

Joseph's Coat Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2009

Blessings:

"We are each born with certain gifts. The blessing is to be able to use those gifts to help others...."

Our parents taught us that we have a responsibility to help others no matter our own circumstances.

Help could be a hug, a smile, a kind word, a meal, a ride, a visit or a gift. Help could also be a nudge to move someone along, it could be a listening ear....

Being able to ease someone's pain or worry is a gift and gives us the opportunity to do God's work."

- Harriet and Alan Lewis

Dear Friends,

We all have opportunities to be a blessing to others. I learned long ago that all of you are about being a blessing to Joseph's Coat! We are deeply grateful for all you have done to insure that Joseph's Coat can, in turn, be a blessing to those who come to us for help. During these summer months we are offering assistance to about 500 adults and over 135 children each shopping day. Since early June when school let out, we have been giving adults without children a chance to shop from 9:00 to 11:30 in the morning. Then at 11:30, parents with children and everyone who wants to come, are welcomed. All summer we have been blessed once each week on shopping days, with the presence of a story reader who comes prepared to read or do a little project in the large storage room with as many of the children as would like to attend. Their moms appreciate it as they can shop twice as quickly without their little ones underfoot. The story readers have been arranged by Julie Such from St. Michael's in Prior Lake, who e-mails me each week to tell me who is coming to read and which day I can expect them. She and her host of readers have been the most wonderful blessing to moms, staff and volunteers. We are so very grateful for their time and for their love and care of the little ones while moms get their shopping done uninterrupted.

THANK YOU!



Story readers and craft makers: Emily, and her mom Marla, Jenny and Julia.

Blessings continue: Recently a young woman who had shopped early in the day returned later that same morning with a cake for our volunteers and staff to share. She left a note: "Thank you very much for all the hard work and time you put into helping families meet their needs. Here is something for you to enjoy while doing God's work."

THANK YOU!

One shopping day I had gone across the street to SuperAmerica to purchase a soft drink. While I was there, a woman came in and approached me. She rested her hand on my arm and said: "You do such a nice job over there. I just love to come. It makes me feel honored. You have it arranged just like a department store, and all of your workers are so helpful".

THANK YOU!

Last April, we had gotten a great price from Second Harvest on Wet Wipes (for babies). We bought a lot of cases at that very affordable price! One of our volunteers, who lives in a senior apartment building, took all the cases home with her, called all her friends in the building to help separate them into small bunches and put them into plastic baggies so we could give them away. They had so much fun, they continue to do it as needed!

THANK YOU!



Adrianna and her children Arleth and Judah check out the toy area before they leave.

A MOST WELCOME BLESSING



Jonathan and Ted.

There are two wonderful men in the community who have taken Joseph's Coat under their wing. In the middle of May, they called to ask if there was something they could get for us that we really needed but couldn't afford. Mary and I agreed that our most pressing need was fans. Most of our clients do not have air conditioning and many live and/or sleep in upper quarters where it gets really hot in the summer months. I went back to our friends and said that we would most like some fans; any that they could offer would be great.

A couple of weeks elapsed. On Thursday, June 4th, I had been downtown to pick up the mail, and then drove down 7th Street to the store. As soon as I turned right onto Armstrong, I saw them. There on the sidewalk against the building were **four pallets**, each stacked high (even higher than me!) with boxes of box fans!!!! The pallets were wrapped in plastic wrap. I stopped my car and got out ~

unbelievable! Tears of joy began running down my face. I went into the store and dialed our friends. After one ring, a familiar voice said, "We're almost there. We're coming to help you get them off the sidewalk". A few minutes later Mary arrived, cars pulled up and these wonderful men and their wives got out and everyone worked together to put the fans into the back storage room. Really, it was the experience of a lifetime!



Every single person who has requested a fan this summer has received one!

Extraordinary or unplanned expenses are difficult for many of us to manage.

For the most part, our clients can pay the rent and put food on the table but "extras" are difficult to fit into very tight budgets.

The start of school is really a very special time. The children are excited and happy and looking forward to a new year of learning; new teachers, new friends and new experiences. With school on the horizon, families are coming to Joseph's Coat to look for school clothes, shoes and supplies for their children. Remember when the children that you love were small and you got "the list" of necessary items each child needed on the first day? For many of our clients "the list" is daunting, especially if they have more than one child in school. Joseph's Coat has always tried to help with school supplies. Kind and thoughtful as always, you have been dropping off boxes of filler paper, crayons, notebooks, folders, glue and glue sticks, pens and pencils, notebooks, scissors, everything a little person would need to have a great start in school.

THANK YOU!

And, how's *this* for a blessing? We recently received a shipment of 200 (!) new backpacks from two wonderful donors and many additional new backpacks from church groups and individuals. All together, they made it possible for us to gift hundreds of families with a brand new backpack filled with age appropriate school supplies!!

THANK YOU!

FOR ALL THESE GIFTS AND FOR YOUR WONDERFUL CARE OF JOSEPH'S COAT, WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL.



Becca, her mom Diane, who is a volunteer, and a friend Gloria, from Venezuela.



Toni and family: mom, daughter, twin grand daughters, sister-in-law and nephew.



Gene, Scott and Kent, three terrific volunteers!

THE GIFT OF BICYCLES

On Saturday July 8th, we received a donation of 25 gently used bicycles, both men's and women's!!! These were not just your ordinary used bikes; they were all clean and in good condition. Some had new parts; all of them worked perfectly. They arrived in a huge silver trailer. Mary put them in the store room. I was not working at the store that Saturday.

On Monday morning, Mary mentioned that we had received this unusual gift. I immediately went back to look. OH! MY GOSH! All the remaining available floor space was filled with bikes, both men's and women's! I could only shake my head in amazement. What a blessing!

Later that day, a homeless gentleman, Tim, called to ask if we had any bikes. I asked him if he had a bike lock. He did not. I told him that he could come the next day and by that time, I would not only have the bike, but the lock as well. "I'll stop by", he said. We were busy and several hours went speeding by. Tim called again wanting to know if he could come and just **see** the bike. He assured me he just wanted to look at it. So, "OK", I agreed. When he arrived, we talked a little bit about the importance of having a bike lock. He answered that he had a tent and would sleep with his bike in his tent that night if I would just let him take it, and he would come back the following day for the lock. He further explained that he had a lot of friends in the woods who would help him look after it. "Please?" he asked. I finally agreed and went to get it, knowing full well how this story would end.

I chose the one closest to the door. It was silver, white and green. It was just beautiful!!! I wheeled it out into the vestibule just inside the brown door where he was standing. I heard the softest intake of his breath! He looked intently at the bike, taking in every square inch of it. "Hmm, new kick stand", he whispered to himself. He didn't speak again for the longest time. His head was down; he seemed intent on memorizing every detail of it. Finally, after about three minutes had gone by with neither of us speaking a word, I said very softly, "So Tim, do you think this bike will do it for you?" He looked up at me and whispered, "Miss Liz, I've never seen such a beautiful bike!" I answered very quietly, "The best thing about this bike Tim, is that now, it's your bike." He nodded. I gave him a hug, and heard a whispered, "thank you". That said, he walked the bike out onto the sidewalk, and rode off down the street.



Tim with his beautiful new bike.

Addendum: I have seen Tim several times since he got his bike. It has given him wonderful independence. He rode it to a job interview last week and to a second interview at that same company today. He called to say that he thought it went very well. We so hope that he gets that job. Late breaking news: he got it!

- Liz Lutton, Director

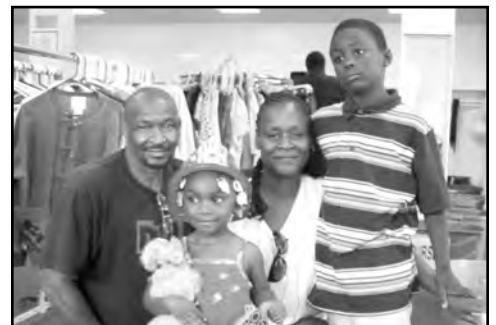
"Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and over-flowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." ~ Luke 7:38



A portion of the morning line allowed to assemble at 8:30.



Maria and Flores shopped today and got a microwave that they put in the front seat.



A lovely family, Mom, Dad and kids, shop together, then visit the toy box!

MANY THANKS...

To the church communities, foundations, businesses and individuals who support us financially. We could never manage without your generous help.

To our faithful donors who continue to gift us with clean seasonal clothing, household items and hygiene products. We are very grateful for your generosity.

To our wonderful volunteers, my dearest friends, extraordinary people. You are the heart of this ministry. Our doors would never open without you.

To my husband Larry, for his constant help, support and encouragement.

For these and for all our blessings, we are truly grateful.



Eulia and LaKayla shop for school supplies and clothes to get ready for 4th grade.

NEEDS LIST FOR JOSEPH'S COAT

Clean **seasonal** clothing for men, women and children

T-shirts, socks and underwear, new or gently used

Outerwear appropriate for the season

Adult backpacks, sleeping bags, duffle bags

Shoes and boots, especially for our men

Books for adults (novels, mysteries)

Children's games, toys and books

Candles

Hygiene products: soap, toothpaste and brushes, deodorant, lotion, shampoo, conditioner, shaving soap, razors, foot powder, etc.

Household items: pots and pans, glassware, dishes and silverware, small electric items, sheets, blankets, towels, bedspreads, rugs for the bathroom and kitchen, etc.

Brown paper grocery bags



Pat, Connie and Eileen visit as they sort gently used clothing items.

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS FULLY TAX DEDUCTABLE. YOUR CONTRIBUTION MAY BE DESIGNATED TOWARD PURCHASING ITEMS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE WE ARE SERVING.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

SHOPPING HOURS: MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY, 9:00 - 4:30 & THE 2ND SATURDAY OF ALMOST EVERY MONTH (**NOT SEPTEMBER**) FROM 9:00 - 1:00

DONATION HOURS: TUESDAY AND THURSDAY, 9:00 - 2:00 & THE 2ND SATURDAY OF MOST MONTHS (**NOT SEPTEMBER**) FROM 9:00 - 1:00 **OR BY APPOINTMENT.**

PLEASE CALL AHEAD FOR LARGE DONATIONS.

MAILING ADDRESS:

Joseph's Coat
P.O. Box 2202
St. Paul, MN 55102

CLOSING DATES FOR HOLIDAY TIMES:

September 7th - 12th (not open Saturday the 12th)
November 23rd - 27th for Thanksgiving
December 21st - **January** 1st for Christmas and New Years

STREET ADDRESS: 1107 West 7th Street - On West 7th Street, 1 block West of Randolph, 1 mile East of 35E

PHONE #: 651-291-2472 **WEB:** josephscoatmn.org

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