

Sharing the Good + News

Spring/Summer 2015

2015 Helping Hands Award Honorees: Frank & Mary Therese Riley



Frank and Mary Therese Riley, this year's Helping Hands Award recipients, are much deserving of this honor. Their continued generosity and service extends beyond their parish walls and into the greater community.

Frank, originally from the Buffalo area, married Mary Therese McCormick at St. Peter Cathedral in 1962. A veteran of the Marine Corps, Frank was a member of the Cathedral Association of Parents and Educators for over two decades. He remains involved in their parish as a lector, usher, and collection counter.

Mary Therese, an Erie native, is a graduate of Villa Maria Academy. Prior to starting their family, Mary Therese taught children with special needs. At St. Peter, she is involved with religious education, pastoral council, the Women's Council Advisory Board, and the development committee.

The additional committee work and volunteer efforts of Frank and Mary Therese are numerous. Together they have served the Barber National Institute and various other charities. Frank recalls with pleasure the privilege he had of dancing the first dance at the annual Christmas Ball with the late Dr. Gertrude A. Barber, while Mary Therese affectionately remembers the pleasure of serving as chair couple.

While service is central to the Riley's lives, their Catholic faith is the nucleus. This faith continues with their 6 children and 12 grandchildren as well. It is as an extension of their faith that they became involved with the Bishop's Breakfast Program, an outreach ministry of Catholic Charities that serves homeless persons five mornings a week. The Rileys accepted this year's Helping Hands



Frank & Mary Therese Riley
Helping Hands Award Honorees

Award in hope of raising awareness of the program and its growing need for volunteers. "There is nothing that compares to the power behind the 'thank you' that is shared by someone who genuinely appreciates it", Frank stated. Catholic Charities could not agree more. THANK YOU, Frank and Mary Therese; your Church and Community are very grateful to you as well.



Agencies and Services:

Good Samaritan Center Shelter for Temporarily Homeless Men; Food/ Financial Referrals

St. Martin Center Emergency Assistance; Early Learning Center; Nutrition Education; Housing Counseling

Prince of Peace Center Soup Kitchen; Budget Counseling; Thrift Store; Food Distribution; Home Case Management & Life Skills; Transitional Housing for Homeless Women and Men

St. Elizabeth Center Food Pantry; Thrift Store

Counseling & Adoption Professional Counseling; Pregnancy Counseling; Problem Gambling Counseling; Anger Management Groups; Sexual Abstinence Program; Project Rachel; Adoption Services; Refugee Resettlement

Christ the King Manor Continuing Care Retirement Community Providing Skilled Nursing Care, Personal Care, Alzheimer Units, Rehabilitation Services, Home Support and Independent Living Cottages

Saint John XXIII Home Assisted Living; Respite; Physical Therapy; Alzheimer Services; Long-Term Care; Occupational Therapy

Harborcreek Youth Services Campus-Based Residential Facilities; Assessment/Diagnostic Services; Private Education; Drug and Alcohol Counseling; Community Service; Work Experience; Multi-systemic Therapy and Therapeutic Foster Care; Campus Ministry

Better Homes 52 Units of Affordable Housing; Social Services for Families

PASTORAL SERVICES

Family Life: Pre-Cana, Engagement Encounter, NOVA, Worldwide Marriage Encounter, "Families Always Matter", Family Perspectives, Transitions

Disabilities: Deaf Ministry, Parish Advocacy, Spiritual Enrichment, PALS, Victorious Missionaries, Faith & Light, Mental Health Spirituality Outreach

Parish Social Ministry: Parish Care & Concern, Bereavement, Elizabeth Ministry, Justice & Peace/Respect Life Advocacy, Rainbows

Mission: Mission of Friendship, Propagation of the Faith, Mission Education, Holy Childhood Association

Rural: Pastoral & Ecumenical Outreach, Spiritual Support, Parish Education, Retreats/Enrichment Day Programs, Faith Sharing Groups

All-Faith Focus on...

Helping People Most in Need

Bishop's Breakfast Program Helps Those in Need

In 2007, Bishop Emeritus Donald Trautman became aware of the growing problem of hunger among homeless persons in the Erie Community. In deciding how best to fill this need, the Bishop's Breakfast Program was born.

Catholic Charities and Bishop Trautman provided the initial "seed" money to get the program off the ground. From the beginning, St. Martin Center (SMC) has been a key program partner. SMC manages the program's finances, food preparation, and delivery of the hot food to St. Paul's United Church of Christ at 1024 Peach Street. Volunteers from St. Peter Cathedral Parish, coordinated by parishioners Mary Therese and Frank Riley, serve the food to waiting individuals five days per week.

It became apparent to all involved that those coming for breakfast each morning needed more than just a hot meal. Margie Olszewski, Social Service Administrator at SMC, explains: "Within the first year, staff from our Social Service Department began to facilitate an outreach program to bring services and information to the clients at the Bishop's Breakfast Program. There have been many services provided to these clients over the years, including food, vouchers for clothing and self-serve laundry, medical prescriptions, eyeglasses, rent, and utility assistance."

Matching a person with the services they need is not always easy. Many people who frequent the Bishop's Breakfast Program are transients. Others, for various reasons, are hesitant to trust those who want to help. Margie explains: "A relationship with some of our clients from the Bishop's Breakfast Program must be forged over time. We help many people right away, but, for others, building a relationship of trust must happen first."

Much has been learned by working with clients in need of social services. "It has taught me, as an individual, to know how fortunate I am. The biggest difference between shelter clients and other people who fall on hard times are that shelter clients have very poor support systems," explains Margie. "I try to make them aware change is possible. I try to give them hope."



Margie Olszewski helps Willie Austin at the Bishop's Breakfast Program.



Harborcreek Youth Services

Harborcreek Youth Services

In 1955, Marion Anderson became the first African American singer to perform at the Met (NYC). Dr. Jonas Salk successfully tested the Polio Vaccine. "In God We Trust" was put on currency. And in Erie County, a school with a half-sized gym was erected as part of the Catholic Boys Protectors.

The Protectors took on many names before becoming Harborcreek Youth Services (HYS). Still, it has stayed true to its mission of helping youth triumph over adversity.

Presently, HYS can house up to 70 residential clients, ranging in age from 10 to 18. All of these young men share the same indoor recreational space, the original gym from 1955.

Ties of Friendship: Diocesan Mission & Gannon University

After a flight lasting more than nine hours and traveling nearly thirty-one hundred miles away from Erie, a group of missionaries arrived in Mérida, the largest city on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula.

Late in February, eight missionaries, including six students from Gannon University, made a weeklong trip to the Misión de Amistad (Mission of Friendship) in Mérida, as part of the University's Alternative Break Service Trips (ABST) program.

The mission is approaching its forty-fifth year as part of the Sister Diocese relationship between the Diocese of Erie and the Archdiocese of Yucatán.

Among its services, the mission offers an after school program for girls, a medical program, a sponsorship program, and a daycare center. Volunteer groups who want to assist at the Misión de Amistad are always welcome.

Janet Armbruster, who works with career and employment services at Gannon, accompanied the group. This was her third trip to the Mission of Friendship, her first being when she was a Gannon student in 1972.

"You come away from this experience with a greater sense of what is important in life," shares Armbruster, "it's not the money, social status, [or] things... It is service – serving and allowing others to serve you."

"The Mission of Friendship lives and breathes its Catholic faith everyday and I wanted to see this first hand," explains Kevin Holland, a student leader for the trip and a third year seminarian with the Erie Diocese.

Mission trips have been part of Holland's life since his first trip in his junior year of high school. He claims he would not be the person he is now without his service experience.



Mission Volunteers, from left to right: Trica Pipkin, Coordinator of the Mission of Friendship, Kevin Holland, Raven Saunders, Abby Jabaratnam, Chelsey Butterbaugh, Sammy Taylor, Janet Armbruster, Deacon Steven Washek, and Leah Johnson

Holland expresses that his greatest take-away from the Mission of Friendship was learning how powerful a simple smile can be.

"It doesn't matter if the other person knows English or not," reflects Holland. "When two people can stop what they are doing to share a laugh and smile, you can tell that God has entered into that moment."

To find out more about this group's service trip and other service opportunities, visit Gannon University's website at gannon.edu, keyword search "ABST".

To learn more about the Mission of Friendship and how you can become involved, please visit eriercd.org/missions4.asp.

Grows to Meet the Future Needs of Residents

In the summer, HYS has enough outdoor space for a dirt bike program, a swimming pool, and a plethora of other activities in which the boys participate. However, in the winter, space is limited. Units take turns using the gym, causing the boys to feel "cramped" during the long winter months.

"We're proud that we have outgrown our space," says Amanda Karns, the community outreach coordinator for HYS, "but we also don't want to keep teenagers cooped up all winter."

HYS is proposing the construction of an addition to the existing gym to give the boys more space for activities. According to CEO John Petulla, HYS is hoping to raise enough funds to help with the cost of the new addition. He hopes to enhance physical activity choices as well as art and music therapy.

"I would like to be able to give our boys more opportunities during the winter," Petulla says.

The therapeutic and recreation center would feature a full-sized basketball court, a walking track, multipurpose rooms for art and music therapy, and a home economics room.

"I think the Therapeutic Recreational Center would be good for residents to blow off steam...," says one of HYS's residents. "I really think that it would help [us] out a lot."

Although it is still in the beginning phases, Petulla hopes to complete the addition by the winter of 2016. For more information about the effort, go to www.hys-erie.org.



Hope Animal-Assisted Crisis Response Volunteers and HYS Student

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429 East Grandview Blvd. • Erie, PA 16504

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MISSION STATEMENT

As Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie, we are witnesses and servants of Jesus Christ. Consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church, we provide health care, social and pastoral services for those in need, regardless of faith. Catholic Charities is committed to the sacredness of human life and the betterment of society.

SERVING PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS

New Executive Director Named for Catholic Charities

Following 10 years as director of the Family Life Office for the Diocese of Erie, Ann Badach has stepped into the role of executive director of Catholic Charities.

Bishop Lawrence Persico officially announced the appointment on Jan. 7. Ann began her new duties on March 2.

"I have every confidence in Ann's good work and in her commitment to Catholic Charities," Bishop Persico said.

As executive director, Ann is responsible for overseeing the work of Catholic Charities' affiliate agencies and pastoral programs for the 13-county diocese, while serving as liaison between those agencies and the bishop.

"I am humbled to serve in this role," Ann says. "We have some of the most dedicated servant leaders in all of Pennsylvania, and I look forward to all that God will ask of us in the months and years to come."



Having worked in pastoral leadership since 2004, Ann brings a unique background of experience and skill to her new role. With a bachelor's degree in family ecology from Mercyhurst University and a master's in public administration/pastoral leadership from Gannon University, Ann spent several years in the area of family counseling and adoption casework in Erie. She is a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, Erie, where she and her husband, Greg, have been involved in the choir, have served as lectors, and facilitate weekly gatherings with their Christian community.

Ann succeeds Mary Maxwell, who retired in February after 35 years of dedicated service to the Diocese of Erie. Mary spent 11 of those years as executive director of Catholic Charities and 22 years as director of Family Ministries.

We hope you share in our joy and excitement for the future of Catholic Charities under Ann's leadership. Please join us as we offer our congratulations and prayers for her in this new ministry.