the family and the boy in mind whenever I was making decisions.”

Both Esh and Shaffer used their stay in Washington to reach out to members of Congress.

“I thanked them for the Fostering Connections to Increase Adoption Act, which forces agencies to look closely at kin and fictive kin and attempts to decrease the number of children who actually come into foster care,” says Esh. “If we can keep them out of care and with family who know them, that is the best bet to avoid the loss of their birth families and multiple moves in foster care, which can cause extreme grief for the child. However, when



*(Top) Elisa Esh with Danny DeVito, whose wife, Rhea Perlman, received a national Angels in Adoption award for her advocacy for older children in foster care. (Bottom) Matt Shaffer poses with Emmy and Tony Award winner Kristin Chenoweth. An adoptee herself, Chenoweth has partnered with Wendy’s to support the company’s Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. She received a 2010 national Angels in Adoption award.*

reunification with birth families is not possible, we strive to place children permanently with adoptive ‘forever families’ that they so need and deserve.”

The Angels in Adoption program is a CCAI public-awareness campaign and provides an opportunity for all members of Congress to honor the work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of foster children and orphans in the United States and abroad. ■

## Contract renewal enables Diakon to continue operation of statewide adoption network

■ At any given moment, there are 1,000 children in Pennsylvania without a permanent home. And a very important contract renewal will allow Diakon to continue to do something about that.

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare recently awarded a third five-year contract to Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, in partnership with Family Design Resources, to manage Pennsylvania’s Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network, known as SWAN. Diakon and Family Design Resources have partnered to manage SWAN for the Commonwealth since 2000.

“Working with partners such as Diakon, the commonwealth has made great strides in promoting adoption in recent years,” Pennsylvania Acting Public Welfare Secretary Michael Nardone says. “Last year alone, 2,175 adoptions were finalized—a record for the commonwealth—and we look forward to building on that success in the years ahead.”

During the last five-year period, Diakon-FDR operation of the SWAN contract resulted in significant achievements, including expansion of services with children other than those with a goal of adoption; in particular, the number of SWAN affiliate adoption agencies providing child-preparation or post-adoption services nearly doubled in the period from 2005 to 2010.

Other achievements included an increase in adoption finalization-related units of service from 776 in fiscal year 05-06 to more than 1,400 in FY 2009-10; growth in local collaborative efforts aimed at improving outcomes for children in the child-welfare system; significant expansion of the SWAN Legal Services Initiative, which places paralegals in public child welfare agencies to expedite the permanency process; and creation of the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange/SWAN Helpline “seamless system” to enhance child-family matching. ■■■■■

# Praising their Diakon Wilderness Center experiences: Youth services alumni ‘make the grade’

■ ■ ■ As teenagers, Katie Ireland and Chris Chilton were self-proclaimed rebels. They fought their family, friends, and the system—and paid the consequences.

But when Diakon Youth Services helped put them on the right path, their lives changed forever. Both Ireland and Chilton recently reached out to their former program directors, thanking them.

At age 16, Ireland, a native of Levittown, Pa., was in trouble with the law. She was first placed on juvenile probation for “joy riding” at 14 years of age. Two years later, she violated probation by running away from home and skipping school. She was referred to the Diakon Wilderness Center’s month-long Wilderness Challenge Program, where she spent her 16th birthday somewhere in the swamps of Florida.

“I completed the course, which taught me how to survive in the elements and to be self-sufficient,” explains Ireland, now 30. “And I took something away from the experience. Unlike in most facilities juveniles are placed in as punishments, I learned something. I hiked the Appalachian Trail, I camped in the middle of winter, and I lived outside for an entire month.”

The 30-day wilderness challenge focuses on capturing the attention of youths who need to stabilize their behavior or regain focus before more intensive services are needed. Far away from televisions, cell phones, and the Internet, the adventure-based, short-term intervention delivers an experience participants will long remember and draw from.

The program operates year-round, requiring youths to live outdoors and successfully complete challenging physical and emotional activities. Working with specially trained staff for the entire experience, youths in each group share responsibilities, learn problem-solving and communication skills, and overcome fears as they create a foundation for successful return home.

It has been about 14 years since Ireland, now a resident of Los Angeles, completed the program. She has since received a GED, attended community college,

completed the Alcoholics Anonymous program, and driven across the country. She is about to re-enter college to work toward a bachelor’s degree.

“I decided to write the [center] because I really do reflect on the experience often, and although it was difficult at the time, I really learned a tremendous amount about myself and survival,” Ireland says.

Like Ireland, Chris Chilton violated probation and was referred to the Diakon Wilderness Center. After completing the Foundations 120-day Residential Program, he joined the Flight Program, a voluntary mentoring and training opportunity helping young adults formerly served by youth programs to become more successful (see related story on page 1).

“The program changed my life in so many ways and I have dedicated my life to changing my issues of defiance, stubbornness, and arrogant attitude,” says Chilton. “I would most definitely recommend the program to any youth who is struggling with issues and not listening to authority figures.”

A comedian and student at the Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology in Lancaster, Pa., Chilton received a \$1,200 scholarship from Daikon to attend school.

“The support I continue to receive from the program has helped me get to the place I am today,” he says. “I decided to [contact center] staff because it was the least I could do after what Diakon did for me. They are my biggest fan base for comedy and for life.”

Corey Carothers, Diakon Youth Services administrator, says that “seeing kids take advantage of opportunities presented to them to succeed in their lives is the basis for our mission. These individuals are the purest representation of what it is all about.”

Ireland would absolutely recommend the center, especially as an alternative to other placements for youth. “Knowing I can survive outside in the dead of winter for 30 days helps me get through a lot of things,” she says. “It’s really a state of mind and a choice of attitude that the program helped me find.” ■ ■



Chris Chilton



Katie Ireland

.....

*‘These individuals are the purest representation of what it is all about.’*

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## Assistance available to older persons Little-known programs often go untapped

■ Many older Americans struggling to pay for basic essentials may not be receiving benefits to which they are entitled from existing federal, state, and local programs. In many cases, they are not even aware of these programs; in others, they don't know how to apply for assistance.

BenefitsCheckUp, a comprehensive Web-based program, has helped more than 2 million people 55 and older discover these benefits.

Two Lehigh Valley residents, Carole Kidd and Marie Young, were taking advantage of some available benefits, but thought there could be more for which they would qualify. They simply didn't know what steps to take to find the additional benefits.

"It's difficult to find out what is available," says Young. With the help of Janis Charvala, a BenefitsCheckUp volunteer, Young discovered she qualified for a rent rebate and Kidd for nutrition assistance.

"I was flabbergasted. I never thought I would qualify for food stamps," says Kidd.

Over the last few years, Charvala has helped many other Lehigh Valley residents

with the BenefitsCheckUp program.

"Carole and Marie were looking forward. They wanted to change their situations and took the initiative to apply for programs that were available to them," says Charvala.

A volunteer her entire life, Charvala began working four years ago with Senior Corps RSVP, sponsored by Diakon in Lehigh, Northampton, and Carbon counties of Pennsylvania.

BenefitsCheckUp, offered in those counties in collaboration with the Lehigh Valley Alliance on Aging, appealed to her because she was newly retired and had questions about the medical benefits available to her.

"I didn't understand Medicare. I wanted to learn more about it and I wanted to work with people," says Charvala. As she reached a comfort level with the new information, she began helping seniors with Medicare Part D.

In the Lehigh Valley alone, there are an estimated 18,000 benefits that go uncollected each year. Ranging from heating and energy assistance to prescription savings and income



*RSVP Benefits Ambassadors Carole Kidd, left, and Marie Young.*

supplements, there are many public programs available to older persons in need. Charvala is glad she has been able to help people find some of these benefits.

"I've met a lot of people, helped them work through the program and found benefits they didn't know existed," she says.

Besides serving as Benefits Ambassadors, Senior Corps RSVP volunteers are involved in water testing, mentoring at-risk youths, delivering meals to the homebound, and lending skills to many diverse community and social service groups. RSVP is open to people 55 and older. ■

### President's Dialog *Continued from Page 3*

Our continual focus on training, our comprehensive compliance and quality assurance programs, and our openness in communication are just some of the ways we emphasize the culture we want to exist throughout Diakon. I have held and will continue to hold "town hall"-type meetings with staff to gain their input and thoughts.

While we have developed and moved forward with these core initiatives, I have focused significant time on organizational relationships. By design, I have met with synod bishops, conference and mission district deans, pastors, board members, staff groups at our program sites, and numerous donors.

The goal of these visits is to help me understand how, together, we can work more efficiently and effectively to minister to those in need. I have enjoyed hearing of how others view Diakon, of the impact our services have had on their lives, or of the dedication they bring daily to their role in serving others. Many of these stories have warmed my heart and made me appreciate more than ever the types of individuals drawn to this ministry.

Among other tasks, I have worked closely with our board members to enhance the size and composition of our boards and also taken the initial steps to expand the scope of responsibilities of the Diakon Lutheran Fund.

There is no question, however, that I came to my new role in very challenging times. Some might have been tempted to call the last several years "the perfect storm"—various financial concerns all arising at the same time to create significant challenges.

Among the many issues we faced in 2009 and 2010 were flat or decreasing reimbursements, declines in census, a tight banking environment in which to borrow needed funds, an up-and-down investment market, and fund-raising challenges.

Some of these challenges are not new when you consider Diakon's history. We have weathered such storms in the past and are confident we will continue to do so. While we have had to make difficult decisions at times, recently reducing our paid work week, we have endeavored to be as fair as possible to our dedicated staff members.

As examples, we continue to offer a fully employer-funded defined-benefit pension plan for eligible staff members and recently announced the organization would absorb a more-than-eight-percent increase in health care premiums so that staff members' premiums would remain the same in 2011 as in 2010.

Despite the challenges we've faced, we have improved our employee retention rate, increased the number of people served, and maintained our emphasis on benevolent care. We also have worked diligently to maintain as strong a financial position as possible, to gain the initial capital we need to move Diakon forward.

Recently, we have experienced a very encouraging trend in move-ins for our senior living accommodations. Heartened by this trend, we remain optimistic that we are at the beginning of a new growth period for Diakon, one that will allow us to continue that 150-year heritage of touching and changing the lives of ever-more people.

# Donated houses bring hope to homeless

*'We are delighted to see these properties used for people who are working diligently to be self-sufficient and gainfully employed.'*



Photos from inside a home donated by Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries to Baltimore Outreach Services.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries has donated two houses in the City of Baltimore to Baltimore Outreach Services.

Growing out of a soup kitchen and homeless shelter operated by Christ Lutheran Church, Inner Harbor, the outreach program is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing housing, jobs, and education to impoverished women and children.

"We are delighted to see these properties used for people who are working diligently to be self-sufficient and gainfully employed," says Mark Pile, Diakon president/CEO. "We celebrate the partnership we have developed with Christ Church."

The two houses are located on Ashland and Rose streets and are being used as transitional housing.

The houses are named The Sister Zora Home and The Dr. James Oosterling Home in honor of individuals who dedicated their lives to Lutheran social ministry within Baltimore. Diakon today continues the ministries begun in 1916 by the Lutheran Inner Mission Society.

The houses were among a series of buildings Diakon had purchased in Baltimore to rehabilitate for low- to moderate-income homeowners. Because of the need for transitional housing, Diakon in 2009 sold a McElderry Street property at cost to the Christ Church program, which gutted and converted the house into two separate, multi-level, two-bedroom units. In recognition of the partnership between the congregation and Diakon, Christ Church called that property Diakon House.

Unlike other shelters that limit stays to 90 days, BOS allows residents to remain in the shelter until housing is available, as long as they work toward their goals of housing and self-sufficiency.

"It is impossible for women to get an ID, get a job, and move out of an emergency shelter in 90 days," says Karen Adkins, BOS executive director. "Most of our folks take five to six months."

Women who enter the BOS transitional-housing program must complete a two-year, intensive counseling and mentoring program that encourages growth to achieve goals of financial stability, mental-health treatment, and substance-abuse recovery. All residents must be employed to enter the program. ■■

## Your generosity is appreciated

💡 In 2010, 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 Advancement at 1-877- DIAKON-7, option 2, extension 21219, or visit [www.diakon.org](http://www.diakon.org). Thank you.





Top, Herb Booz stands before his medals. Bottom, Booz reminisces while looking at old photos.

## Retired Marine recalls the victories of service

■ Every day, two fellow ex-Marines at Luther Crest, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Allentown, Pa., ask Herb Booz if he has any orders for them. “I’ll answer them by saying, ‘If I need something, I’ll let you know. Stay loose!’” says Booz. Most days, Booz doesn’t need anything.

But seven decades ago, things were much different for Booz, as were the lives of many others who lived through the 1930s and 1940s. The Great Depression was under way; later, lives would be lost as thousands of young men fought to defend their nation in World War II.

In 1942, Booz decided he wanted to enlist, but wouldn’t do so without the blessing of his parents. When he told his father he wanted to serve his country, his father asked him which branch of the armed forces he intended to join. Booz proudly told him he wanted to join The United States Marine Corps.

“My dad always told me that if I wanted to be a good soldier, I should be a Marine because they were heroes.” Booz went off to boot camp with his father’s blessing, confident of the choice he had made.

For the next six months, Booz spent his time training before he was sent overseas, first to Pearl Harbor, then to the Philippines, and, finally, to

Japan. By the time Booz reached Okinawa, the Japanese had surrendered, the war was ending, and Booz was ready to go home.

There were three ways that Marines could get back “home”—two being the end of the war or sustaining an injury. Booz saw the third way as he stood with a fellow Marine overlooking a cemetery bearing 12,000 American flags that marked the graves of those whose lives had been cut short by combat. He turned to his friend and said, “We’re lucky we’re not there.”

No Marine will ever say, “I was a hero,” but every one of them will tell you, “I served with a great bunch of guys and they were heroes.”

Booz will not say he was a hero nor will he speak of heroic acts that he performed, but he will say he is “very proud of his service in the Marine Corps.” ■



*I served with a great  
bunch of guys and  
they were heroes.*