

DIALOG

FALL 2003

VOL. 4 NO. 2

Active Older Adults

Ski trips. Daily swims. Bicycle trails. College courses.

Not the stuff stereotypically associated with older adults.

But the world of retirement—and retirement services—is changing. And Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries is working hard to keep pace with those changes.

From a Berks County community-based program designed specifically to meet the needs of very active older adults to a western Maryland service that allows a 91-year-old woman to continue to live independently...from strength-training programs and Tai Chi classes to a long-standing youth camp that mixes nursing-



center residents and teens in creative projects...Diakon services are designed to help older persons stay as active and independent as possible, with a focus on the individual.

“Seniors today are interested in keeping active as long as they can,” says Tricia Daugherty, fitness coordinator at a Diakon retirement village. “We try to offer a variety of programs and opportunities” to meet each person’s needs and interests.

Such activities, taking place through Diakon-sponsored senior centers and retirement communities, may include cycling, exercise classes, water aerobics, strength training, roller-skating, canoeing, kayaking, volleyball, and even downhill skiing.

And benefits often extend beyond the activity.

Participants of the Berks Active Older Adults program often take on leadership roles, says Karen Gottschall, manager. “It is really inspirational that they’ve stayed healthy and vibrant.”

Several articles in the regionalized center section of Dialog feature local programs focused on helping older persons to remain active and independent.

Luther Crest Retirement Community resident Millie Arnold readies for some roller-blading.

Our regional format

Beginning on Page 3, you will find our newsletter content focuses on your geographic area. The section you receive—which we call **Diakconnection**—depends on your address or interest in a particular Diakon program or facility.

Four regionalized inserts are produced: Delaware-Maryland, Lower Susquehanna, Northeastern Pennsylvania, and Upper Susquehanna. The regions parallel synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The regionalized **Dialog** provides interesting information about the retirement villages and Congregation, Children, and Family Services programs in your area—and about those they serve.

If you are interested in receiving an insert different from the one in this issue, please contact Mary Seip at 1-888-582-2230, ext. 1215. In addition, each of the four inserts is available for viewing on our Web site, www.diakon.org.

INSIDE

Special gifts *Inside Front Cover*
New community . . . *Inside Back Cover*
TimeLine: 1911 *Back Cover*
Diakconnection
Regional Edition *Page 3*

 **DIAKON**
LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES
www.diakon.org

Young girl's wish among unique gifts

It began with a simple wish—to help a friend.

Shannon Nabors, a member of New Hope Lutheran Church in Columbia, Md., co-wrote a book to help people understand the Muslim culture of a schoolmate. Shannon was 11 at the time she co-wrote “Lost in New York” with classmate Rachel Lanspa.

The youths' goal was to sell enough books to raise money for our Refugee Services program. In fact, the books sold so well the girls earned \$250, which Thrivent Financial for Lutherans then matched, turning the effort into a \$500 contribution for Refugee Services!

I wanted you to know of this inspirational gift because the story may not appear in your regional edition of *Dialog*.

What's amazing to me is the number of such significant and “unusual” gifts recounted in various stories within this publication's four regional editions...

- The men from The Lutheran Home at Topton who took it upon themselves to purchase and plant a mini-orchard on the retirement campus so that future generations could enjoy the real fruits of their labor.
- The anonymous donor from the Baltimore area whose contributions have helped to bring our parish-nursing programs to underserved areas.
- The Luther Crest Retirement Community residents who developed Blue Bird Lane for everyone's enjoyment.
- The members of Tree of Life Lutheran Church outside Harrisburg who donated needed appliances to the TresslerCare Wilderness Center, in response to the Wish List that appears in *Dialog*.

• The more than \$20,000 in contributions from the Lower Susquehanna Synod as well as individuals and congregations within the synod in recognition of Fae Appleby on her retirement Aug. 31 as the synod's vice president after 12 years in that role. Fae's love for the Wilderness Center programs—which help young people to get their lives back on the right track—is well known

In fact, the gifts generated by Fae's interest could not have come at a better time. Currently, Diakon is in the midst of a significant capital campaign to raise more than \$2 million for the Wilderness Center. At this point, we've hit the \$1.65 million mark and construction is proceeding on new dormitory space for the youths who

live on campus.

But we must raise the additional funds to build a critically needed gymnasium and program center—especially in light of our hopes of providing residential programming for girls, a much-needed service across the state.

While the Wilderness Center is situated near Boiling Springs, Pa., its services indeed reach across Pennsylvania. As of June 30, the center's four programs—short- and long-term residential care, Weekend Alternative Program, and 30-day Wilderness Challenge course—had served more than 500 youths.

And those young men and women (the challenge course and weekend programs are co-educational) came from such counties as Berks, Blair, Bucks, Centre, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Elk, Greene, Juniata, Lehigh, Mercer, Monroe, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, Snyder, Somerset, Wayne, York, and many more.

As you can see, the center's reach is broad, and its services needed now more than ever—as is your gift.

In a letter enclosed with her \$500 check, young Shannon Nabors expressed her wishes for her donation.

“I hope that the money will be used to help families and children who are new to this country,” she wrote. “From my experiences with my friend...I know that it can be hard for people new to this country to find good jobs and make good friends.”

Diakon itself could have no better friends than Shannon and all the others who, through such gifts, help daily to bring our mission and ministry to the lives of people in need.

We welcome you to this vital friendship.



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

Diakon to buy Cumberland Crossings

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries has signed an agreement of sale to purchase Cumberland Crossings Retirement Community, Carlisle, Pa., from the Carlisle Area Health & Wellness Foundation.

The purchase should be completed by Oct. 1.

“We are delighted with the prospect of adding Cumberland Crossings to the services we offer in central Pennsylvania,” said the Rev. Dr. Daun E. McKee, president/CEO of Diakon. “Having a retirement community within Cumberland County has long been a goal of this organization.”

Bill Keen, chairman of the foundation’s board of directors, noted that the process “for selecting an appropriate purchaser for Cumberland Crossings was long and thoughtful. After much diligence and work by the foundation, we . . . believe Diakon to be both an appropriate match for the culture and values of the residents and a strong fiduciary partner.”

The foundation was established in June 2001 from the proceeds of the sale of the assets of Carlisle Hospital and Health Services, Inc., to Health Management Associates and the transfer of related endowments and trusts. Its mis-

Cumberland Crossings Retirement Community



sion as a foundation reflects its heritage and commitment to excellence in health for the region’s residents, Keen noted.

The sale of Cumberland Crossings is related to the foundation’s efforts to position itself as a funding, rather than operational, organization.

Diakon currently has more than 700 senior-housing cottages and apartments, more than 650 assisted living units, 345 units of rental-subsidy housing, and nearly 1,900 long-term nursing care beds at facilities in Pennsylvania and Maryland. The acquisition will add 115 senior-housing units, 45 assisted living

units, and 60 skilled-care beds to Diakon’s services.

Initial plans for the campus, according to Tama Carey, recently appointed vice president for Diakon’s Continuing Care Retirement Communities, are to integrate operations at Cumberland Crossings into a Diakon model, including implementation of the agency’s extensive quality improvement and compliance programs.

Jan Bigelow, who most recently has served as Diakon’s executive for marketing and census development, has been named executive director of Cumberland Crossings.

Wilderness Center

Construction continues on the new residential building at the TresslerCare Wilderness Center near Boiling Springs. The work is part of a major expansion at the center, which serves adjudicated youths.



TimeLine: 1911

Continued from Back Cover

campaign, dedicated a 450,000-gallon swimming pool as part of the home’s new Alumni Memorial Park.

A sign of the times: The project was approved by the American Commission for Living War Memorials.

Children enjoy the new Tressler Orphans Home swimming pool in 1948.



Address Service Requested

TIMELINE: 1911

Several Diakon retirement communities include aquatic programs, both on and off campus. But pools are nothing new to the organization.

In fact, both of Diakon's historic children's homes had swimming pools—the result of donors' commitment to the organizations.

The first pool—in actuality a “bathing pond”—was constructed in 1911 in the basement of Old Main at The Lutheran Home at Topton (though there had been a small ice-skating rink nearby even earlier). Partly funded by a contribution from St. John's German Lutheran Church in Reading, the bathing pool was heated by steam pipes connected to the home's boiler.

An outdoor 50-foot wading pool was built five years later, becoming a popular summer gathering place for the home's younger children. A larger pond was created after part of the original dam washed away in 1919. In winter, the pond provided ice for harvesting and

storage for summer use.

A formal outdoor swimming pool was built at Topton in 1934, a gift of the former Reading Conference Luther League.

Children at the Tressler Orphans Home in Loysville had contented themselves for years by swimming, supervised, in

two nearby creeks' “swimming holes.”

In the 1940s, however, the home's administration and older youths began excavations for an on-campus pond.

Those early efforts came to fruition by 1948 when the home, with financing from alumni gifts and a special Christmas

Continued on Inside Back Cover

Swimming pool at The Lutheran Home at Topton, circa 1940.

