

March 2009

Spring

## “Immerse” – in Trenton

### *Princeton Alliance Church Volunteers*

*By Susan Sprague Yeske*

The Rescue Mission of Trenton is the agency in the City of Trenton that serves the truly needy men and women who have no place to turn for shelter, food, and clothing. The Mission provides a safe, clean, warm refuge for the homeless, the hungry, the transient, the addicted. The Mission provides services and counseling to encourage individuals to reach their greatest potential. The Mission creates an environment where one can live with dignity, build self-esteem, experience love, responsibility and hope.

#### **Services include:**

**Vince's Place:** Licensed by the State of NJ, Department of Human Services, as a Residential Addictions Treatment Facility (75 beds).

**Outpatient Program:** Substance abuse care for men and women providing counseling sessions, group counseling sessions, and addiction education. Referral for medical, behavioral health care, and other services as appropriate.

**Robinson Program:** Licensed by the State of NJ, Department of Community Affairs, Class C Rooming & Boarding House (50 beds).

#### **Weekend Soup Kitchen**

#### **Emergency clothing and furniture**

**Emergency Shelter:** Shelter for single men and women. Licensed by the State of NJ, Department of Community Affairs.

**TEACH Program:** Individuals are provided training in GED preparation, basic literacy, reading/writing skills, job seeking skills and computer and word processing skills.

**Industrial Salvage:** Donated materials are collected by route trucks and processed and sold through the Carroll Street Store and warehouse. The Mission depends on Industrial Salvage for 40% of its operating budget.

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“It was only a 15-to-20-minute ride on Route 1 from her home in West Windsor to the Trenton Rescue Mission, but it was like traveling to a different world,” said Kelly DeForest.

“I’ve done missions before, but to see the need in my own backyard was very eye-opening,” said Mrs. DeForest, a member of the leadership team of Princeton Alliance Church in Plainsboro. “I thought to myself, here’s a place so close to my home where people are waiting for a place to stay.”

Mrs. DeForest is among a group of volunteers from the 1,000-member church who visit the Mission one Saturday morning each month to help sort and hang clothes and other items donated to the Mission store. The program is part of an increased community outreach by the church, and is a mission for the young adults’ group, Immerse.

“Church is not just going to services,” said Mrs. DeForest, who has attended the church for 17 years and served as a youth director at Princeton Alliance before the birth of her first child. “Christ was where the people were. It’s about reaching out to the lost and the needy.”

Beginning with her initial tour of the Mission facilities, she said she was impressed. “My heart is really there,” she said. “What they are doing is really awesome.”

“During the church’s first visit to the Mission, a group of 22 workers was able to make their way through a small mountain of clothing that had been donated at that time,” Mrs. DeForest said. They were told it was a first for the Mission for all the clothing to be sorted and hung on hangers and racks.

In subsequent weeks, teams of young people have come to the Mission one Saturday morning each month. There they have sorted clothes, straightened the racks of the store that is the lifeblood of the Mission and crucial to the nearby community, and worked their way through piles of Christmas ornaments, sorting and bagging them for next year. The young people, ages 18-30, were happy to be there.

“As we looked for service projects, we wanted to make a presence in our community,” said Kyle Whitlow of Princeton Junction. “It’s important to be involved in our community and to serve,” he said.

“What the Mission does is amazing,” said Arie Hoogendoorn of Plainsboro, who said he also has worked on missions to Appalachia. “This is just as important, if not more important,” he said. The volunteer work is an opportunity to give back, said Travis Black of West Windsor, who with wife Jill put clothes onto hangers, preparing them to be hung in the store.

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# FOCUS ON

## ...Sasa Olessi Montana & Michael Farewell

By Susan Sprague Yeske

Two former members of the Rescue Mission Board of Trustees are back on the board, determined to help the Mission weather the nation's current economic storm.

Michael Farewell of Farewell Mills Gatch Architects, and Sasa Olessi Montana, who until last fall served as Director of Housing and Economic Development for the City of Trenton, bring different strengths to the tasks ahead. Both cite the important work of the Mission and their continuing admiration for the leadership of executive director Mary Gay Abbott-Young as reasons for their return.

"All of us are feeling duress," said Mr. Farewell of the nation's economic problems. "In these trying times this segment of the population really needs the attention."

"These are challenging times for the Mission," agreed Ms. Olessi Montana, a Trenton resident. "What the Mission does is a huge service to Mercer County and beyond."

Mr. Farewell, who served on the board from 1988 to 2002 and as president from 1993-1994, became involved in other charitable works after he left the board. Recently he was approached by a board member. "We started talking and recollecting and it seemed like a good time to come back," he said.

Ms. Olessi Montana, who served from 2001-2004 and left because of a conflict of interest with her work, said she had wanted to return at the earliest opportunity. That came in November, after she returned from Spain, where she had been caring for an ailing relative.

Mr. Farewell brings to the board his extensive business experience as a partner in a thriving Mercer County enterprise. "It's great to be able to provide the help and support and offer a business model," he said, citing the vocation component of the Mission's work.

He also brings architectural expertise, which can be helpful in determining the use of the Rescue Mission property on Carroll Street. "I bring an architectural sensitivity to space needs as well," he said. "They have that amazing complex of buildings."

Major accomplishments during his term as president included the renovation of the emergency shelter and improving the residential building so that it was up to code and in conformance with licensure requirements. He served as Chair and Co-Chair of

the Facility Committee for more than a dozen years.

Ms. Olessi Montana has spent her career in social services, including several years as executive director of the YWCA of Trenton. She also was a founding director of the PACE Center for Community Service at Princeton University and deputy director of the Mercer County Department of Human Services. She brings those experiences to the table, plus her service on the Mission board during the economic downturn that followed the attack on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

"After 2001 our concerns were rising insurance costs, which went through the roof," she said. "But I have not seen anything like this before. Clothing donations are down, as well as purchases in the store. Foundations that offer financial support have less money to give. It is a very tough time."

Both trustees have faith in the management skills of Mary Gay Abbott-Young. "The opportunity to work with Mary Gay again is an amazing thing," said Farewell. "She is one of the staff's great people and makes a tremendous difference." "Mary Gay is amazing," agreed Olessi Montana. "She's still fresh and thinking about new things for the Mission. I'm a great fan of hers."

Working with the Mission staff in general was a draw for Farewell. "I think its important work and I have a lot of respect for the people who do it," he said. "It's an infectious thing when you work with people who keep the world running."

Farewell's architectural credentials include an addition and renovations to the United States Golf Association Museum and Archives in Far Hills, NJ; renovations to the New Jersey State Museum; and the Dorothy Young Center for the Arts Music Hall at Drew University. He currently is working on a new library for Fairleigh Dickinson University; a Master Plan and expansion of the Princeton Charter School; a Concept Design and Strategic Master Plan for the Thomas Edison Menlo Park Museum; and a Master Plan and expansion for the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association.

Olessi Montana's credentials include serving as vice president for community services at Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey and work with the Children's Home Society. She was founder and executive director of Latinas Unidas in Trenton and has worked with the New Jersey Judiciary System, Womanspace Inc. and taught Spanish at Rider University.

## Princeton Alliance Church *(Continued from page 1)*

"We feel like we have a lot of stuff that's given to us and we want to help those who don't have as much," said Travis Black, echoing the Christian belief that "from those to whom much is given, much is expected."

Their church, which is affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, has missions around the world. Missionary work is an integral part of the church's beliefs. Michelle Nikitzuk of North Brunswick said the Mission's work with ex-inmates is especially important. "My mother and I were interested in finding a program to help former inmates get on their feet," she said. "God was calling us. I think that what the Rescue Mission does is awesome."

Jill Larsen of Plainsboro was no stranger to the Mission; while still a student at The College of New Jersey, she bought not one but two sofas for her apartment. "An added bonus to helping the Mission is being able to spend time with friends," she said.

"For the Mission, it's a much-needed infusion of youthful energy," said Doug Liebau, director of entrepreneurial and training. "It's great supplemental labor, especially on a Saturday morning, when many of the Mission's residents are permitted to visit with their families. It lets us keep operating smoothly, and helps us accomplish tasks we don't have the manpower to do. It's a great way for people to get to know the Mission," he added, "and builds a base in the community."

"Other recent volunteers have included a cheerleading team from an area high school and a basketball team," Liebau said. "They really did a lot of work, showing off their ability to work as a team. And they were cheerful to have around."

Those were one-time opportunities, while the members of Immerse will be back each month. "We would like to do this on a regular basis and build a relationship with the Mission," said Michelle Nikitzuk as she sorted through sacks of donated clothes.

**TO REGISTER YOUR GROUP TO VOLUNTEER CALL 609-695-1436 EXT. 102**



## JOIN OUR LIST OF VOLUNTEERS



**Rutgers University**



**Rider University**



**Bloomberg, L.P.**

## Holidays...A Special Time of the Year at the Mission

As has been the case for decades, the Mission this past year once again assembled holiday gift bags for each of our residents. This year's gift bags were paid for through a generous holiday gift of \$10,000 from TYCO International. With the help of the donation the Mission was able to purchase socks, underwear, personal hygiene items, coffee cups, and sweatshirts for the residents and shelter clients. A volunteer group from Bloomberg, LLC assembled all the packages for distribution.

Contributions from Princeton Corridor Rotary Club, Trenton Rotary, Harris Interactive, and numerous other local businesses enabled the Mission to once again provide items for residents to distribute to their children. The Mission staff hosted a "Santa's workshop" for residents to select the toys and personally wrap each gift right down to the ribbons and bows.

Once again this year the Princeton Garden Statesmen provided the residents with a special holiday performance. There was a special "bingo" night where residents had the opportunity to win gift certificates, walkman radios, and calling cards.



Special meals were served on both Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. The meals were greatly enhanced by the many turkeys and hams which were donated and the dozens of pastries, pies, and rolls donated by the community. We want to thank the Mercer Street Friends Food Bank for supplementing the turkeys donated by the community, the Marriott Lafayette Hotel and Action Realty for their donations of turkeys, hams, and various different food products.



## THE MISSION CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE YOUR SUPPORT

If you did not respond to our end of the year appeal please do so now.  
We cannot serve those most in need in our community without your support.

\$35    \$50    \$100    \$500    \$1,000    other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send check and coupon to: **Rescue Mission of Trenton**, P.O. Box 790, Trenton, NJ 08605-0790

# 5th Annual Adam Shanks Memorial Miniature Golf Masters Tournament A Huge Success

This year's tournament was held on Friday, February 27th. In spite of the severe economic downturn, the tournament had a record number of participants and sponsors. "We very much appreciate the support the community showed towards the Mission's work through their support of this event," indicated Bonnie Baker, the President of the Mission Board of Directors. "We are especially pleased that the majority of our co-sponsors and many of the golfers have been with us for all five years."

Tom McMahon, Esq., a member of the Mission board and a repeat golfer, indicated that "he looked forward each year to the event as a break from the winter doldrums. It is a lot of fun with lots of good-natured 'golf kibitzing'. I especially like that the event is catered in-house and that after the event is staged for the community, the Mission's residents who erected and decorated the course, play it and prizes are awarded to them."

This year's event was co-sponsored by The Shanks Family, The Penguin Group, Bind-Rite Robbinsville, Borden Perlman Agency, Command Web-New Jersey, Hutchinson Industries, and Wilmington Trust. More than 50 individuals and companies sponsored holes on the two courses. We also received over 30 items to be auctioned off in the silent auction and the first gift basket raffle.

The winner of the North course tournament was Andrew Orlando of the Penguin Group and the winner of the South course tournament was Ed Baker. The most honest golfers were Barbara O'Shay and Danielle Wilson.

Mary Gay Abbott-Young, the Mission's CEO extended a special thanks to Jessica Shanks who sent more than 200 hundred personal invitations to friends, family and business associates of her grandfather, the late Adam Shanks, a long-time esteemed member of the Mission board and an avid golfer for whom the tournament was named three years ago. She also thanked the Mission's Event Planning Committee composed of Bonnie Baker, Denise Rath Higgins, Patricia Kidd, and Pascal Serandarian, and MaryAnn Rexrode for their efforts in planning and staging the event. The event raised more than \$42,000 in funds used to help the Mission in its efforts to Rebuild Lives.



## **Tournament Hosts**

*Bind-Rite Robbinsville, LLC;  
Borden Perlman; Command  
Web Offset; Hutchinson  
Industries; The Penguin Group  
USA; The Shanks Family;  
Wilmington Trust- NJ FSB*

## **Event Sponsors**

*Arvato Print, USA; Joseph and  
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## **Additional Contributors**

*Best Trucks; Patricia A. Borg;  
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## Did You Know... *Did You Know ...*

- ✓ The Mission recently received a check in the amount of \$20,246 from Battle Against Hunger for last year's bike ride. This event which is sponsored by Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, PLG, has raised almost \$320,000 in the past six years. We salute the fantastic Battle Against Hunger Team which includes the organization's many corporate and individual supporters, its riders and Support and Gear. This year's ride is schedule for September 11th & 12th and Kinny's Walk will be held in Mercer County Park on June 6th.
- ✓ The Stockton Inn collected over \$3,900 from proceeds from the 2008 Thanksgiving Dinner served and designated the funds for the Rescue Mission of Trenton.
- ✓ Dwight Elstner recently assumed the position of Job Development Specialist for the Rescue Mission of Trenton. Other staff news includes Joyce Williams who now serves as the Emergency Services/HAR Program Manager and Barrett Young who recently received his CADC License and is in the position of Counselor/Operations Manager.
- ✓ Our volunteer program welcomes all churches, synagogues, civic associations, corporations, schools who are interested in volunteering their time at the Mission. All interested parties should contact MaryAnn Rexrode at 609-695-1436 ext. 102 to reserve their dates. Group volunteer opportunities are available Monday through Friday every week.

The Rescue Mission of Trenton is not affiliated with any other organization in the U.S. listed as Rescue Mission. It is a private non-profit organization.

## **RESCUE MISSION OF TRENTON**

98 CARROLL STREET, P.O. BOX 790  
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