



# Helping Hands

Summer 2012

*Providing Christian ministry of refuge, hope and encouragement to those in need*

## In this issue:

- 2 Message from Director
- 3 Highmark Walk/Golf Tournament
- 4 Outfitted for Success
- 5 Program Spotlight - Rainbow Connection
- 6 Erie Gives/School adopt-a-child Program

## Important dates:

- 8/14 Erie Gives 2012
- 9/3 Ride for The Refuge
- 9/25 Fall Tour
- 11/9 Fall Extravaganza

## Ride for The Refuge 2012



Without fail for the last 12 years, Jack Sheffer and his brother, Roland, have been participating in the Ride for The Refuge, EUMA's charity bicycle ride benefitting The Refuge. This year - number 13 - will be no different "Lord willing" as the 77-year-old bicyclist said.

The Sheffer brothers, along with Jack's wife Judy some years, have committed themselves to participating in the Ride for The Refuge because they view it as a great way to support The Refuge, EUMA's emergency homeless shelter for families with children.

"We do it as a fundraiser, to raise money for The Refuge," Jack said. "We raise support (in addition to the registration fee) because we realize how helpful it is."

Join the Sheffers on **Labor Day (Sept. 3)** for our 13th Annual Ride for The Refuge! This event features scenic tours of various lengths at each of our two locations: Shades Beach in East Erie County and Albion Fairgrounds in West Erie County. This is not a race, but an event for bicycle enthusiasts of all abilities. You'll enjoy a great ride through scenic country, water stops along the way, sag wagon services and our famous Riders' Picnic. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m., with the ride starting at 8:30 a.m.

Register by Aug. 24, 2012 to receive a free Ride for The Refuge t-shirt! All proceeds from this event benefit families who are struggling with homelessness and poverty and are receiving shelter, support and services through The Refuge. New this year, you can register online at [www.euma-erie.org](http://www.euma-erie.org) or, if you prefer, registration forms are available on our website or by calling us at 814-456-8073.



It's a great day to give - **Erie Gives - August 14, 2012**. See our story on pg. 6 to learn how you can impact the homeless community through a gift to EUMA on this special day.

## Board of Directors

Gail Fees  
President

Susan Travis  
Secretary

James Garlick  
Treasurer

Bill Baxter  
Viki Bloomer  
Julie Davis  
Ken Davis  
Ann DiTullio  
Nancy Dusckas  
Ann Marie Ernst  
Rev. Robert Lewis  
Rev. Keith McGarvey  
Melissa Miller  
Rev. Rich Pearson  
Jim Renshaw  
Nels Sandberg  
Rev. Ray Speakman  
Jarad Willats  
Rev. Michelle Wobrak  
Harold Yannayon

Janet Douthett  
Member Emeritus

Rev. Joseph W. Patterson III  
District Superintendent

## EUMA Contacts:

Cheryl Davis  
Executive Director, 456-8073

Karen Trask  
Chaplain, 456-8073

Darlene Outlaw  
Refuge Supervisor, 454-6088

Ken Miles  
Liberty House Supervisor, 874-3687

Nicole Thompson  
Outreach Supervisor, 456-5670

Victoria Weber  
Rainbow Connection Mgr., 453-4080

Lisa Karle  
HMIS Administrator, 456-8073

Kate Hiles  
Development Director, 456-8073

## Message from the Executive Director

As you can see in this summer edition of our newsletter, there is a lot happening at EUMA. Each of our ministries continues to see increasing need among the folks who come to our doors or call our Outreach workers. With a 30% poverty level which means more than 29,000 people living below federal poverty guidelines and so many programs that used to help either severely cut or no longer in existence, our challenge is great. How do we continue to do more with less? It takes enormous resources to be here on the frontlines day after day - \$800,000 in cash, countless volunteers and over \$160,000 worth of in-kind items such as paper products, toiletries, clothing. And we're so grateful every time you respond to a fundraiser or an appeal to help keep us going. I know it may seem like we're always asking for money or things, but you are our life blood. We want to be here even as other programs are not and we can't do it without all of you.

It's an exciting summer for EUMA as an agency as well. We're excited about reinventing our logo and our website to more effectively get the word out about who we are and what we're doing. We have a "changing of the guard" on our Board of Directors as we say goodbye and thank you to Rev. Pat Lenox, Rev. Darrell Greenawalt, and Rev. Dennis Miller. We welcome and look forward to working with new members Ann Marie Ernst, Rev. Keith McGarvey, Rev. Ray Speakman and Jarad Willats.

So please keep us in your prayers and forgive us if we seem a little too needy in always asking for your help. But remember - our needs are really the needs of people like Javier and his family at The Refuge or Joe at Liberty House or Amanda who is calling Outreach because she's alone and scared. We only exist to bring the love of God to His people in need by helping them in their day to day lives with the very tangible items they need to survive - housing, clothing, food and more importantly, a sense of worth, a feeling of being loved, a knowing that someone cares enough to walk beside you when everyone else has abandoned you. When you support us, you really support them and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

God bless you!

*Cheryl Davis*

## Volunteers roll up their sleeves for EUMA



Many hands make light work, or so they say. The work may not have been so easy, but 35 volunteers recently came to EUMA to help with different work projects in and around our ministry locations. Their efforts paid off and proved to be a tremendous help. At top left is a volunteer with ServErie who is painting the second floor walls at The Refuge. At bottom left is a picture of the new pavilion at Liberty House. Members from North East Park UMC built the pavilion during Change the World Day in May. Other jobs performed by both groups included yard work, painting a Hope House apartment, and power-washing the outside of The Refuge garage.

# Walkers rally to meet needs



*Team Christ United Methodist Church ranked as the top team, recruiting 13 walkers and raising \$1,344 in donations. Way to go!*

188 days and nights of shelter, basic necessities, and life skills training - that is what our amazing group of walkers and supporters accomplished through the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community.

More than 100 walkers came out in support of EUMA at the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community, a 5K (or one-mile) fundraising event held Saturday, June 9 at Presque Isle State Park. The event, sponsored and underwritten by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, enabled 24 local charities (including EUMA) to recruit walkers and raise support for their organizations.

Our dedicated walkers, along with your sponsors, raised more than \$9,400 for our programs. This amount translates into 188 days/nights of

shelter and services for a family at The Refuge, our emergency homeless shelter for families with children. With your help, EUMA ranked in the top six agencies for funds raised! Thank you!

## Marking Milestone - Refuge Golf reaches \$100,000

With their recent donation of \$10,000, the Refuge Golf Committee has reached the \$100,000 mark in total giving over the event's 16 year history! We at EUMA are so thankful for this dedicated group for their tremendous impact on our mission.

On Monday, June 18, a record group of 132 golfers participated in the 16th Annual Refuge Golf Tournament at The Riverside Golf Course in Cambridge Springs, PA. Taking the top spot in the scramble competition was G.H. Trumbo and his teammates from Wesley UMC.

“The growing success of the Refuge Golf Outing each year, as a fundraiser for the Erie United Methodist Alliance’s emergency family shelter, is due in large part to the compelling need of homeless families with children,” said Jim Renshaw, Committee Chair. “How could we not do everything we can to insure the viability of such a worthwhile mission?”

Congratulations to the winning team and to the committee on such a successful event!



*Top: Cheryl Davis, EUMA Executive Director, is presented with a check from Refuge Golf Committee representatives (from left) Jim Renshaw, Connie Close (third from left) and Cal Close. Bottom, from left: Willis Jeffries, Bishop Tom Bickerton, Rev. Dan Owen and Tori Moody team up to compete at the Refuge Golf Outing on June 18.*

# Outfitted for Success

## Team effort leads to employment for Refuge resident



It was a team effort to get “Javier” ready for a same-day job interview. The Refuge client, who at the time was staying at the emergency shelter with his wife and two children, had nothing to wear when he got the call for an interview just hours away.

The staff at The Refuge sent Javier to the Rainbow Connection, EUMA’s thrift store. There, the Rainbow Connection staff found him this suit, along with the shirt, tie and shoes . . . and even ironed the ensemble, while The Refuge staff printed copies of his resume.

“The staff at The Refuge and the Rainbow Connection made every effort to be sure he was ready to present his best to the interviewer,” said “Melissa,” Javier’s wife.

Everyone’s efforts paid off and Javier was offered the job! Congratulations, Javier, on your new job.

## Calendar Keepers - upcoming EUMA events

There are two special events coming up at EUMA that we wanted to share with you, our supporters. These events are open to the public and all are welcome to attend.

### Fall Tour - Tuesday, Sept. 25 (tentative)

Each year, we open our ministry sites to share with you all that we are accomplishing together through our programs. The event features a brief opening program, followed by carpools to our five ministry locations. The event usually lasts 2 to 3 hours, and is followed by a luncheon. General invitations will be mailed out to the United Methodist churches, or make a reservation at 814-456-8073.

*Watch our website for more details.*

### Fall Extravaganza - Friday, Nov. 9

Our Extravaganza Committee is busy planning a follow-up to last year’s wonderful event. This year, the Extravaganza is planned for Friday, Nov. 9 at the Sunset Inn, 1990 Lakeside Drive, Erie. The event will begin at 6 p.m. Keep an eye out for forthcoming information on our website and make plans to attend.

## Under Construction

[www.euma-erie.org](http://www.euma-erie.org)

By the end of this summer, visitors to our website should observe a great transformation. Through a grant from The NonProfit Partnership, EUMA has contracted with fh group, a local advertising agency, to revise our website and develop a new logo for us. We’re very excited by this opportunity and hope visitors will soon be able to navigate our website more easily and enjoyably. We’d like to thank The NonProfit Partnership for this amazing opportunity!

### *Response to Spring Appeal for Assistance*

This Spring, we sent out a special appeal for assistance during a season of financial difficulty. It is only through the generosity of our supporters that we are here and can continue to provide for the most intrinsic needs of those dealing with homelessness. We appreciate each and every supporter and church who stepped up to help us through this time of need. As we have always said, we are here for them because you are here for us. Thank You!

# Program Spotlight - Rainbow Connection

For more than 25 years, the Rainbow Connection has been providing quality, low-priced clothing and household items while supporting the mission of the Erie United Methodist Alliance.

Proceeds from sales at the thrift store benefit the programs at EUMA. But what many people don't know is that the Rainbow Connection is a ministry as well.

“Through our voucher assistance program, people-in-need who are served through our programs, as well as other area social service agencies, can get clothing and other necessities free of charge here at the Rainbow Connection,” explained Victoria Weber, store manager. “Last year, we gave out more than \$22,000 worth of items to people who were truly in need.”

The store, at 1516 Buffalo Road, is open to the public for shopping Monday through Friday, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The store will also gratefully accept donations during this time. By donating your gently used, unwanted items, you can know your contributions will directly impact the families, individuals, and Veterans being served by the ministries at EUMA.



## Thoughts from the Chaplain

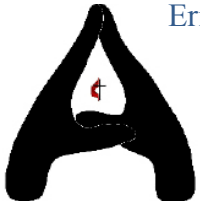
God promised long ago that there would always be seasons; for planting and harvest, for life and death, for joy and mourning. He didn't promise, however, that we would always embrace them and never complain. We're moving through the season of summer with the heat, sun, swimming, outdoor games, vacations, campfires, gardens and relaxation. ....at least that's what some folks experience. Some others, though, experience panic, homelessness and the loss of everything they know to be secure. Just imagine.

And yet another season is coming; the school year will be starting and autumn will bring the chill and then.....dare I say it.... winter, cold, snow. I don't think that it's too early to think about all these things because it will be here before we are ready.

Some of the folks we serve through the ministries of EUMA know only too well what it means to be unprepared for the changing of the seasons. Take a moment to think about what a child needs for the school year and changing weather. School uniforms, shoes and boots, socks and underwear, backpacks, coats and jackets, umbrellas, lunch boxes, school supplies, and a multitude of other unaffordable items. Did you know that parents in Erie are responsible to supply items like hand sanitizer, tissues, and Lysol wipes for the classrooms each of their children will attend? Parents at The Refuge and Hope House must do the same. So in addition to experiencing homelessness, they will have this extra financial burden.

God expects us to be His church. In the book of James in Chapter 2 vs. 15-16, the brother of Jesus says to us; “Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?” What good indeed. Please take a moment to remember your blessings and find a place in your heart for our families, children, Veterans, and single folks living on the street. They will all experience the coming seasons hoping to “keep warm and well fed” because God's Church will “show you [her] faith by [her] deeds” (Js 2:18b)

*-Karen Trask, CLM, EUMA Chaplain*



Erie United Methodist Alliance, Inc.  
1033 East 26th Street  
Erie, PA 16504-2951

**Return Service Requested**

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
ERIE, PA  
PERMIT NO. 131

Save a tree and our budget! Get newsletters electronically. To sign up, e-mail [info@euma-erie.org](mailto:info@euma-erie.org).

## **Ministries**

### **EUMA Office**

814-456-8073

### **The Refuge**

*Emergency homeless shelter  
for families*

1027 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504

814-454-6088

### **Hope House**

*Long-range housing with life-skills  
training for families*

1033 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504

814-456-8073

### **Liberty House**

*Long-range housing with life-skills  
training for Veterans*

550 W. 7th St. Erie, PA 16502

814-874-3687

### **Project Hope Outreach**

*On-the-street ministry*

1033 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504

814-456-5670

### **Rainbow Connection**

*Thrift store providing necessities  
to those in need*

*and financial support to EUMA*

1516 Buffalo Rd. Erie, PA 16510

814-453-4080

*Refrigerator Friend - cut-out reminder for Erie Gives*

## ***Erie Gives - It's a good day to give***



Watch your financial gifts to EUMA grow when you participate in Erie Gives, the Erie Community Foundation's 12-hour online giving program. On **Tuesday, August 14 – from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.** – the Erie Community Foundation will match a percentage of each donation of \$25 or more that you make to EUMA when you donate online through [www.eriegives.org](http://www.eriegives.org). The more donations made to EUMA, the more matching funds that our programs for homeless families, Veterans and those-in-need will receive. For more information, visit [www.eriegives.org](http://www.eriegives.org).

## **Success for school - adopt-a-child program**

As the new school year quickly approaches, the staff at The Refuge and Hope House have a special request. We are seeking churches to “adopt” one of our children and provide for his/her basic needs as they return to school.

Through this program, interested churches will be given the initials, sizes and specific needs of one child staying at one of our homeless shelters. The shopping list includes two pair of pants, three shirts (in uniform color), and a backpack filled with school-specific needs.

Although the number of children can change over the course of a few weeks, we currently have 16 school-aged children on our list. Interested churches can contact The Refuge directly at 814-454-6088 to be matched with a child as soon as possible.