

DIALOG

A publication of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

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FLYING ENTHUSIAST FILLS THE SKY WITH UNIQUE HISTORIC PLANES

As a young boy, Bill Kalb watched, enthralled, from a window of his Kansas home as a neighbor boy flew a balsawood glider in a nearby field. Today, others are the fascinated spectators as Kalb sends his planes soaring.

"I was totally hooked," says Kalb of that first vicarious experience. "I've been interested in remote-controlled planes since the age of 5. After I got out of the service and college... that's when I really got involved."



"I was totally hooked," says Kalb of that first vicarious experience.

Kalb and his wife, Elaine, live at Ravenwood Lutheran Village, a Diakon Senior Living Community in Hagerstown, Md. They like the extra space their two-bedroom senior living home at Ravenwood offered.

"Of course we needed room for the planes," says Mrs. Kalb. "We looked at Ravenwood and it all fell into place."

Kalb builds and flies German World War I planes—built not from a kit, but from scratch, following extensive research. Several shelves of reference books serve as a resource for his precisely replicated models. Each one is built to scale and is meticulously true to its original, complete with a pilot doll attired in flight garb of the era.

"I am historically accurate," Kalb says. "The tri-planes [of that period] intrigue me, with their colorful markings of the German air force. I research the plane and the pilot. The research is half the fun."

Certainly the best-known pilot of the time was The Red Baron, he notes. But hundreds of other pilots flew aircraft they personalized with insignia and markings. Tail markings signified a specific squadron, while markings over the fuselage identified a particular pilot.

Kalb's painstaking dedication to accuracy is one of the reasons he and his planes stand out at flying club meets. Moreover, very few people attempt to fly tri-planes because of the challenge presented by their three wings.

"World War I was the height of the tri-planes," Kalb explains. "They are unique so they usually draw some attention." He estimates that he has built 20 to 30 tri-planes through the years, spending hundreds of hours on each. He sells some after he has flown them for a while, to make room for new ones. He spends as much time as possible at the local flying club field.

"I am a flier more than a builder," says the 40-year retiree from the National Security Agency. "I enjoy the time I can spend with other fliers. You may not know the guy next to you at the field, but you know what he flies." ■



Senior volunteers 2 test water quality

■ On a chilly, overcast day, Janet Harris and Karen Wilhelm stand on a bridge overlooking a stream that feeds into Muhlenberg Lake in Allentown, Pa. They lower a bottle into the stream, filling it with water that will be tested for its quality.

Their effort is part of a Senior Corps RSVP program to monitor the quality of water in the Lehigh Valley. As members of Senior Corps RSVP, the women collect water samples once a month at two different locations, performing on-site testing and then transporting the samples to the Bureau of Water Sources in Allentown for further testing.

Recent retirees, the two friends and neighbors had been looking for ways to help the community when one of them recalled having heard Diane Schrameyer, director of the Diakon-sponsored Senior Corps RSVP program for Lehigh, Northampton, and Carbon counties, speak about water testing.

“I was looking for a way to volunteer and I wanted to do something with the Lutheran church,” says Wilhelm. “I thought water testing was a good idea because I love the outdoors.”

The work represented a field with which they were familiar. “Our husbands are chemists,” says Harris. The two women enjoy their service to the community and are amazed at how much they have learned from the effort. “We’re surprising ourselves every day!” says Wilhelm. ■



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Senior Corps RSVP volunteers serve in a diverse range of non-profit organizations, public agencies, and faith-based groups. In addition to water testing, volunteers mentor at-risk youths, teach English-as-a-Second-Language, and lend their skills to community groups that provide critical social services. Senior Corps RSVP is open to individuals age 55 and over. For more information on the Diakon-sponsored program in Lehigh, Northampton, and Carbon counties, readers may call (610) 391-8257 or email RSVP@diakon.org.

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 70,000 children, families, and older adults. Diakon's mission is to respond to God's call to serve the neighbor, and we are proud to continue a 140-year tradition of hospitality and care for people of all faiths.

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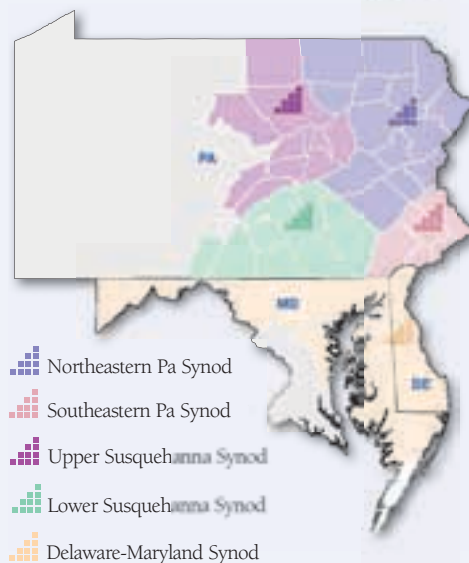
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DIAKON SERVICE TERRITORY



THE PRESIDENT'S DIALOG



The Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D.

Touching lives may stem from our one heart at Diakon, but it requires many hands to do so.

It also requires a lot more.

The ability to touch and change so many lives—in a typical year, the lives of some 70,000 persons—requires technology, modes of communication, and the everyday items that keeps offices, and our services to people, operational.

We sometimes refer to these year-end totals as “fun facts,” but in all seriousness they represent just part of what is required to run an organization such as Diakon.

Technology

More than 86 miles of data wiring provide the framework through which Diakon employees communicate and work on a daily basis:

- 374 desktops, 161 laptops, and 381 “thin-client” computer stations make up the total computers in service at Diakon.
- 1,637,052 e-mails were sent from those computers in 2007.
- There are 3,105 active telephone extensions at Diakon. On them, 1,641,848 incoming and 2,950,244 outgoing phone calls were made last year.

Administrative needs

As with all organizations, office supplies are required to conduct business. This holds especially true for an organization that reaches thousands of individuals each year:

- 14,400 reams of paper and 28,800 file folders were purchased.
- 7.2 million copies were made, 20,000 purchase orders were completed, and 38,276 checks were written.
- 1,636 capital projects were handled in 2006.
- 3.1 million reimbursable miles were driven by staff members.

Payroll & benefits

No company can operate without experienced, dedicated employees:

- 51,916 payroll checks were processed in 2007.
- A total of 4,379,174 employee hours were paid; 683 Diakon retirees received benefits.
- Diakon paid more than \$4.5 million in payroll taxes.
- More than 50,000 hours were dedicated to staff training.
- 74 staff members received tuition assistance to help them further their education.
- Years of service for all active employees totaled 12,646.
- A total of 12 employees celebrated the anniversary milestones of 30, 35, and 45 years of service to the organization.

Information

Marketing and public relations campaigns are necessary to keep the public informed about our wide spectrum of services. Striving to be the best at what we do can help others only if they know what we do and how to contact us:

- Billboard advertisements had the potential to reach 491,870 people daily.
- 5,303 copies of news releases were submitted to a variety of news media outlets.

Senior programs evolve with the times

Lives touched

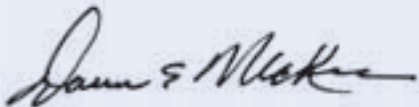
These are, of course, the most important statistics. Whether we are serving people in need or offering an opportunity for service to those seeking ways to give of their time and blessings, it is the people whose lives we touch who represent the reason for our ministry.

- Approximately \$1 million a month in benevolent care was provided to people lacking the financial resources to pay the full cost of their service.
- 70,431 hours of counseling were provided.
- 1.6 million meals were prepared for senior living residents.
- 16,436 miles were walked by youths at Diakon Wilderness Center; 595 persons successfully climbed the Alpine Tower at the center.
- 206 children and youths were served through foster care; 61 children were placed with loving adoptive families.
- 149,460 volunteer hours were freely given.
- 3,924 generous donors helped to make all of this service possible.

While it's certainly interesting to review these large numbers and how they relate to what we do, we remember always that all the paper and pencils in the world don't do the job we need to do.

What we do requires people—dedicated staff and board members, volunteers, generous donors, and the residents and clients and their families who come to us for service, accommodations, and care. As we work to touch their lives in so many ways, they in turn touch ours.

And that's one of the year's most important facts.



The Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D.
President/CEO

One of the most important statistics above involves the nearly 4,000 donors who supported us last year. Their compassion and generosity make a tangible difference in the lives of so many people each year. To read more about how our partners bring about change in the lives of people in need, read our enclosed Donor Report. And I invite you to join our many supporters by using the enclosed envelope. Thank you!



Some call the idea “Centers Without Walls.” Diakon has chosen to term the concept “*Diakon Living & Learning After 50.*” Whatever it’s called, the effort represents a way of offering community-based services to older adults different from traditional senior centers.

The idea is to take a range of programs on the road—to adults who might not attend traditional senior centers. “The goal is not to replace traditional community-based senior centers, which serve a specific group of older persons,” says Karen Wood, Diakon’s director of Community Services for Seniors, “but to offer new and different programs to other older adults throughout the community.” Diakon’s effort is currently under way in Cumberland and Schuylkill counties in Pennsylvania, in which the organization has contracts with the local Area Agencies on Aging to provide various community-based services, including the management of nine senior adult centers.

The new concept is driven in part by the diminishing number of people attending senior centers, says Wood. “We have been unable to attract younger seniors to the centers for a variety of reasons, including longer work hours and busier schedules,” she says. “For years and years, older adults came for the meals. We’re finding, while the meal is still critically important, it is not an important factor for our younger seniors.”

By taking new programs into the community, Program Coordinator Susan Long hopes to encourage those younger seniors to tap into the Living & Learning focus. Her intent is to create programs that will enhance socialization, spirituality, health, and wellness.

“I am going to start with painting classes, pottery, and sculpture and be in full swing by the spring,” she says, adding that the “hot” issues now are nutrition, exercise, and weight management. “I am looking to churches, borough buildings, and anyone in the community to partner with us so we can host the programs across the counties.”

Classes will be offered four days a week, including day and evening events. “We also will offer a wider variety of programs in different venues, such as water aerobics, fitness classes, and belly dancing,” Long adds. “What we won’t be doing is duplicating the efforts of other groups already providing services in these communities.”

The new programs, which charge modest fees, represent one way to help support the senior centers, which continue to offer a vital service to a sometimes-frail population, Wood says. ■■■

A favorite song comes alive for Diakon Kidz Stuff children



When the children at Diakon KidzStuff Child Care in Baltimore gather at circle time to sing “Old McDonald Had A Farm,” they name every animal they can think of that might reside on that farm.

On a field trip this fall to Green Meadows Farm in Jessup, Md., however, they had the chance to do more than sing about the animals. They got an up-close—in some cases, nose-to-nose—look at a variety of farm animals. They learned about the animals’ behavior and habits, petted many of them, and had the chance to feed some.

“There was a lot of interaction between the animals and the children,” says Danielle Franklin, a senior teacher with the program. “It was exciting for them to see the animals they sing about.”



Sixty-three children from six weeks to 12 years old, along with dozens of parents, spent the day getting to know more about cows, goats, sheep, and pigs. A hayride and a pig race added to the fun.

Diakon KidzStuff tries to plan at least one educational field trip each month, Franklin says. Previous trips have included those to a dentist’s office, a television studio, and even the movies. “They’re always great learning experiences,” says Franklin. ■



Photographer captures kids on film

kids capture his heart

■ Larry Canner spent a rainy day last fall with a bunch of kids and a good bit of mud. He was capturing images of the children from Diakon KidzStuff as they petted and fed and ooohhh-ed and aaawww-ed over the animals at Green Meadow Farms.

It's not the first time Canner has photographed children connected with Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries. In fact, they seem to have found a special place in his heart.

One of Canner's freelance assignments with Diakon was to take photographs of families considering adoption as they viewed images of children awaiting adoptive placement, at an adoption "Heart Gallery."

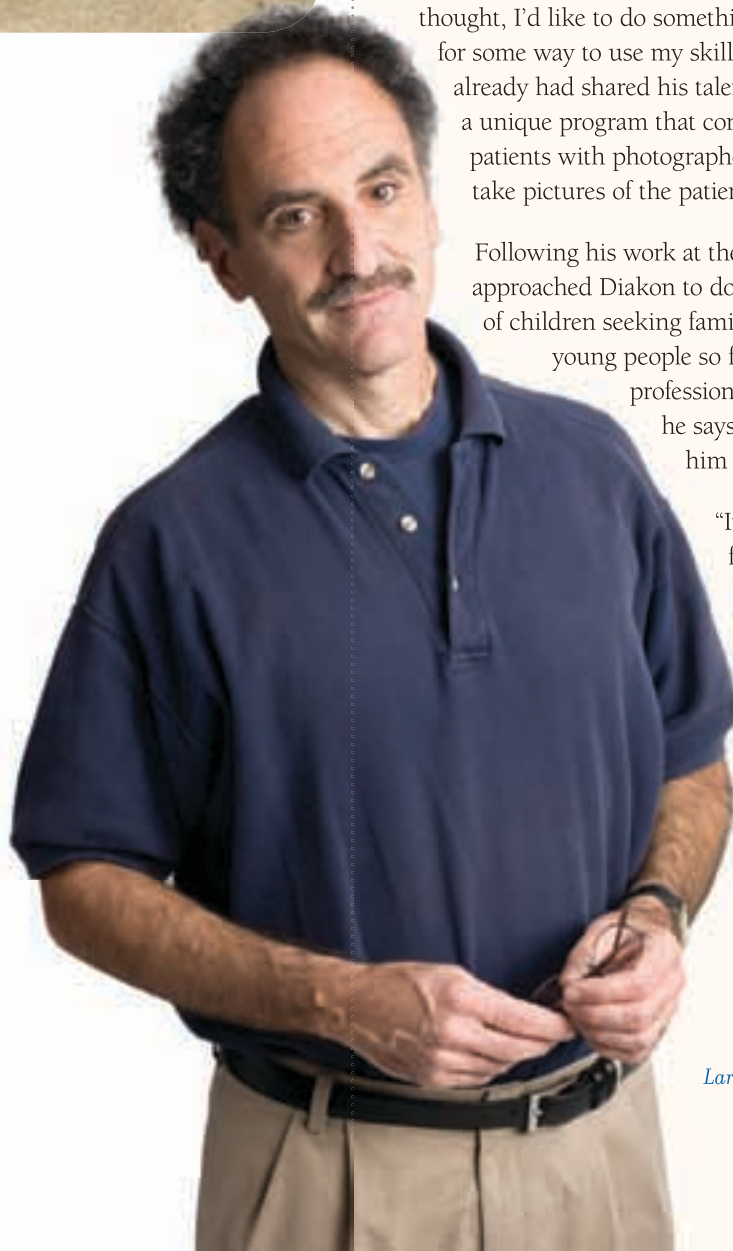
As he was photographing the families, something about the children's pictures drew him in.

"I was inspired by the quality of the photos," says Canner. "I thought, I'd like to do something like that. I'm always looking for some way to use my skills to benefit others." Canner already had shared his talents with Flashes of Hope, a unique program that connects hospitalized cancer patients with photographers who donate their time to take pictures of the patients for their families.

Following his work at the Heart Gallery, Canner approached Diakon to donate his time to create portraits of children seeking families. He's photographed two young people so far and the effort has been professionally and personally rewarding, he says. It's the type of work that lets him use his gifts for a greater good.

"It's nice to have your skill used for some better purpose," Canner says. "I find enjoyment in making people happy. It's extra special enjoyment when it serves a little broader purpose." ■

Larry Canner, freelance photographer



ADOPTION MONTH

EVENTS BUILD AWARENESS OF WAITING CHILDREN

More than 100,000 children across the United States wait for a family to call their own. Although Diakon Adoption & Foster Care works every day to reduce that number, each November—National Adoption Month—prompts special efforts to build awareness of these children and their need.

Youths grab spotlight during fashion show

■ In Baltimore, Md., where approximately 800 children are available for adoption, Diakon hosted a fashion show and matching event, which featured 12 youths in need of permanent families. The children wore outfits that they had chosen, walked the red carpet to music they selected, and carried a prop, such as a soccer ball, that helped to identify their interests.

“It put the children in the spotlight in a very positive way,” says Ramona Hoyle, director of Diakon Adoption Services in Maryland. “People also had the opportunity to learn about adoption as a great way to build a family.”

This first-of-its-kind event, held at First English Lutheran Church in Baltimore, was the idea of Ebony Alderman, a Diakon child-specific recruitment specialist for the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids Program, funded by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. Alderman works with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services to find homes for identified waiting children, specifically the 12 who participated in the show.

“In addition to three of the 12 children who walked the red carpet with their adoptive parents already identified through this program proudly watching, Ebony has several very serious inquiries about the remaining nine children,” Hoyle says.

As part of a state grant, Diakon has been holding a variety of adoption-awareness events in many areas of Maryland, including a “Family Fun Day” at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Frederick and a dinner honoring adoptive families and professionals in Cecil County. ■

Adoptive families earn honors

■ As part of adoption month events, several south-central Pennsylvania adoption coalitions honored three adoptive families, among others, with “Friends of Adoption” awards. Of the three families honored, two serve as Diakon adoption resources—Jim and Brenda Wooding and Lynn Maines.

“Mr. and Ms. Wooding may appear to be just another family and would likely admit as much, however they are unique and special because they make ‘normal’ that which is beautiful and amazing,” says Craig Gehosky, director of the Diakon Adoption & Foster Care offices in York and Mechanicsburg.

“They are amazing because they have provided homes for 29 foster youths and adopted five children during their 11 years with Diakon. They also share their wisdom through their assistance with new resource-family training, during events for resource families, and, most importantly, through example.”

Also recognized was Lynn Maines, a single adoptive father. Marian Koviack, a Diakon case manager, shared that Maines, a research scientist, chose to adopt because he wanted to be more involved in a child’s life beyond his long-standing involvement in Big Brothers. “Lynn Maines expresses a deep sense of giving back to the community,” Koviack says. “His adoptive son entered his home with many learning challenges. Through Mr. Maines’ love, advocacy, and desire to see his son excel, he is now achieving the same milestones as his peers.”

Gehosky says, “To have two of the three families recognized from Diakon is impressive. Nominations came from throughout central Pennsylvania and different adoption coalitions.” ■

Siblings earn recognition for determination



Tho’mas and Melinda.

■ In Lehigh County in Pennsylvania the celebration continued when the county children and youth services office featured two youths adopted through Diakon during its annual adoption press conference. The brother and sister, Melinda, 17, and Tho’mas, 13, received a certificate from the county.

According to Linda Lofft, supervisor for Lehigh County Children and Youth Services, the siblings were recognized for their ability to look for the good in a process that, for them, was filled with disappointments.

“These children had been in care for quite a while and had a number of disappointments. Despite all of that, they remained so hopeful,” Lofft says, adding that each served as a positive influence on the other.

“Since their adoption, they have made great strides. We thought they would be a good example of siblings who knew it was important to be together and who have been through thick and thin.” ■

Diakon Family Life Services

Helping to create a process of change for men who batter



■ For the better part of 10 years, Diakon Family Life Services – Capital Region in Mechanicsburg, Pa., has offered a program intent on changing the attitudes and beliefs of male batterers and stopping domestic violence.

It is about accountability, says Doreen Winey, group facilitator. “The major focus of the program is for men to recognize that they, and only they, are responsible for their actions and that they need to hold themselves accountable and cease blaming the victim,” she says.

“Until this occurs, batterers will deny it is they who need to change, and they will not invest in learning non-violent conflict-resolution skills. This perpetuates the cycle of violence.”

Every Thursday some 10 to 12 offenders spend two hours with Winey as part of the Choices program. The curriculum helps men understand that for every action of control, there is a corresponding action that is, instead, respectful and affirming of the relationship.

“I specifically focus on changing attitudes and beliefs. Until you change your core belief system your behavior will not change,” says Winey.

The men coming to the program often are referred by the court system following a domestic violence arrest. Others are referred by a therapist, while some come voluntarily after recognizing they use violence as a way to assume power over their partners.

Winey believes the 26-week program helps to “plant the seed for the men to begin to understand their need to cease using violence toward women and to engage with women, partners, and non-partners alike in a less assuming and more respectful manner. The work, though, will continue for a lifetime.” ■



Join us as Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries celebrates 20 years of Benefactors Dinners with a major event complete with special guest, musician, and television and radio host John Tesh. For more information, contact us at 1-877-DIAKON-7, option 2, extension 50464, or visit us online at www.diakon.org/benefactors.

Your generosity is appreciated

Most of the Diakon programs and services depicted in *Dialog* provide benevolent care in a variety of ways. Diakon depends on generous donations from corporations, synods, congregations, and individuals to enable it to serve so many people, especially those with limited financial resources.

You, too, can make 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 at www.diakon.org 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. And see our Donor Report in this issue of Dialog.

Thank you!

BRIDGING

TEENS TAKE TIME TO LEND A HAND



Teen volunteers Maddy Feinauer, left, and Rachel Hertzog, right, spend time with Topton resident Helen Warning.

Young and old bond over summer break

■ Maddy Feinauer made some new friends last summer. Many of them were six times her age or more, but they talked and laughed together, getting to know each other as friends do. When summer ended and the 12-year-old headed back to school, she knew she'd miss her new friends.

Maddy was one of 17 youths ranging in age from 12 to 17 who volunteered time last summer to interact with residents of The Lutheran Home at Topton, a Diakon Senior Living Community in Topton, Pa. The youths helped in a variety of ways, delivering ice and water, assisting with activities, and escorting residents to appointments on campus.

Each teen also had one or two “buddy” residents, with whom they got better acquainted and spent extra time. Rachel Hertzog, 16, recalls helping her buddy decorate her room for the 4th of July and then celebrating the holiday together. “We would always go outside for walks and I got to know about her family,” Rachel says. “Sometimes they just want someone to talk to.”

For some of the teens, the volunteer activity represented their second or third summer on the Topton campus. Many of the others who volunteered for the first time plan to return this summer. While their motivations vary—their family members may be Topton residents, their friends work at the senior living community, or the activity is part of a senior project—they universally found volunteering to be rewarding.

“I needed to do something during the summer,” says Denise McNeill, 16, “and this seemed like a good thing to do.” Kim Berger, 17, likes the fact she is getting work experience. “Maybe it will help me get a job working with older people,” she says.

Matt Krupa, 15, feels a personal connection because his grandmother lived at The Lutheran Home at Topton before she passed away. It's hard to go in what had been her room, he says, but he does stop and talk with her roommate. “I can do that and feel a little closer to her.”

As much as the teens gained from the experience, residents benefited, too. “They made me laugh all the time and I would make them smile,” says Rachel, who also gave manicures as one of her duties. “It was a bunch of fun to be here.” ■

GAPS



College program builds friendships between generations

■ Several years ago, a young man dressed in black from head to toe with chains swinging from his midsection walked into Pocono Lutheran Village, a Diakon Senior Living Community in East Stroudsburg, Pa.

While some residents were taken aback by his appearance, the youth spoke with a soft and gentle voice. “His demeanor was nothing like his wardrobe,” says Vicky Bradshaw, activities director for the assisted living community. “He turned out to be the sweetest kid!”

The residents’ reactions were based on a stereotype, says Dr. Angela Vauter, associate professor of the Recreation and Leisure Services Management Department at East Stroudsburg University, who has held classes at Pocono Lutheran Village to help dispel stereotypes about both young and older people.

“Our society has often used age as one criterion to separate one group of people from another. While differences definitely exist at different times of one’s life, there are more commonalities among people than differences,” Vauter says.

Her conclusions have been tested and retested in what she calls a “living lab” at the village, where for the last six years, her students and village residents have participated in an intergenerational program as part of studies on leisure and aging. Each year, four classes are held at the village to provide students with the opportunity to develop a positive attitude toward the aging process—and for older adults to know the young people better.

Results have been overwhelming

“One of the best things that has come out of this class is the exposure the residents have had to different ideas, cultures, and people,” says Bradshaw. Another positive result is the increase in the number of student volunteers. “The students like it so much that they continue to visit and develop relationships with the residents.”

Resident Charlie Popall admits that he used to have preconceived ideas of the students. But after four years of participating in the classes, his thoughts have changed. “There are nice kids around. They have the same healthy attitude that we have. They care,” says Popall. ■



“There are definite stereotypes of what it means to be old in this country, but there is still a lot of work to be done,” says Doyle Nelson, a non-traditional student in the class. “Calendar age has little to do with physical and mental abilities.”



FAMILY DAY PAVES PATH

THROUGH WILDERNESS OF FAMILY ISSUES

■ ■ ■ Fanetta Eldridge had a few things she wanted to say to her son. He had a few things he wanted her to know, too. But sometimes a simple conversation can be difficult. The Diakon Wilderness Center's Foundations Family Day helped mother and son to connect. "It opened up the doors," says Eldridge.

Family day is part of the Diakon Wilderness Center's short-term Foundations Residential Program for young men, 13 to 18, who have been court-adjudicated and recommended for behavioral and educational intervention. Family day is held once a month. More than 20 members from eight families gathered at one recent family day, held at the Diakon Wilderness Center in Boiling Springs, Pa., for activities to foster communication, understanding, fellowship, and team-building.

The gathering is designed so that families can appreciate the exercises and methods of instruction used with their sons. Bringing the families together also helps each family to realize they are not alone in dealing with the often-challenging teenage years.



"When kids are placed here, the family relationships have broken down," says Rick Street, the program's clinical director. "We can help change attitudes and model behaviors, but when the kids return home, if there isn't a different environment, they go back to square one. We help families change the environment."

For example, families at one recent family day spent the morning in a learning session with counselors; their sons joined them for lunch and an afternoon of activities. Family members drew outlines of one another on large craft paper and filled the outline with positive words describing each family member. They drew a family "coat of arms" and agreed on a family motto, while also discussing family traditions.

This was Eldridge's second visit during her son's time at the wilderness center. Through the program and her visits, she wants him to understand something important: "I want him to know I am always there for him." ■ ■



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