

FROM SISTER MARY:

Dear Friends of Emmaus,

I like the Zen quote “No seed ever sees the flower.” Though it advises me not to worry about results, it also reinforces the need to plant seeds. And it reminds me that I get to choose what kind of seeds to plant. Do I want a flower or not? If I choose to plant seeds of negativity, discord, hatred, I get an invasive weed. If I choose to plant seeds of life, I get a flower. In this newsletter, we highlight a few of the choices that people make to plant seeds of dignity and nourishment and inspiration and generosity. As you know, I believe strongly in planting seeds of beauty.

Recently I had a chance to give a seed of beauty and then receive one in return. A beautiful passion flower plant grows outside our food pantry and one morning I picked a flower and brought it inside so our guests and volunteers could enjoy it. I have to admit that I was surprised when one of our guests, Bonnie, stopped to admire it and said to me, “This is amazing. It must be a passion flower.

I’ve never seen one in real life—only in *National Geographic* magazines!” I took her outside and showed her the full plant, picked another flower and gave it to her. After thanking me, she offered this beautiful seed: “I’m going to take this home, press it, and put it in my bible. And I’ll pray for all the people of Emmaus while I do so.”

At Emmaus Grove, our urban farm, we are harvesting the bounty from hundreds of tiny seeds planted in spring. I suppose that’s why gardens are such a delight. Unlike the seed that never sees the flower, we can see the zinnias and squash and tomatoes and baskets filled to the brim and overflowing. The other seeds of goodness and kindness and beauty that we plant require more faith. They demand the faith of Julian of Norwich who, holding an acorn in her hand, wrote: “In this is all that is.” Let us continue, then, to sow our lives and the future yet to come with that simple, but potent, seed of faith.

Sister Mary

“In this
is all
that is.”

Julian of Norwich



Sister Mary admiring a passion flower outside the Food Pantry





Ellen DiPlacido with freshly picked produce in the Emmaus Grove



Soup Kitchen volunteer, Kitty Welton, with fresh tomatoes from Emmaus Grove

Save the Date

Emmaus Grove Harvest Fest

Sunday, October 1, 2017, 1-4 p.m.

214 East 11th Street

FREE MUSIC, TOURS, FOOD

All Are Welcome!

Seeds of Abundance

"To have an abundant garden, one must start with a good seed," said master gardener Mike Bailey, who co-coordinates Emmaus Grove: The Erie Urban Farm School.

"Of course. But having a good seed is only one part of the process," added co-coordinator and master gardener Ellen DiPlacido. "The seed can only grow with good soil, water, and sunshine."

Emmaus Grove itself has grown just like an abundant seed. Four years ago, the garden at Emmaus was but a mere seed, an idea shared by two women, Ellen DiPlacido and Rosemary Gantz.

Now it's a premier growing space in the center of the city.

FACTS BY THE NUMBERS:

- 9 fruit trees grow in Emmaus Grove: 5 apple, 2 peach, 2 pear
- 10 classes of children attended Emmaus Grove's outdoor classroom in 2017
- 1 whitetail deer was spotted nibbling leaves in the garden!!
- 8 different types of herbs can be picked for flavoring
- 2500 lbs of produce are expected to be harvested this year for the kitchen and pantry
- 2 fresh vegetables that guests like the most: snap peas and cherry tomatoes
- Too many rabbits ignore the "No Rabbits" sign hanging on the fence!

Seeds of Dignity

Emmaus summer intern Caitlin Snizek is learning the wisdom of Dale Carnegie's words: "A person's name is to him or her the sweetest and most important sound in any language."

As part of her internship program through the University of Pittsburgh, Caitlin took pictures of each soup kitchen guest and recorded his or her name, birthday, emergency contact, and favorite food. "It's been such a positive experience," she said. "I've had people come in the next day and light up when I called them by name."

All the photos and pertinent data were compiled into a book and copies of the photos were given to any guest who requested one. "I had several people tell me they are going to send their pictures to family members or friends they haven't seen or spoken to in a while," Caitlin said.



Soup Kitchen guest, Stan



Caitlin taking pictures of guests at the Soup Kitchen

Not only was Caitlin's project a wonderful community builder with our guests but it's a handy reference for staff and volunteers, especially new ones who want to call guests by name.

Caitlin who was a Vista Volunteer with Mercyhurst University volunteered at the soup kitchen for several years prior to enrolling in graduate school at Pitt for an MA in Public Administration.

P.S. The most popular "favorite food" of soup kitchen guests is lasagna.

Seeds of Inspiration

Before he swam across Lake Erie to raise funds for the Kids Cafe, Chris Fetcko met with the children to encourage them to follow their lifelong dreams.

"You even know how to swim?" a concerned child asked Chris. "Well," Chris replied, "I've been wanting to swim across the lake since I was your age. I swam in high school and then stopped for a while. But two and a half years ago, I made the decision to swim the lake and since I've been practicing all the time! If you really want to do something," Chris continued, "You have to put a lot of time into making it happen."

Late in July, 41-year-old Chris Fetcko's dream came true: he swam across the lake in 15 hours and 12 minutes. He swam with the Lake Erie Open Water Swimming Association, which provided two doctors, two nurses, two boats, and six kayaks to monitor the swim.

Chris is using his dream to inspire others to work toward ending hunger by raising awareness of and funds to feed hungry children in Erie. "Childhood hunger drives me nuts!" Chris said, "And I want to do something about it." In total, he raised over \$6500 for Sister Gus' Kids Cafe from friends, family members, and other supporters of his swim.



Chris Fetcko taking questions from children at the Kids Cafe



Chris Fetcko showing the children where he swam across Lake Erie

FUN FACTS:

- **Chris needed a passport because he swam across International Waters.**
- **Chris was not allowed to touch anything while he swam—food and water were thrown to him from the boat. When he stopped to eat or rest, he had to tread water.**
- **Chris prayed intensely during the swim, especially when his shoulder popped out about six miles from the starting line—half an hour later, he was pain free.**

SOUP'S ON: An Emmaus Journal

Soup's On: An Emmaus Journal by staff member Breanna Mekuly can be found at www.emmauserie.org

Right before the dining room opened, a volunteer at the kitchen asked Rita Scrimenti, Emmaus' social worker: "Are you going to be the bouncer tonight?" Quickly she responded: "No, I'm going to be the greeter."

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Caitlin, Emmaus' summer intern, has been helping in the kitchen while Shirley Whaley, Emmaus' regular cook, is out of town. "I can't believe the cooks can stand on their feet all day!" Caitlin said when she visited the office for lunch. "I've only been there a day and a half but I'm exhausted already! There's so much to do!"

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"Wow," I said to the nine-year-old girl at the Kids Cafe, "I really like your boots. Are they new?" She smiled really wide. "Yes! They are my cowgirl boots. I love them. And you know where I got them?" she asked me. "I got them here at the Kids Cafe store." Children who help with different chores around the place earn Kids Cafe dollars that they use to buy things like school supplies, snack foods, clothes, and shoes. The little girl continued: "I wear these boots all the time. I never take them off." A Kids Cafe staff member laughed: "Even when you sleep you keep them on?" "Yes!" the little girl responded happily.

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At the soup kitchen, Margaret Kloecker, administrative assistant at Emmaus, pulled me aside and told me that Larry, a guest, came in with the soles of his shoes falling apart. Larry has a new job and asked if we had any shoes in his size but we didn't. Another guest, Jermichael, overheard: "I'm sorry to eavesdrop," Jermichael said, "but I heard you need shoes. How long are you going to be here? I have shoes in your size that don't fit me. I'll run home and get them." Twenty minutes later Jermichael returned with two pair of almost new shoes. They fit Larry perfectly but he decided to take only one pair, offering the second to another guest sitting nearby. Before Larry left, he stopped Jermichael: "How much do you want for the shoes?" Jermichael smiled and said: "I didn't say I wanted anything for them. You just enjoy them."

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A new family came into the kitchen today. The oldest of the children, about 8 years old, walked in to the dining room and immediately introduced himself to me. "Nice to meet you. My name is Trevor," and looking around the dining room at the hustle and bustle of people getting and eating their food he continued, "This is the first time I've ever been in a church."



Rita Scrimenti, Emmaus Social Worker, with a Soup Kitchen guest

FOR THE RECORD

ERIE GIVES: “We are a small non-profit and to be listed 5th in total donors is humbling,” said Sister Mary Miller, director of Emmaus Ministries, referring to the results of Erie Gives, a day when the Erie community is encouraged to donate online to their favorite local nonprofit.



Erie Gives, held on August 8, 2017, included 374 non-profit participants. Emmaus ranked 20th for total donations at \$51,478.13, and 5th in total donors with 329.

The annual event is organized by the Erie Community Foundation which gave a prorated match for every gift from a funding pool of \$315,000. “We are grateful to our donors and to the Foundation,” said Sister Mary. “What this communal day of giving makes visible is Erie’s great heart.”

EDIBLE BEAUTY: Beauty is brought into the Emmaus Soup Kitchen in many different ways. The most recent is artistically designed cookies.

Joe Orinko, a member of St. Jude Church, bakes cookies with all sorts of special designs, such as fidget spinners or KFC chicken wings, each month for the Emmaus Soup Kitchen guests as a hobby. “It takes about 10-15 minutes to design each cookie. And typically I have to let the first coat of frosting dry overnight. But I’m retired and making cookies like this is fun for me to do. It’s artistic practice.”



SUMMER AT THE KIDS CAFE: “The hours at the Kids Cafe may be abbreviated during the summer,” said Stephanie Gear, coordinator, “but the activities seem to multiply.”



Children from the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House are eating lunch at the Kids Cafe.

So did the children. The number of youngsters eating lunch doubled because students enrolled in the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House joined those enrolled at the Kids Cafe for lunch. Both ministries are run by the Erie Benedictine Sisters but coming to the Kids Cafe for lunch is a first for some of the children.

“I’ve been going to the Art House since I was seven,” a young child said while eating her sloppy-joe sandwich, orange slices and celery. “But I have never been to the Kids Cafe to eat before today!” Then looking around, she said, “I like it here.”

Once again, the Kids Cafe closed its summer session with the annual Pay-



Picking out new shoes at Payless

less Shoes shopping and Splash Lagoon recreation trip. The children picked out new shoes for the upcoming school year then raced back to the busses to get to Splash Lagoon for pizza and swimming. Matt Gregoroff, parishioner at the Russian Orthodox Church of the Nativity, coordinated the sponsors of this event: Church of the Nativity raised money to buy the children’s shoes, Payless Shoe Source gave a substantial discount, and Scott Enterprises offered lunch at and free admission to Splash Lagoon.

Well...the Splash Lagoon outing didn’t exactly “close” the summer Cafe program. “During the month of August, the Kids Cafe is usually shut down but I wanted to offer something for the youth to continue coming to,” said Sister Dianne

Sabot, director of Programs and Facility at the St. Benedict Community Center, who coordinates the gym for Kids Cafe youth to use.

“Some of our children have really great basketball skills and instincts but we want to help them learn the fine points and basics of basketball,” Sister Dianne continued. “And A&K Basketball Skills Clinic is good at helping young people develop the detailed techniques of basketball.”



Youth participating in the A&K Basketball Skills Clinic

Sister Dianne organized this three-week clinic in collaboration with the Kids Cafe, St. Benedict Community Center, and the A&K Skill Development.

LET US GIVE THANKS TO...

CARL LARESE, of LARESE FLORAL DESIGN, for again including Emmaus Soup Kitchen in FTD Florists National Good Neighbor Day: on Wednesday, Sept. 13, bring a non-perishable item to his floral shop, 3857 Peach St, Erie, and receive a free bouquet of flowers... **EHREN KNAPP**, for the new Emmaus Grove Garden sign... **BONNIE LEAMER**, for donating plants for Emmaus Food Pantry guests to grow their own food... **FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT from GRANDVIEW ALLIANCE CHURCH** for sharing fresh produce with the Emmaus Soup Kitchen... Kiwanians **BUCK and HELEN SWAHN** for 30 years of dedicated volunteering at the soup kitchen... **MARGIE SANTO** for sharing homemade quilts with Emmaus guests in need...



Harley Davidson of Erie employees with food collected during a fashion show and supporting Emmaus as a food provider in Erie... **GE INTERNS** for volunteering at the Kids Cafe... Erie Poet Laureate, **MARISA MOKS-UNGER** for donating boxes of Cracker Jacks to children at the Kids Cafe... **RHONDA SCHROECK** for donating school supplies and hosting a neighborhood food drive...

In Memory

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

Adele Ward Bole
John E. Fries, Sr.
Marilyn Alice Graham Heberlein
Frances Bules Hofmann
Vera Szapowalowa Karowicz
Herman K. Klauk,
Soup Kitchen Volunteer

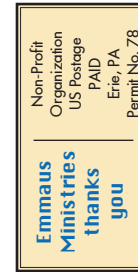
Barbara Ann Mack
Elizabeth "Betty" Orzel
Violet E. Popoff Sala,
Soup Kitchen Volunteer
Marian Woloshyn Smith
Virginia Mae Clements Meyer Thor
Rudy "R.C." Wiesner



A GE intern and child at the Kids Cafe showing off their painted rocks for Rock Out Erie

STUDENTS at VILLA MARIA ACADEMY for making 20 lasagnas for an Emmaus Soup Kitchen dinner... Master gardeners **MIKE BAILEY and ELLEN DIPLACIDO** for teaching children from Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School about gardening at Emmaus Grove: The Erie Urban Farm School... **STAFF at HARLEY DAVIDSON of ERIE** for collecting food during a fashion show... the **ERIE COUNTY CROP HUNGER WALK** for recognizing and supporting Emmaus as a food

STAFF: Mary Miller, OSB; Margaret Kloebler; Claire Marie Surmik, OSB; Lucia Surmik, OSB
Rosanne Lindell-Hynes, OSB; Rita Scrimanti; Shirley Whaley; Stephanie Grear; Breanna Mekuly;
and Karen Oprenochok, OSB; Companion Editor, Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB; Layout, Judy Allison

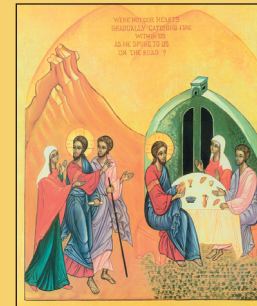


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EMMAUS ICON
Icon *Road to Emmaus*
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They came to know Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Luke 24:35