

C.R.O.S. Currents

A quarterly publication for the friends of Christians Reaching Out to Society, Inc.

Spring 2007

Director's Corner



Dear Friends:

2007 is starting out with a boom.

Usually, we serve fewer clients at the pantries during the first few winter

months of the year because there are more jobs available at this time of year. However, the number of people served at the pantries is remaining quite high this year.

This is the first year in almost thirty-five years that we have seen a decrease in the number of children enrolled in public schools; however, there has been a 10% increase in the number of children receiving free and reduced-price meals. With many people still struggling with the after effects of three hurricanes in 14 months, the issues of food remain critical for so many people.

We are grateful to the farmers who allow us to glean produce. In less than half a day, enough produce to feed several hundred people can be picked. We need people to pick produce during the week. Give Ian Oudit, our gleaning coordinator, a call if you can assist in this effort.

I cannot imagine not having enough food to feed my children or grandchildren. Please get involved in some way in helping those in need that live right next to us. You are such a blessing to thousands that have lost hope and have no place to turn. Thank you.

Peace and Grace,

Pam

Rev. Pamela A. Cahoon

At Home for the Holidays through Hurricane Recovery

C.R.O.S. Ministries participated in the Disaster Recovery Coalition event, *Home for the Holidays*, which took place on November 18th and December 9th, was a local endeavor to help families still recovering from the 2004 and 2005 hurricanes. Volunteers worked diligently to help nine families repair their homes in time for the holidays.



Mrs. Williams*, a resident of Boynton Beach, had eagerly awaited the help for many months and her wish came true on the 18th when volunteers showed up with gloves and hammers in hand, ready to work. This woman experienced extensive roof damage from Hurricane Wilma, which further caused damage to her ceilings. Although her roof had been repaired and the leaks stopped, her ceilings needed of a lot of help. The volunteers spent the day measuring, cutting and hanging drywall. The volunteers did an amazing job and after all the sheet rock was installed, the home looked brand new.

A couple of days before Christmas we were able to deliver a holiday package, provided by Trinity United Methodist Church of Palm Beach Gardens, to Ms. Williams. She was incredibly grateful for the work that had been done to her home and the wonderful meal she would be able to cook for Christmas.

Thank you to the many volunteers who assisted with *Home for the Holidays*. There are still many homes that need repair, if you would like to volunteer please contact Katie Dodd at (561) 833-9499 or katedodd@hotmail.com.

Food Pantries Make a Difference

A family of five came into the pantry, desperate for food. Both mother and father are paraplegics and they have three children. The cost of living and health expenses left this family struggling to meet their basic need for food. Once given their food package, they tore open the crackers and began to eat them immediately. They were so grateful for the food and thanked everyone at the pantry.

Pantry volunteers offer hope to families like this everyday. In 2006, C.R.O.S. served over 32,000 individuals through our food pantries. Without the dedication of volunteers, this would not be feasible. If you are interested in working at any of our pantries, please contact Donna Buchalter at (561) 699-5113 or dbcros@bellsouth.net. Shifts at the Lake Worth and Riviera Beach pantries are available between 10am and 4pm.



Children enjoyed a visit from Santa at the Caring Kitchen's Bounce Into the New Year party.



Mary Hanna and her friends baked dozens of cookies.

Holiday Happenings

The holidays are always filled with the blessings of our supporters. We cannot say "thank you" enough to all those you have made a difference in the lives of those we serve.

- Last year C.R.O.S. was able to provide Christmas gifts to 1,400 children and youth. One mother expressed her gratitude in a thank you note stating, "Without you there would be no smiling faces on Christmas morning."
- The Reilly Family of Delray Beach treated approximately 45-50 children to crafts, snacks and games to get their New Year off to a fun start.
- The Caring Kitchen provided 220 families with Thanksgiving baskets and turkeys because of the generosity of Office Depot, the Korothy Family and Friends, Faith UMC of Boynton Beach and 1st Presbyterian of Delray Beach.
- Trinity United Methodist Church in Palm Beach Gardens provided both Thanksgiving and Christmas food boxes to over 90 families.
- A volunteer from our Lake Worth pantry, Mary Hanna organized a cookie bake with her friends. They baked over 148 dozen cookies to include in food packages given out around Christmas time.

C.R.O.S. Ministries Will Move to New Location

Since 1978, C.R.O.S.'s office space has been located at Wagg Memorial UMC in West Palm Beach. Due to the merger of Wagg Memorial with another United Methodist church, Wagg Memorial's building will be sold. Though we are uncertain as to when, C.R.O.S. is moving its offices to Calvary UMC in Lake Worth.

We want to take this space to express to Wagg Memorial UMC our deep, heartfelt gratitude for their generous support of C.R.O.S. Ministries over the years, not only through office space, but through overall support of our ministry in this community. We are also thankful for the welcome Calvary UMC has extended to our staff and look forward to continuing to serve persons in need from our new location in Lake Worth.

National Matching Funds to Fight Hunger

For the 10th year, Alan Shawn Feinstein will divide \$1 million among hunger fighting agencies nationwide using it to help them raise funds during March and April. C.R.O.S will receive a portion of these funds by your generous response to the challenge. Food donations are included in the challenge and will be valued at \$1 per pound.

The \$1 million will be divided proportionately among all agencies who participate in the challenge. The more you give, the more C.R.O.S. receives. Consider organizing a food drive at your school or workplace, or having an additional food drive at your church.

Donations of money or food to C.R.O.S. that are received from March 1 to April 30 will be counted towards the Feinstein challenge. Please mark your donations "Feinstein Challenge" to increase the amount C.R.O.S. will be eligible to receive. For more information call our office at (561) 833-9499 or email info@croministries.org.

The Children Are Our Future

Many years ago Shaquanna came to CROS CAMPS as a quiet yet energetic, young girl. She lived in a home where hunger was a constant reality and she often worried about when her daddy would hurt her mommy again.

Shaquanna was quite active in camp activities including outdoor games and arts and crafts. After a few years of being camper she decided to volunteer with the program. Though she enjoyed being a volunteer she could not wait to work on staff. In her interview, she was asked why she chose to work at CROS CAMPS. She replied, "I want to share the hope that CROS gave me with other children." Today Shaquanna is preparing to graduate from the University of Florida and will attend law school in the fall.



Addy and Justin, two CROS CAMP staff who made a difference this past summer.

CROS CAMPS would not be possible without the help of volunteers and staff who are passionate about sharing God's love. CROS CAMPS will be hiring approximately 12 individuals to work at the day camps June 4 – July 20, 2007 in West Palm Beach, Boynton Beach, Delray Beach, and Belle Glade. In addition, we are looking for individuals 14 years and older to volunteer a minimum of one day a week for four hours, June 11 – July 20, 2007. Community service hours will be awarded at the end of the summer. For more information please contact Claribel at (561) 833-9499 or cbaron@crossministries.org.

Changing the Lives of Children through Mentoring

We invite you to explore, discover and dream of the exciting activities that you can experience as a mentor. Mentoring Children of Promise (MCP) has witnessed first hand the passion and energy of those who have committed to becoming an adult friend to a young person in our program. Twenty-eight children have been matched with mentors but the need is still great. We have fifteen children, primarily boys who are waiting in West Palm Beach and Riviera Beach. These children need the love, support and guidance of someone who will consistently care.

To qualify for our program, a child must be between the ages of 4 and 15, live in Palm Beach County, and have a parent in prison. Unless there is a positive intervention, statistics indicate that as many as 70% of children who have an incarcerated parent will one day be imprisoned themselves.

Join us on Saturday April 21, 2007 as we "Give through Gleaning". This is an intergenerational community service project. Volunteer adults and youth will work together to attack hunger in Palm Beach County. If you are interested in MCP please contact Gail Hipp, Program Director, at (561) 833-9499.

All Hands in the Fields

The gleaning season is in full swing. 265 volunteers have gleaned 75,423 lbs. of produce from three fields. Five different crops have been gleaned this season: corn, tomatoes, green peppers, green beans and eggplant. This fresh produce is a blessing to feeding programs like The Caring Kitchen.

Gleaning events, both weekend and weekday, are being scheduled through May. We are currently compiling a list of people available for weekday gleaning. To schedule your group please, contact Ian Oudit, Gleaning Coordinator, at (561)833-9499.

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Our Mission

The mission of Christians Reaching Out to Society is to enable people of all faiths to work together to identify needs and collaborate with community groups in creating solutions.

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2nd Annual Magical Evening of Music

C.R.O.S. Ministries will present its 2nd Annual Magical Evening of Music, benefiting The Caring Kitchen and Community Food Pantry, on March 1st at Old School Square in Delray Beach. The evening will begin with dinner-by-the-bite, wine bar and silent auction at 6pm. Guests will then be ushered into the theatre for a live auction and feature performance by the Thomas Pizzi Ensemble. The concert will include musical selections from Chopin, Claude Bolling, and arrangements written by Thomas Pizzi himself.



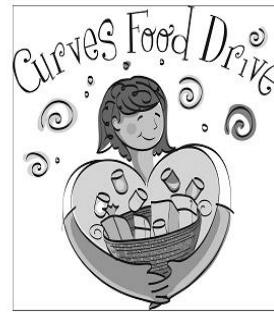
Thomas Pizzi will again be performing classical and jazz selections.

Special thanks to event underwriters including ABC Fine Wines & Spirits, BFW Advertising, Inc., Carrabba's Italian Grill, Hood Auctioneers, Old School Square Cultural Arts Center, Sandy James Fine Food, Inc., and Top Notch Caterer's, Inc.

To make a contribution to the silent auction or for information on sponsorships and

reservations, call the C.R.O.S. office at (561) 833-9499. Tickets are \$50 in advance and \$60 at the door.

Join honorary co-chairs Vince and Pat Canning and Loren and Monika Sheffer, along with our fabulous benefit committee, this Magical Evening. We hope to see you there!



**Join This
March
\$0
Service***

Bring a bag of non-perishable food items in March to your Curves and join with \$0 service fee*.

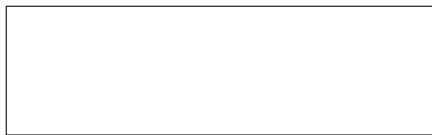
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*Offer based on first visit enrollment, 12 mo c.d. program. Not valid with any other offer.
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*Is your faith, hope and love for
C.R.O.S. Ministries reflected in
your will and estate plan?*

**WE ARE UPDATING OUR MAILING LIST...
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE REMOVED, LET US KNOW. THANK YOU!!**



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