



The Companion

September 2011
Vol. 21 No. 3

Emmaus Ministries • 345 East Ninth Street • Erie, PA 16503-1107 • (814) 459-8349



Summer afternoon,
summer afternoon...
the two most beautiful words
in the English language.

Henry James

Dear Friends of Emmaus,

Some of my most precious childhood memories are of working in the backyard rose garden with my father. Bernie Miller was a beautiful grower of beauty.

So every year I plant and wait expectantly for flower season. Nothing brings me greater joy than summer and swimming in gardens of irises, cosmos, tiger lilies, pansies and yes, roses.

If you ask me what heaven is like, I image my dad and me working side-by-side in a flower garden.

I'm sure each of you has a special summer love—baseball, reading in the hammock, sunsets at Lake Erie, an annual family picnic....

Emmaus has some special summer loves, too. We offer you a taste of them in this newsletter: gardens, field trips, picnics, fundraisers. In fact, as I



write this I am preparing to leave for the soup kitchen where volunteer Martha Hilbert is hosting her annual Ice Cream Sundae Day for the guests. (Staff, too, mmmmm.)

It's so easy to get mired in the realities of grinding poverty, a frightening economy, and violence erupting on city streets. But summer nudges us and reminds us

“Earth laughs in flowers” (Emerson).
Come, summer calls, join in the joy of life.



Sister Mary

Just as summer officially ends, there's the *Annual Crop Walk* at Presque Isle on September 25 to end hunger. Twenty-five percent of all funds raised stay in the local area and, over the years, Emmaus has benefited greatly. For info 814-456-7596

FOCUS FEATURE: PLANTER OF SEEDS

To what can we compare Master Gardener Cindy Soltys?

MISS CINDY IS LIKE the perennial flowers that she plants—you can count on her to appear. Every spring she appears to assist the children in planning and caring for the flower garden in front of the Kids Cafe and the vegetable garden at the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House. “The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies,” Gertrude Jekyll wrote. Also taking root in that “love of gardening seed” are a sense of responsibility, an experience in faithfulness, and a love of beauty.

MISS CINDY IS LIKE the tomatoes and zucchini and vegetables that she plants—she nourishes the lives of the children. She takes groups of Kids Cafe children on field trips to her home to play and “hang out” and prepare a home cooked meal. Then the children enjoy a sit down meal with Cindy and her husband, Mister Greg. A fresh peach or a strawberry is a new experience for some of the children. So is the concept of a potato. As one of the girls tells it, “You peel the potatoes, you boil them and then you put them in the mixer and you wait until they get soft. At home I get them out of a box.”



INDEED, MISS CINDY HAS BECOME a living master gardener. She has grown into the wisdom of the Chinese proverb, “Cultivate the garden within.” Goodness, like lovely flowers, blooms inside her.



—from the master gardeners to be



Sue-Sue, Shy, Janaya and Jamera

I’m going to be eleven in August and I’ve been going with Miss Cindy since I was six-years-old. I love it because it’s quiet outside. –Sue-Sue

I went strawberry picking with Miss Cindy once. Then we came back and made strawberry shortcake for all the kids. That was fun. –Janaya

I love Miss Cindy’s house. It has two bathrooms. My favorite thing is playing with the dogs and walking through the apple trees. Sometimes they fall on your head. –Shy

We be going on rides around the woods. We be making cookies. We be making dinner. Miss Cindy sure grows lots of flowers. –Jamera



FOR the RECORD

Anniversary benefit

One of Erie's landmarks, Kraus Department Store, recently celebrated its 125th anniversary with a 2-day party by giving away 1150 hot dogs and 1000 bags of popcorn as a "thank you to our customers." "We had a donation box and earmarked it for Emmaus," said owner Tom Nowosielski. "The Benedictine Sisters have been in the neighborhood as long as we have."



Face-lift for Emmaus

Everyone deserves an occasional "face lift," even a soup kitchen. Thanks to a generous bequest, it was possible to remove the 27-year-old, deteriorating siding (part of which flew off in the last thunderstorm) from the Emmaus Soup Kitchen building, insulate it from roof to basement and install new vinyl siding. Emmaus is committed to not only improving the lives of the people it serves, but to adding beauty to the neighborhood where it ministers.



College bound

Three young people—Sidonia Arnold (pictured with Ann Vinca), Jermaine Thornton and Marcus Marshall—who attended the Kids Cafe through elementary and high school—are off to college this fall. "It's a great accomplishment for these youngsters," said Ann Vinca, coordinator of the Kids Cafe. "They had to persevere against a great many odds and we're so proud of them."



Let us give thanks to...

••• Janel Potratz Levin of Potratz Floral Shop who donated 90 flats of vegetables to Emmaus for distribution to the Food Panty patrons ••• Maggi Goodall and her two daughters, Susan Norris and Caroline Sobalick, who chose Emmaus as one of three charities to benefit from a golf fundraiser, "Celebrate Erie, Let's Give Back," at the Kahkwa Ladies Golf Invitational on June 17 ••• High school student Cory Meyers who organized "Rock for a Cause,"—3 high school bands that played all day on July 16 at the West Ridge Fire Hall picnic pavilion to benefit the soup kitchen ••• The children from Wayside Presbyterian Church's Vacation Bible School who brought desserts and handmade place mats to the Emmaus Soup Kitchen and Kids Cafe as part of their studies ••• Barb and Dan Wysocki who donated five bikes to the Kids Cafe.



The Emmaus family joins in sympathy with Rita Scrimenti, an Emmaus staff person, who recently lost her beloved husband, Albert Edward Wehan III, due to complications from ALS Disease.

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 pantry volunteer for 24 years:

Salvatore Joseph Consolo

Edwin Baginski
Jerome H. "Bus" Blakeslee
Atty. Richard F. Brabender, Sr.
Jane M. Ward Carney
Mildred Hankey
Adam B. Holland
Angelo V. Saraceno
Albert Edward Wehan, III
Frank M. (Fussy) Marucci

Happiness is...



☺ boarding a chartered bus with 51 friends from the Kids Cafe for an all day field trip

☺ stopping at Payless and picking out a brand new pair of shoes, any kind you want

☺ arriving at Splash Lagoon Water Park for an afternoon of riding slides like The Big Kahuna and The Black Hole, getting doused by 1000 gallons of water under the Tiki Bucket, floating down The Lazy River, splashing in the The Frog Pond and shooting water hoops

☺ a party at the water park with pizza, pizza, pizza and more pizza



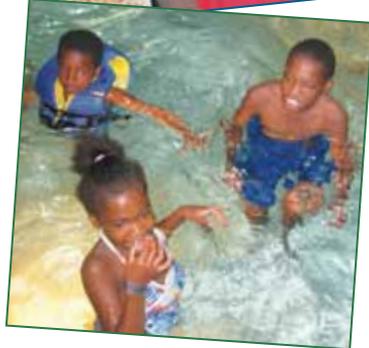
☺ Happiness is knowing all these people care for you!

—Matt Gregoroff and the Russian Orthodox Church of the Nativity who for the past five years have sponsored the “free shoes” program and to Payless for its kindness

—the owners of Splash Lagoon who donated the party and water park

—Ann Vinca, coordinator of Kids Cafe, and staff assistant Colleen Burbules who helped Matt Gregoroff organize the event and then accompanied the children on the field trip

—and, of course, Denny Oswalt who started the event 10 years ago and added to it every year until his unexpected death 5 years ago



FACE to FACE: EMMAUS VOLUNTEERS

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK?

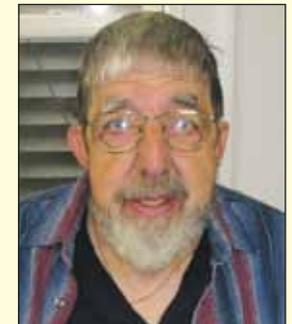
I love all things Irish and about Ireland notes **Pam Eckberg, Food Pantry volunteer**. Pam recommends *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt. Set in the 1930s and 40's this true story depicts the life and struggles of a poverty stricken family. It is a bit sad. These wholesome people work so hard and every time they are beaten down. Yet, they do make it. If they could make it, any one could. It is a lesson in humility, teaching people they can do well and make it in the real world.



The Jean Auel series of early civilizations (Earth's Children), like, *Clan of the Cave Bear*, are favorite books of **Soup Kitchen volunteer, Karen Shrum**. The writing is excellent. The research is phenomenal. I have interest in early civilizations and these books show how far as a species we have come. We take so much for granted in our lives and in these books you read how it all evolved and developed. Also, early civilizations were religious and deeply spiritual. Ayla, a lead character, was an outcast in her clan, yet she was determined and persevered to become a leader. It is fascinating reading.



I have 2 books that I would recommend says **George Anthony, Food Pantry volunteer**. *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau is a favorite because I relate to him. He's a lot like me. We have the same ideas and the same philosophies. In Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* I connect with the Jean Val Jean's character, his inner strength and attitude. You come in contact with the reality of the man, the person.



Prayer of St. Vincent de Paul

*You will find that charity
is a heavy burden to carry,
heavier than the kettle of soup
and the basket of bread.*

*But you must your gentleness
and your smile keep.*

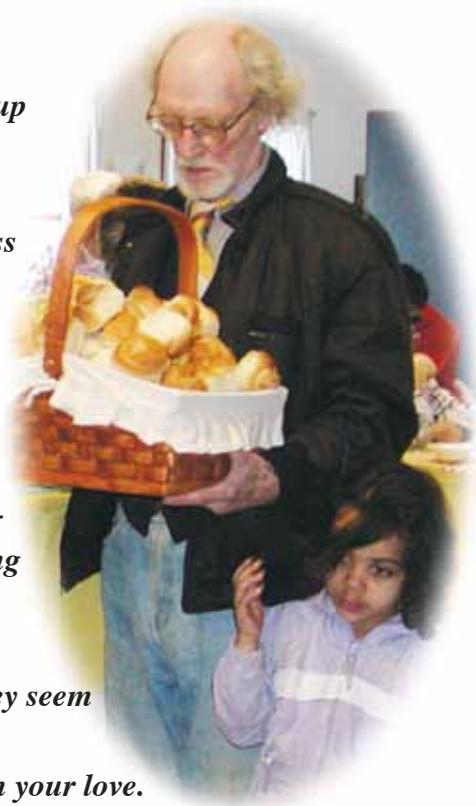
*Giving soup and bread
isn't all that you can do.*

*The poor are your masters—
terribly sensitive and exacting
as you will see.*

*But the more demanding they seem
the more unjust and bitter
the more you must give them your love.*

*It is only because of your love
only your love
that the poor will forgive you
the bread you give them.*

St. Vincent de Paul (adapted)



STAFF: Mary Miller, OSB; Margaret Kloecker; Claire Marie Surmik, OSB; Lucia Surmik, OSB
Rosanne Lindell-Hynes, OSB; Ann Dwyer Vinca; Colleen Burbules; Rita Scrimeni. Companion
Editor, Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB; Deborah McQuaid, reporter; Layout, Judy Allison



345 East Ninth Street • Erie, PA 16503-1107

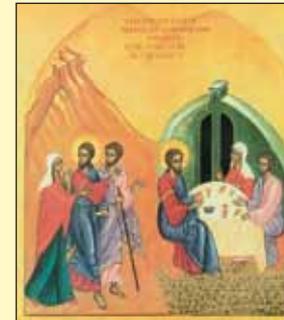
Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Erie, PA
Permit No. 78

**Emmaus
Ministries
thanks
you**

www.emmauserie.org

EMMAUS ICON

Icon *Road to Emmaus*
Iconographer: Sister
Marie-Paul, OSB
© Monastère des
Bénédictines du Mont
des Oliviers, Jerusalem
Image provided by
The Printery House of
Conception Abbey



**Were not
our hearts
gradually
catching fire
within us
as He spoke to us
on the road?**

Luke 24:32