



N E W S L E T T E R

The Gratitude Issue

My New Attitude of Gratitude

We have all walked along the streets of major cities in America, and we have seen the increasing number of people who call those streets their home. In desperation they are struggling to survive. Most are suffering from mental illness. Many are addicted and physically disabled. I have felt so helpless in the face of such suffering. Since we opened the Grace Center and I see folks in poverty, a new wave of love and gratitude comes over me. In Gloucester our faith groups and concerned citizens are stepping up to change the world. We are responding to this crisis of economic inequality by rushing in to do the work of compassion and justice. I no longer feel helpless. I have a new feeling of joy and thanksgiving for what YOU our volunteers and donors are doing to fix this broken world! Grace to you and Peace! My heart is filled with gratitude for you and your gifts of mercy.

Rev. Tom Bentley
Executive Director

A Note from One of our Guests

My name is Grace. When I first came here I felt so lost until I found Action Inc. and Grace Center. I am the only deaf person here but I am always made to feel welcome and accepted. It is not easy to socialize, and communication can be hard, but I use paper to write out messages to others. I also struggle with my sobriety. People here are really patient with me. I lived in the shelter from October of last year until two months ago when I got housing at the Gloucester YMCA. Even though I have my own place, I still come into Grace Center to have lunch and see friends. Grace Center welcomes all – the homeless, the mentally ill and those just looking for a place to spend time during the day. I am very thankful for the staff and volunteers here who are friendly and nice. Sometimes we play games and talk. I want Grace Center to continue to stay strong. I'm really glad I found this place.

If You are Reading This Newsletter, This Message is for You

There are some compelling numbers to report to you in this issue. To date we have reached the 500 mark – that is, the number of separate individuals that have come through our doors since our opening in December of 2011. Our three host churches have been providing us with a welcoming space for two and a half years, the equivalent of \$2,000 a month in in-kind facilities usage. Our volunteers have given us the value of \$3,000 per week in donated service hours. Open Door donates food for as many as 60 people per day, or 12,000 lunches since we began this mission. Jim's Donuts has been giving us pastry for breakfast which amounts to about 9,000 donuts thus far.

In addition to the large donation from Ralph Bates last December, twenty churches from Cape Ann and other North Shore towns have helped us with funds totaling \$34,000. Seventeen local

businesses have given us a total of \$36,000. Seaside Graphics does our printing at a substantial discount. We have given out 1,300 vouchers for clothing and



household items for guests to redeem at Second Glance, The Cape Ann Thrift Store at Trinity Church, as well as St. John's Thrift Store. St Vincent de Paul, through Holy Family Parish, gives guests new beds and

other furniture for their apartments when moving out of the shelter. The YMCA allows guests to use their facilities for showering.

We could not run Grace Center without the generosity of all these community members, individuals and business owners, and we cannot thank them enough.

I don't think I am alone in feeling that Grace Center is a constant source of blessings. I am grateful for the lessons I learn each day. Our common humanity is always in evidence here at our center.

One of our board members and Wednesday volunteer Susmita Lavery stated it best. "I get more from being here with our guests than I could possibly give back."

We truly owe all of our supporters, through their financial gifts, items, or gifts of time our immense gratitude for all you do.

Christine Bobek
Program Director

Services and Events at Grace Center



While we offer a welcoming space and great food for breakfast and lunch at Grace Center, we do much more than that during our hours of operation. To further the many goals we have for our guests to improve their lives in any way possible, we provide needed social services and referrals, as well as yoga, meditation and stress management for any interested guests in the afternoons. We have expanded the activities we offer in therapeutic arts with artist Anna Lane guiding groups in painting and glass projects.

In June we had author and teacher Ray McGinnis from Vancouver, BC come to offer two workshops. One was for our volunteers and others in the faith community, and the second for the guests. In the workshop for our guests, called, Remembering Stories from our Lives that Matter, the participants were given journals to decorate in the art program prior to the class. We are offering these writing workshops again in October and are working on having an ongoing creative writing program each week.

The art and crafts produced in the afternoon workshops are either taken home by the guests or sold at our table at the Cape Ann Farmer's Market and other craft venues. These sales provide revenue to fund the art program, and serve as another opportunity for outreach to the greater community. In the fall we are planning a program called *Through My Lens*, giving guests cameras and the opportunity to document their world, and a venue to exhibit the finished photographs.



Journal-making During Grace Center Art Program

From our Volunteers . . .



Years ago I was a volunteer at the Open Door where my daughter still works. My wife and I started to volunteer at the Grace Center soon after it

opened. I have been volunteering for the Grace Center for over two years now. I pick up food at the Open Door for the Tuesday meals and then help out some in the kitchen, although the women in the kitchen may take exception to the word "help." I am called to this wonderful, exciting, spiritual, and even fun mission as it is so important for me to share the many blessings that I have in my life with others. I pray that my service to others in this way is an act of love which, in my case, is based on my faith.

Joe Perry

My name is Sonia. My husband and I have worked hard over the years and now enjoy

retirement. We are so grateful for good times and good health. I also have a son who is getting married this year!

I love to volunteer at the Grace Center, and give back what I can. It is a special place for me, and I look forward each week to helping out with the meals and chatting with our guests. The other volunteers are great, and we have fun while chopping and dicing! The atmosphere is warm and I hope our people feel comfortable here. When the guests tell us they are grateful, it makes my day. I get so much out of this experience, and I see life with a new perspective.

Sonia Gates



Summer Hours of Operation 8:30-4:30

Tuesday

Trinity CC, 70 Middle Street

Wednesday

St. John's Church, 48 Middle Street

Thursday

Trinity CC, 70 Middle Street

Grace Center is gratefully accepting yarn, art supplies, gift cards, toiletries and paper goods.

For more information about our program contact Christine Bobek at (978) 675-6240

To learn more about volunteering contact Jane Stephens at (413) 281-8452

To make a donation contact Rev. Tom Bentley at (978) 973-2362