



The Companion

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www.emmauserie.org

Water and sun
green these plants.
When the rain
of compassion falls,
even the desert becomes
a vast fertile plain.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Photo by Art Becker

FROM SISTER MARY:

Dear Friends of Emmaus,

Some of my most precious childhood memories are around food: walking with my father in his small “victory” garden, picking elderberries from the bush in our backyard and helping my mother bake pies, each evening the entire family gathering around the table for a home cooked meal, and...oh, my mother’s chicken and biscuits. I learned early on that you can put a lot of love into a meal by the way it is prepared and served.

Of course the Bible overflows with prayers about rich juicy food and pure choice wine, of strangers welcomed as angels in the sharing of a meal. The gospels abound with food imagery—Jesus compares the reign of God to a wedding feast; He freely distributes bread and fish to the crowds, and He’s always attending a fish fry with his friends. At death, He asks us to remember him through food and drink, bread and wine. And my favorite image—when Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene on Easter morning she takes Him for a gardener: a grower of flowers and food.

It’s a privilege then to have most of my adult life’s work be about food. Specifically, about food for the hungry. So in this issue of *The Companion* we celebrate food in all its glory—growing it, preparing it, serving it and feasting on it. But food is only the surface of what Emmaus is really about.

Our numbers at the Soup Kitchen have been staggering recently. Last week, after we had served a record number of 215 adults and 30 children, I overheard a few guests talking about it. “We’re so blessed,” one of them said, “that we have someone who cares for us. Lots of places don’t have anyone who cares.”

We serve food, yes, but “care” is why Emmaus exists. Devoid of care and love, food is only a means to survive. At Emmaus we try to touch the deeper question, “Why should I survive?” We try to be that place where people care.

Sister Mary



Growing the Food

“IT’S THE MIRACLE ON EAST 11TH STREET,” remarked Sister Mary Miller, director, at the ribbon cutting ceremony of Emmaus Grove: The Erie Urban Farm School.

Over 100 volunteers, sponsors, religious and government officials and friends gathered at Emmaus Grove to hang the official sign, bless the 64-raised beds in the garden, offer a prayer and listen to select remarks from those in attendance. The dedication included a community “seed drop” where guests dropped carrot seeds—including seeds from Thomas Jefferson’s garden—in a ritual of unity and support.

The brainchild of volunteers Ellen DiPlacido and Rosemary Gantz, the 4,000 square-foot Urban Farm not only contains over 100 species of vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs but also serves as a school, offering classes in organic gardening.



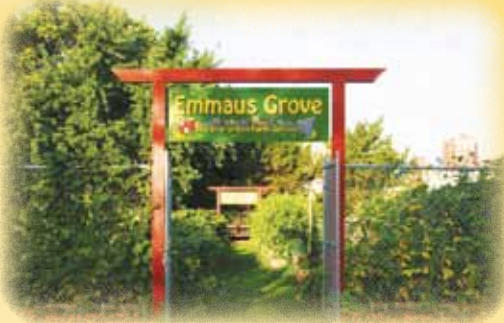
Rosemary Gantz and Ellen DiPlacido

I want to grow joy...you simply cannot walk into this little Farm of ours and not see something you’ve never seen before and this makes people smile. Not only do I want to give people access to fresh, more nutritional and safe food, but I also want to positively affect the quality of lives of people in our city. Emmaus Grove is a place to experience nature, improve the environment, volunteer, learn, build community and to see the good in everyone and everything grow, grow, grow.... With urban farming, we can change the face of the city and the faces in the city.

—Rosemary Gantz, co-founder, Emmaus Grove

I hope to grow a “network of gardeners” through Emmaus Grove. I want people to come to the Urban Farm and learn how to grow healthy, organic produce and then go home and start a garden of any size that will help feed their families. I believe in the proverb—“Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to fish and you can feed them for a lifetime.” I myself learned gardening in a former job working side by side with refugees, many of them farmers in their former countries. I improved their language skills and they taught me the joy and worth of gardening.

—Ellen DiPlacido, co-founder, Emmaus Grove



Art Becker

Preparing the Food

Shirley Whaley, Soup Kitchen Chef



SHIRLEY WHALEY, the chef of Emmaus Soup Kitchen, prepares a home-cooked meal every day for anywhere between 175 to 250 guests. In the spirit of

Joan Chittister’s quote, her meals are tasty, spicy, comforting, filled with love and enable so many needy to face a new tomorrow.

You prepare a lot of meals. Do you have a favorite?

I HAVE THREE OR FOUR FAVORITE CASSEROLE RECIPES. I like to prepare casseroles with chicken and either stuffing, rice or biscuits. Casseroles, for me are comfort food. They make a meal with “stick to your ribs” goodness. Sometimes the casseroles I prepare reflect my mood. For example, if I am feeling adventurous, I can end up using new seasonings and spices or I might use donated food items that came to the Soup Kitchen that morning. I also love to make soups. My favorite is chicken noodle and I know it is a favorite of our Soup Kitchen guests. Who doesn’t like homemade chicken soup?



Food preparation teaches us to do everything we can to make life palatable, spicy, comforting, full of love. Cooking for other people is the way we wish them well for tomorrow and enable them to attain it.

—Joan Chittister

Serving the Food

CLOSE TO 150 VOLUNTEERS serve meals each month at Emmaus Soup Kitchen. They range in age from the late teens to early 80's. The volunteer who has been with Emmaus the longest is Martha Hilbert. She has been a faithful server and dishwasher for 32 years. *The Companion* invites you to get a glimpse into her beautiful soul.

Interview with Martha Hilbert

What brought you to the Soup Kitchen 30 years ago?

It was a time in my life when I looked around and realized how blessed I was. I wanted to share those blessings, to do something good with my life. A Sister friend recommended that I try the Soup Kitchen and it's been my home ever since.

One human face that comes to mind when I say "Soup Kitchen guest."

Oh, that's easy—Larry. He was a very intelligent man who fell on hard times. And yet he was always pleasant and interesting to talk to. I think he was a very successful roofer at one time but through a series of life circumstances ended up living in a sewer until he came to the Soup Kitchen. Sister Mary and others helped find him a

place to live. If I needed a reason to care for someone, Larry was the one I would look to.

Do you have a favorite bible quote or story?

Above my desk at home, I have these words framed: What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humble with your God.—Micah 6:8 I use these words to model my life by—what is God asking of me? That's what I try to do.

I also like The Book of Ruth in the Old Testament because it tells me that each of us is born for a special time. In the special time given to us we can make a difference, even if it's helping just one other person.

To read the complete interview go to www.emmauserie.org



For years, Martha Hilbert and her family members have provided a delicious ice cream treat for Soup Kitchen guests. Pictured from left are: Olivia, John and Tim Hilbert, Martha's grandchildren; Martha Hilbert; and, Nancy Hilbert, Martha's daughter-in-law.

Feasting on the Food

Looking at Your Empty Bowl

*My bowl, empty now,
Will soon be filled
with precious food.
Beings all over the Earth
are struggling to live.
How fortunate we are
to have enough to eat.*



When many people on this Earth look at an empty bowl, they know their bowl will continue to be empty for a long time. So the empty bowl is as important to honor as the full bowl. We are grateful to have food to eat, and with this short meditation, we can vow to help those who are hungry.

—from *Earth Gathas: Meditations for Mindful Living*
by Thich Nhat Hanh

SHOE and SPLASH BASH



Chantal was looking for a pair of boots. Tyrone chose a pair of Airwalks. Gina and her sister picked out the same sneakers. These four shoppers were among the busload of Kids Cafe children who stopped at **Pay-less Shoe Store in the Liberty Plaza** on their way to the annual Splash Lagoon outing. For seven consecutive years the **Russian Orthodox Church of the Nativity** has sponsored School Shoes Day. **Matt Gregoroff**, Church member and organizer of the event, explained, "I remember what it was like to shop for new school shoes. We (church members) want to pass that feeling on to these children."

Then it was on to **Splash Lagoon** for a pizza lunch followed by hours of splish-splash in the water. "Who wouldn't want to get soaked by 1,000 gallons of water poured out of the 48 foot high Tiki Bucket?" laughed Stephanie Taylor, Kids Cafe coordinator. "The children have a blast!" Whether the children are floating in inner tubes along the Lazy River; riding the waves in the Waters Wave Pool, twisting and turning through tunnels on the Big Kahuna or teaming up for a game of water basketball, it is in the words of 11-year old, Jessie, "AWESOME!" **Scott Enterprises** sponsors the day at the water park.



2013 CROP WALK — September 29, 1:30 p.m, Presque Isle Park

Sister Mary Miller, director, Emmaus Ministries, was guest speaker at the annual C.R.O.P. Walk luncheon in April where over \$17,000 of the \$68,853 raised at the 2012 Walk was distributed to Erie County hunger agencies, including Emmaus.



ERIE GIVES DAY



Erie Gives Day proved to be a great day for Emmaus Ministries and other nonprofits in the region. Not only did Emmaus receive \$16,329, doubling the amount given in 2012, but it ranked in the top 10 nonprofits in number of donors with 140 contributors. Erie Gives Day is an annual one-day online giving event where donations to non-profits receive a percentage match from the **Erie Community Foundation** and **GE Transportation**.

EMMAUS GROVE GROWERS

Emmaus Grove: The Erie Urban Farm School was made possible by the generosity of the following:

The **Kathy Herbert Family Foundation** for its generous grant • **Erie Home Depot**, especially Zachary Smith, Store Manager, and Doug Torrence, Lumber Department Manager, for donating materials and staff to build and install all the raised beds • **Joan De Coste** for her generous donation • **ServErie** and its team of volunteers led by Kim Sanford who carried and placed tons of topsoil and built the potting table • **Inner-City Neighborhood Art House** children and Sr. Peg Pilewski for the colorful kiln-fired markers that label each of the raised beds the garden • **Seed Savers** for donating a complete collection of heirloom and organic seeds • **Ehren Knapp** for designing and creating the signs • **Todd Kuzdzal** for designing the logo • **The Great-full Gardener** for donating tools, seeds and materials and to the following Erie businesses: **Stan's Garden Center**, **Dahlkemper Landscape Architects & Contractors**, **Afton Landscaping** and **Miller Brothers Fencing**.



Kathy Herbert

ROCK for a CAUSE III

For the third consecutive year **Corey Meyers**, a member of Our Lady of Peace Youth Group, organized "Rock for a Cause III," a benefit concert for Emmaus Soup Kitchen, and raised over \$1,000.

HOOPS for HOPE

The Emmaus Children's Christmas gift program was recipient of the proceeds from the raffle held during the "Hoops for Hope: Summer Slam" basketball tournament coordinated by **Brent Swain**.

In Memory

We are grateful to family members
who asked that memorials be made to Emmaus
in the names of their deceased loved ones.

EMMAUS VOLUNTEERS
Donald L. Carlson
Cynthia "Cindy" L. Hido Soltys
Marlene Hembold Wilson Waidley
Robert W. Waidley

Kathleen "Kathy" E. (Heintz) Borgia
Joan C. Ertl Kensinger
Sally E. Quinn
Nancy A. Weber Alexander Schaaf
Madeline M. Stephany

Cindy L. Hido Soltys died May 17, 2013



Cindy Soltys, "Miss Cindy," as the Kids Cafe children called her, was a dedicated volunteer and special friend of Emmaus. A master gardener, Cindy worked with the children to plant and care for the garden in front of the Kids Cafe. Every summer she invited the young gardeners to her home where they enjoyed the outdoors, helped prepare a home cooked meal, and shared a sit-down meal with Cindy and her husband, Greg. When Cindy passed away this spring, her friend Dot Plonski arranged for a memorial stone to be placed in the Kids Cafe garden.



*Perhaps the world will end
at the kitchen table,
while we are laughing
and crying,
eating of the last sweet bite.*

—from the poem,
"Perhaps the World Ends Here"
by Joy Harjo



Art Becker

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www.emmauserie.org

EMMAUS ICON

Icon *Road to Emmaus*
Iconographer: Sister
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Bénédictines du Mont
des Oliviers, Jerusalem
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The Printery House of
Conception Abbey



They came
to know Him
in the breaking
of the bread.

Luke 24:35



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you

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